Fitzwilliam Museum

Information Architecture test

This report summarises the findings of a user experience study focusing on the information architecture of https://beta.fitz.ms/.

We used **Treejack**, an information architecture tool that replicated the website's structure, and set 12 tasks for participants to complete.

There were a total of **122 participants**, 97 (80%) of whom completed all tasks.

Successful tasks

Some tasks were far easier than others such as Tasks 3, 6, and 7 (which involved locating information about parking, becoming a Friend and finding out when the Fitzwilliam was founded), where we saw the overwhelming majority of users succeed first time in correctly locating the information in the current Fitzwilliam Beta navigation hierarchy.

Partial success

Tasks 2, 5, 10 and 11 had mixed results. Whilst the majority of users eventually find the correct place for the content in question, some have to backtrack through the site. These tasks involved information about booking a ticket, Fitzwilliam collections, research and rule on in gallery photography.

Failures

Tasks 1, 4, 8, 9, and 12 show **high rates of failure**, indicating that some sections of the site would need reorganising or renaming. These tasks involved locating content to do with what current exhibitions are on, in gallery teaching resources, image ordering, hiring the Museum and locating objects on display in a particular gallery.

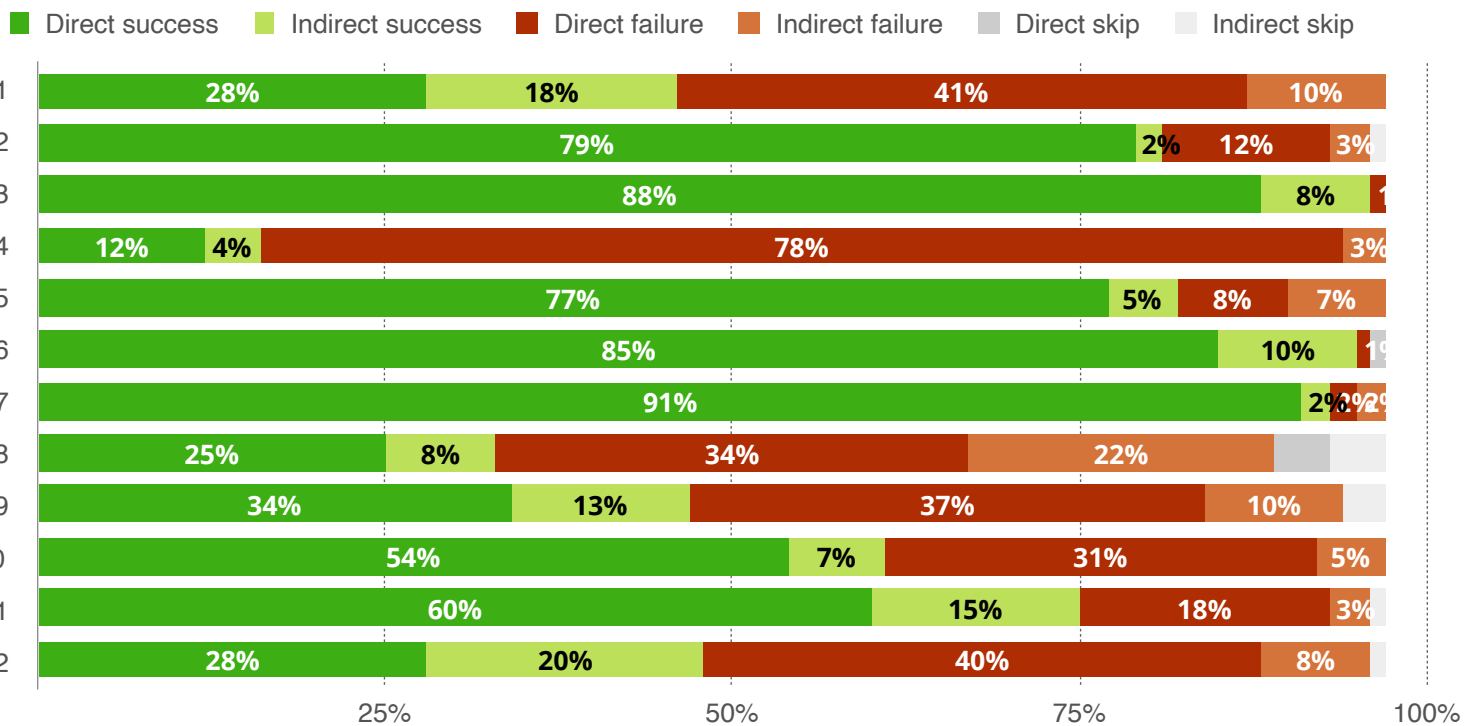You can view and manipulate the raw data and in view interactive visualisations of the data in Treejack.

