Market Research Brief :
Effect of Digitalization on Visitor Engagement at Ontario Museums

1. Contextual Information

Canada has suffered an estimated nationwide loss of C$37.1bn (1.7% of total GDP) due to the COVID-19 pandemic (McCusker, 2020). The tourism industry has been affected the worst of any industry in Canada by COVID-19 (Yarr, 2020). As a way to cope with the changes to business operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, museums have embraced using technology to promote social distancing while making the museum experience more enjoyable (Slone, 2020). These changes are fitting as the strategic vision for the Ontario Museum Association (OMA) involves increasing the digitalization of their museums by 2025 (Ontario Museum Association, 2020). In order to complete this goal, the OMA will need to understand what kind of technology is currently used in museums, how visitors interact with it, and how it enhances or inhibits their experience.

The OMA's vision is to facilitate a collaborative environment between museums, the public, and its stakeholders (Ontario Museum Association, 2018). The OMA values diversity and inclusion, adaptability and efficiency, as well as innovation and improvement to foster community and to improve the well-being of Ontarians.

2. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify how the digitalization of product offerings affects visitor engagement at museums. The research will assess the value of various types of digital content towards increasing visitor engagement. By doing so, we will identify how existing digital offerings can be improved and the types of content that is engaged with the most by viewers.

3.   Objectives

Business Objectives:

- Increase audience engagement with online content by 20% for the year 2021.
- Increase audience reach regarding online content by 25% for the year 2021.
- Identify three new digital offerings to consumers for the year 2021.

Research Objectives:

- Identify which digital technologies consumers prefer to engage with and why.
- Identify how these technologies can be enhanced based on consumer feedback.
- Identify opportunities for new digital offerings based on consumer demand.

4.   Research Methods

Online Survey conducted via Maru/BLUE's Maru/HUB platform. Statistical analysis will be performed on the results. The results will be visualized using a frequency diagram in the form of a pivot table and pie chart.

5.   Constraints

a) **Sample and questionnaire size**: We propose an observational study and as such we hope to derive correlations in the data, however we will not be able to draw any causative links. This study is limited to a sample size of 100 respondents and the questionnaire length is limited to 10 questions. Due to the small sample size, it will be unreliable to compare between subgroups as the size of those groups will be too small to derive meaningful statistical measures (e.g. no logistic regressions, etc.).

b) **Reliability of online surveys:** Straight-lining is also a concern given the study is conducted via online-only survey and measures will have to be put in place to avoid bad data. The number of useful data points will be reduced by participants who drop out of

the survey midway and by inattentive answers, though this should be mitigated based on the short length of the questionnaire.

c) **Sample and bias:** As with all self-report questionnaires, there is a concern about the reliability and validity of the data collected. Due to the small sample size, there is a chance that the respondents will not be representative of the overall population of interest. Voluntary response bias is also a concern as those who choose to participate in a study about museum attendance may have some shared characteristics that bias them towards responding to the survey over those who may not care enough about the issue to participate at all. Social desirability bias may influence the participants to self-inflate their answers (e.g. overstating their museum attendance). The issue we are studying is not contentious or highly technical in nature so these issues should not pose significant risk to the study, but we will be aware of them as we clean and analyze the data.

References:

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