Results

#	Task	% success	Time to complete (seconds)
1	Where would you look for a list of current exhibitions and displays at the Fitzwilliam?	47%	8.6
2	Where would you look to book a free timed ticket to the Museum?	84%	2.5
3	Where would you look to find out where the nearest parking is to the Fitzwilliam?	99%	4.9
4	Where would you look for resources that a teacher might use when taking a group to the Museum?	16%	7.8
5	Where would you look to find out what 19th century paintings the Fitzwilliam has?	85%	7.1
6	Where would you look to become a Friend of the Fitzwilliam?	98%	3.1
7	Where would you look to find out when the Fitzwilliam first opened?	96%	4.9
8	Where would you look to order a poster of 'the gust of wind' by Renoir?	34%	16.5
9	Where would you look to find out about how to hire the Museum?	48%	10.8
10	Where would you look for find out about the research output of a Fitzwilliam researcher?	63%	9.6
11	Where would you look to find out whether you can take pictures of work on display?	77%	8.8
12	Where would you look to find out what objects are on display in Gallery 8?	49%	11.6

Detailed results by task

For each task, the results can be:

- A direct success: the participant found the right place right away

- An indirect success: the participant found the right place but had to backtrack to find it

- A direct failure: the participant clicked on the wrong destination

- An indirect failure: the participant clicked on the wrong destination after backtracking

- A direct skip: the participant skipped the question right away

- An indirect skip: the participant attempted the task but skipped it without finishing

	Direct success	Indirect success	Direct failure	Indirect failure	Direct skip	Indirect skip
Task 1	28%	18%	41%	10%		
Task 2	79%	2%	12%	3%		
Task 3	88%	8%	1%			
Task 4	12%	4%	78%	3%		
Task 5	77%	5%	8%	7%		
Task 6	85%	10%	1%			
Task 7	91%	2%	2%	2%		
Task 8	25%	8%	34%	22%		
Task 9	34%	13%	37%	10%		
Task 10	54%	7%	31%	5%		
Task 11	60%	15%	18%	3%		
Task 12	28%	20%	40%	8%		

25%   50%   75%   100%

FINDINGS

1. Your visitors currently find it hard to book a visit and browse exhibitions

Participants did not find it so straightforward to find out information about booking a visit or finding temporary exhibition information.

Create a graphic call to action for general entry tickets under Visit

As we found in moderated testing, there is some confusion over whether tickets for general entry exist under 'Events' or 'Visit.' But for a visitor who is not anticipating attending an event, and simply wants to book a free timed ticket to the Museum under the new COVID restrictions, it is more intuitive for them to find this information under 'Visit', along with the other information that they will need to fulfil such a visit.

House exhibition related content under your 'Events' tab

90% of participants initially looked for current Exhibition and Display content under 'Events'. However, that information exists under 'Visit', it's only tickets that exist under 'Events'. It is intuitive for people to expect exhibition content to exist under 'Events' as it is temporary content, typically housed in a navigation bar like this or 'What's On' on many other sites, whereas 'Visit' is more commonly static information about the permanent aspects of a Museum visit.

3. Users look for researcher content under 'Collections' and ignore the research tab

Consider nestling 'Research' under 'Collections'

Just under half (46%) of participants looked for researcher profiles under 'Collections' rather than 'Research'. This on the one hand seems counter-intuitive, 'researcher' is cognate with 'research' and should - logically - live there. However, we believe the reason participants ignored this was because it is more usual on Museum websites to find researcher profiles in the collections part of the website. It also makes sense in so far as almost all Museum researcher activity relates to collections, so in that sense it is a subset of 'Collections'.

4. The majority of participants could not accurately place where information about hiring the Museum lives

Consider having a top level item for 'hiring the Museum'

Just 34% of users accurately found 'Gallery Hire' nestled under 'About' on their first go. Users also looked for this content in Visit, Support and Events. In fact just as many (34%) nominated the 'Events' landing page as the correct place for this content to live, since they never found 'gallery hire' under About.

We believe it would be better to place hiring the Museum in a subsidiary navigation (where you could also put 'About' and Vacancies). If this is not technically possible in the Content Management System, we'd recommend linking to it within Events.

5. Users did not find it intuitive to look for how to buy a poster under 'Collections'

Add a landing page under 'Shop' giving users quick links to different Fitzwilliam products (since Curating Cambridge does not do this for you)

When this task was live, the image gallery was linked to under 'collections'. It has since moved to a landing page called 'Commercial Services', although it is not clear how this is accessed from the navigation (and we didn't test for it in its current form).

Based on the data we got back from this task, we'd recommend creating a landing /splash page for different types of Fitzwilliam products. Since buying a poster is likely mostly of interest to a general public audience, it shouldn't be in the same part of the site as requests for reproducing an Fitzwilliam image in a book (as it is currently, in the 'Image Library' page). It will not be intuitive for the majority of your tourist audiences to look for posters in a part of the site that mainly talks about reproducing images in books. This is an example of structuring the navigation around internal organisation - both these functions are fulfilled by the Image Library department. But your average visiting audience won't know this (or think of it as rationale for how you have structured your content). These are very different tasks, and the scenarios in which a user would think of one or the other are very different.

Buying a poster is much more likely to be a similar user journey to looking for other souvenirs from a visit to the Fitzwilliam, or looking for gifts. Since your shop site is not unique to Fitzwilliam, it would be wise to create a splash or landing page on your own site, to point users to different types of Fitzwilliam specific collections that exist on the shop site, such as posters.

TASK RESULTS

Task 1: Where would you look for a list of current exhibitions and displays at the Fitzwilliam?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
47%	53%	8.57	71%

This was one of the less successful tests, although there is a clear suggestion from these results to move exhibition and display information under 'Events' and not 'Visit' (as currently).
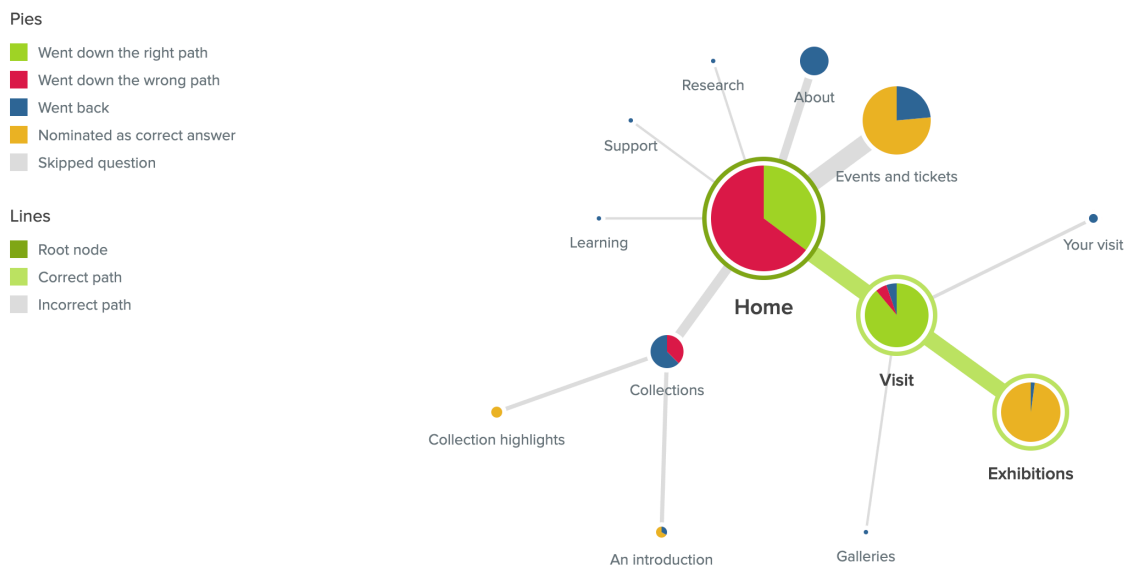
Task 2: Where would you look to book a free timed ticket to the Museum?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
84%	15%	2.48	94%

A number of visitors thought booking a ticket would live under 'Visit'. This is despite the fact that one of the primary level options was 'Events and Tickets'. A reasonable percentage ignored this pointer, suggesting

that it may be more intuitive for visitors to book free timed tickets under 'Visit'. This is quite a standard web convention amongst museums. Also the current site now has 'Events' rather than 'Events and ticketing' as it did when we tested, so we believe this may have exacerbated the problem (as it is now less clear where you book tickets for a general visit 'Events' is not an intuitive place for this). At the very least we'd recommend creating a graphic call to action / modular block to booking tickets in the Visit section.
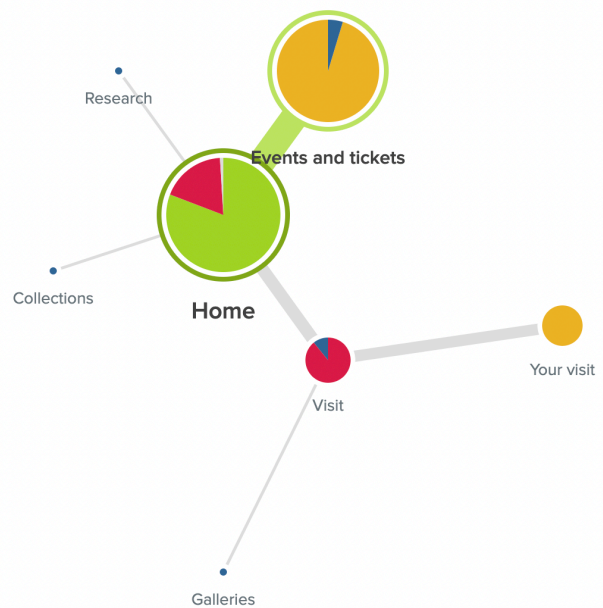
Task 3: Where would you look to find out where the nearest parking is to the Fitzwilliam?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
99%	1%	4.90	92%

There were very few problems with this task, almost everyone immediately correctly assumed this information would live in 'Your visit'.
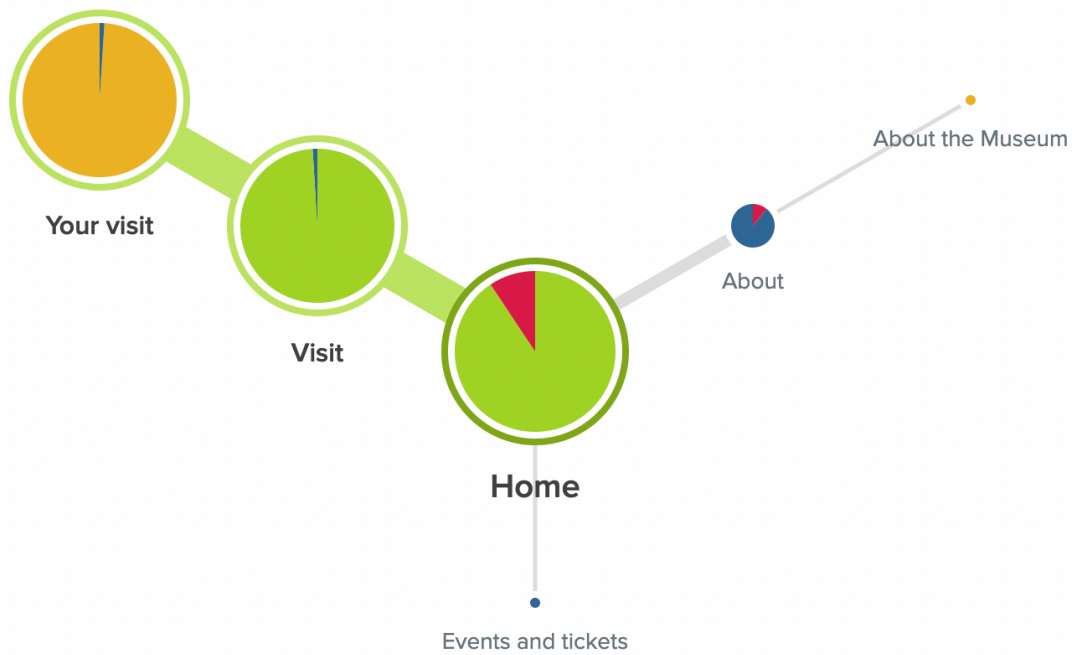
Task 4: Where would you look for resources that a teacher might use when taking a group to the Museum?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
16%	84%	7.84	93%

The majority of users indicated that they thought this content lived under 'schools', ignoring 'resources'. This is interesting and indicates that users expect resources about taking a school group to the Museum should live under schools. This makes sense in so far as this page currently displays session outlines for Fitzwilliam-facilitated sessions and talks about the option for self-led schools sessions at the Museum. But teachers currently then have to go back to Learning > Resources to find resources to help them guide that visit.

It would be more intuitive to have distinct sections on the schools page for 1) Fitzwilliam facilitated sessions, and 2) self led school sessions, and to have resources appropriate for both linked to under each.
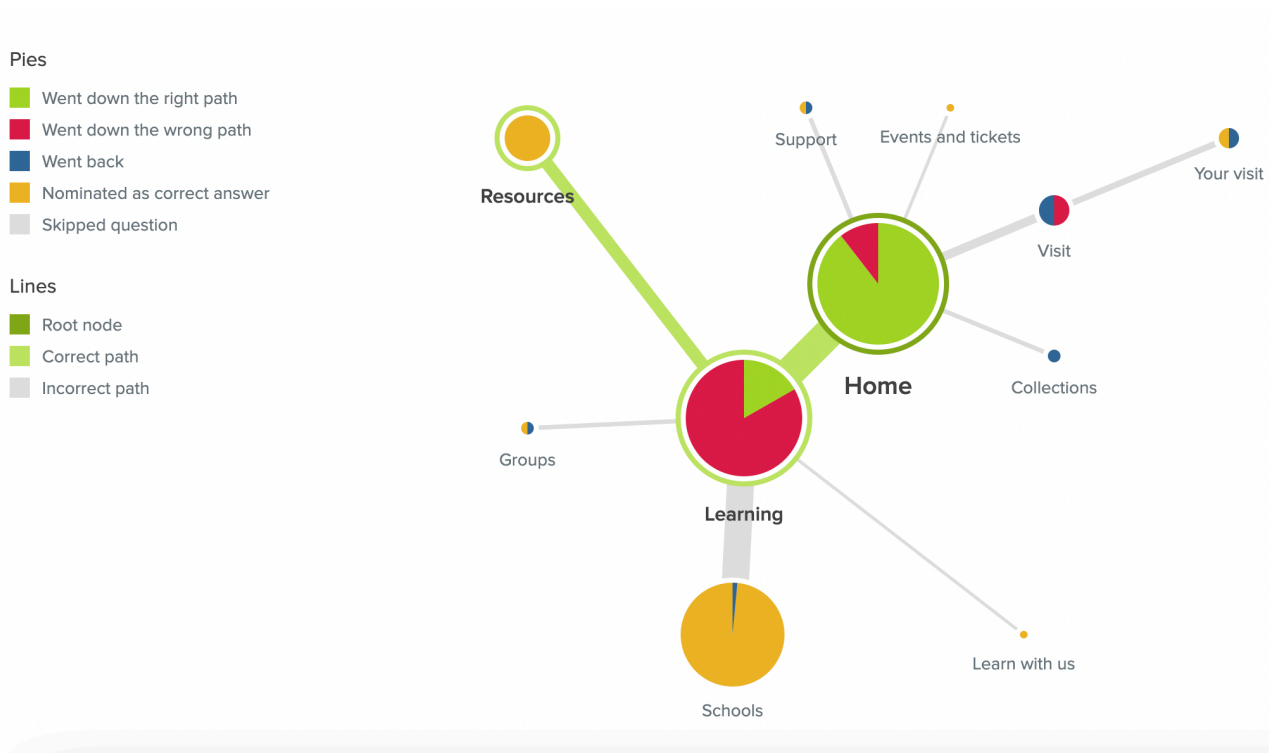
Task 5: Where would you look to find out what 19th century paintings the Fitzwilliam has?

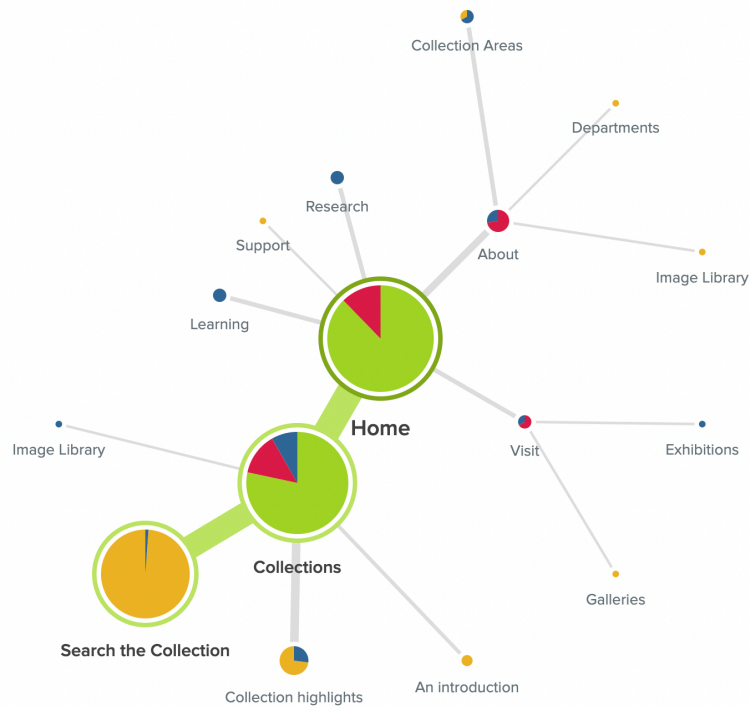| Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
85%	15%	7.13	88%

There were a number of different places where users looked for this content. The majority (correctly) went to collections. Of those, the majority (also correctly) went to Search the collections. However others indicated that they would expect to find this content in 'Collection Highlights'. This makes sense, and it might be nice for the Fitzwilliam to house thematic groupings of objects like 'paintings' within its navigation. Collections highlights is a bit of a confusing term as it's not clear if it's collections areas that are particular strengths of the Museum (like paintings), or whether it refers to specific items (which is in fact the case).

Task 6: Where would you look to become a Friend of the Fitzwilliam?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
98%	1%	3.06	90%

This question did not seem to be too much of an issue for users.

Although other parts of our testing have thrown up issues with the Friends section, it is evident that finding how to become a Friend at least, is not one of the problems with this part of the site.

Pies

- Went down the right path
- Went down the wrong path
- Went back
- Nominated as correct answer
- Skipped question

Lines

- Root node
- Correct path
- Incorrect path

About the Museum

About

Support

Collections

Home

Events and tickets

Visit
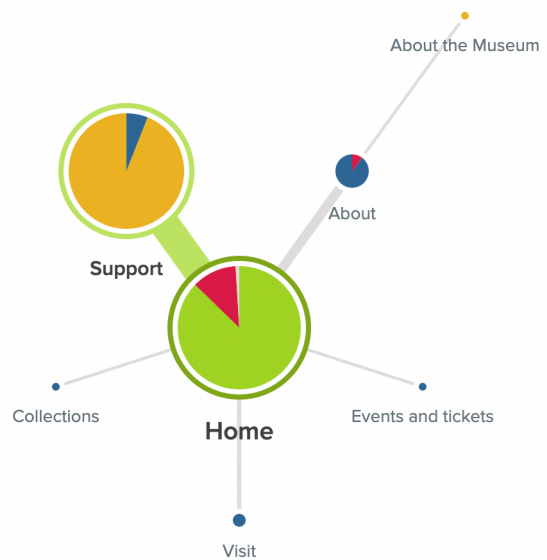
Task 7: Where would you look to find out when the Fitzwilliam first opened?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
96%	4%	4.87	96%

As with task 6, this task posed very little problems for users.
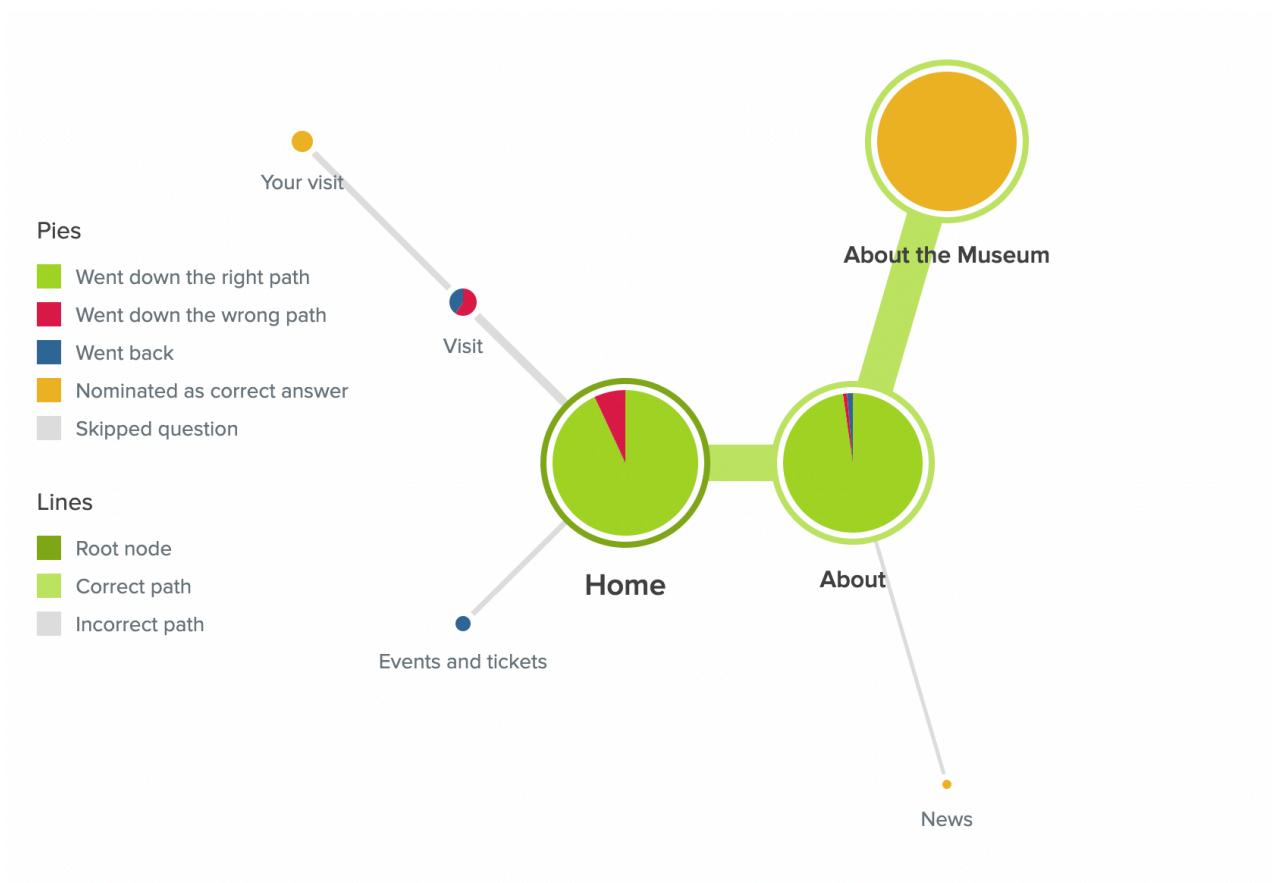
Task 8: Where would you look to order a poster of 'The Gust of Wind' by Renoir?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
34%	58%	16.54	65%

This is one of the more disparate trees we have come across. It's also slightly complicated by the fact that the site structure has changed since this test was put in place.

Now there is a 'Shop' tab, we'd recommend either creating a direct link to the Fitzwilliam's page on Curating Cambridge, rather than the Curating Cambridge homepage (which also includes products from other vendors, and may confuse users who have come via your site expecting a Fitzwilliam specific shop). You could make it easier to browse for different types of Fitzwilliam product by linking directly to different collections on this site, such as posters.
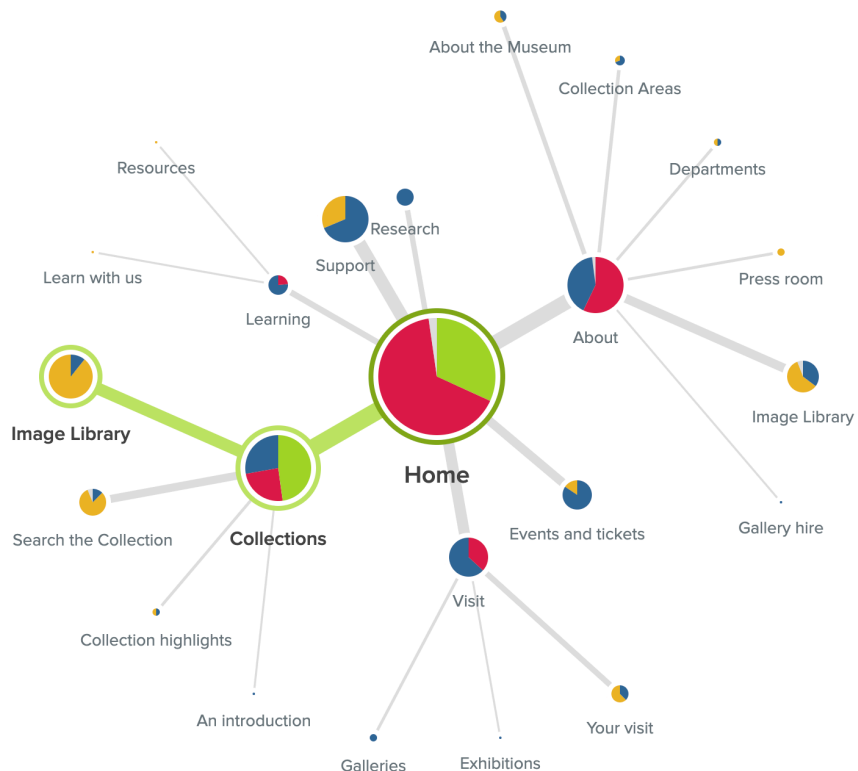
Crucially, poster information should not live, as now, in the same section of the site as information about how to reproduce an image in your book as they are very different user needs fulfilled by different types of audience.

Task 9: Where would you look to find out about how to hire the Museum?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
48%	48%	10.84	73%

The correct pathway here was Home > About > Gallery hire. However the majority of respondents found it unintuitive to find this content in About. About is (rightly) associated with history, news and policy content. It is not typically where transactional parts of the site (like venue hire) live. Many participants (48%) believed they had found the correct place for this content to live in 'Events and tickets', which does make sense as hiring is a kind of event.
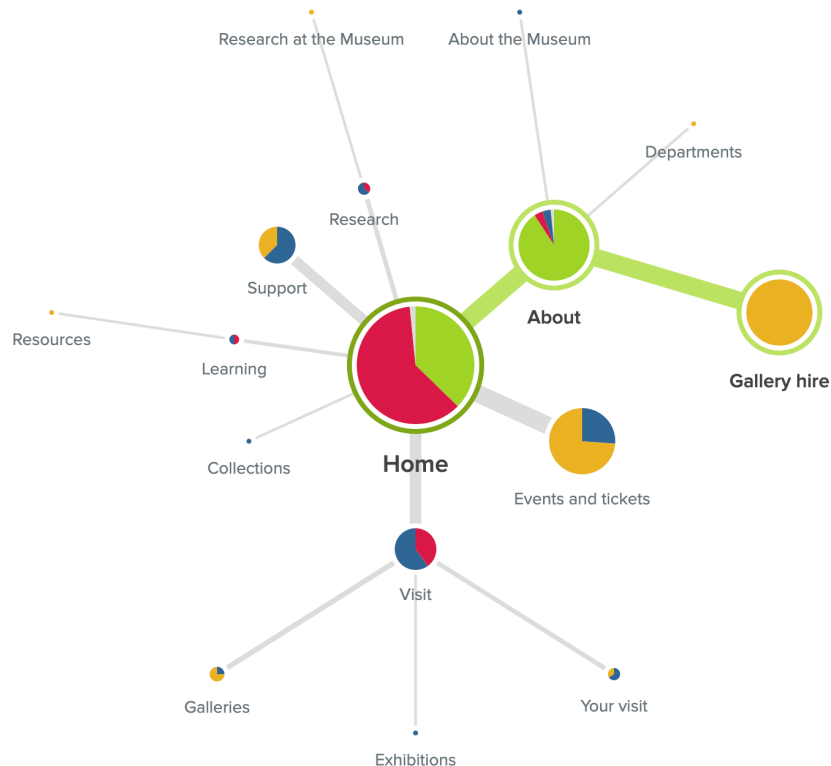
We'd recommend creating a split navigation bar and embedding Venue hire in a subsidiary header. If the design or content management system does not support this, we'd recommend adding it within Events and tickets and also linking to it directly from the footer.

Task 10: Where would you look for find out about the research output of a Fitzwilliam researcher?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
63%	37%	9.6	88%

The majority of users identified that this content was likely to live under 'Research', however 'profiles' seemed to put some respondents off, they didn't necessarily associate this with specific researchers, and a number of participants thought this content could live in 'Research Projects' or 'Research at the Museum' instead. This is fair as 'Research Output' could mean projects, we were thinking more specifically of papers, which currently exist under specific profile pages. We'd recommend getting rid of the slightly confusing term 'researcher profiles' and replacing with the more intuitive 'researchers'.
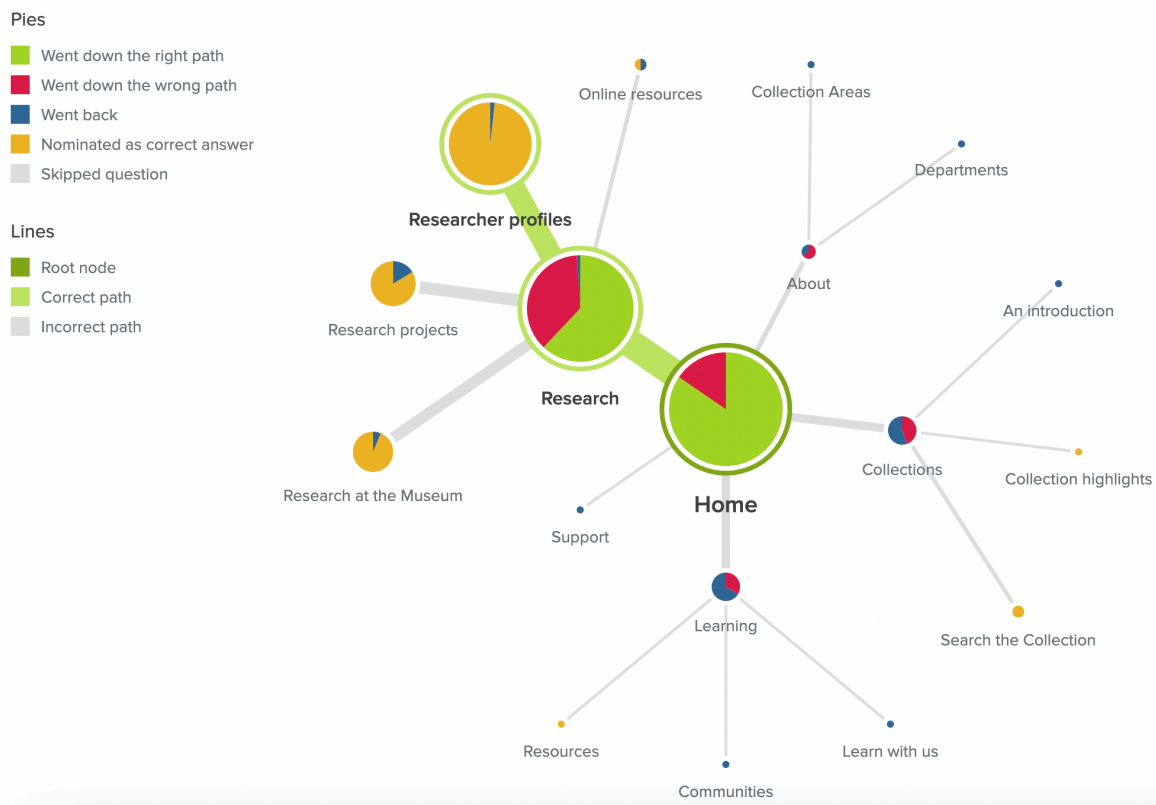
Task 11: Where would you look to find out whether you can take pictures of work on display?

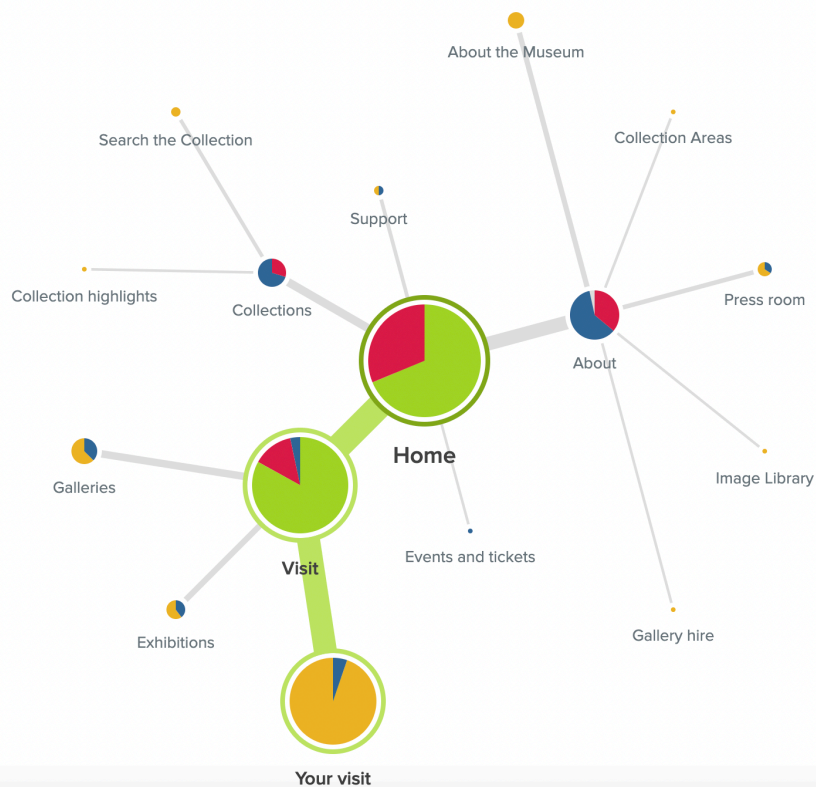| Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
77%	22%	8.82	80%

The majority of respondents predicted that this would live under 'Your Visit', although some also looked for it in About (as it is a policy). Fitzwilliam could additionally add a link to your photography policy from About if it wanted to catch users who went down this pathway for this information.

Task 12: Where would you look to find out what objects are on display in Gallery 8?

Success %	Fail %	Time taken (seconds)	Directness %
49%	49%	11.55	70%

Users were conflicted about whether this content would live in Collections or Visit. Many felt they could get this information in Collections > Search the collection. We feel that since this task is designed to be a test of what users could see in a visit, it is in the right place. It may be partly because we used the numerical gallery names rather than the descriptive ones. If the test had said 'where would you look to find out what you might be able to see in the Spanish and Flemish galleries', the results might have been more in favour of your current content structure.

Pies
- 🟩 Went down the right path
- 🟥 Went down the wrong path
- 🟦 Went back
- 🟧 Nominated as correct answer
- ⬜ Skipped question

Lines
- 🟩 Root node
- 🟩 Correct path
- ⬜ Incorrect path