

Museums and Social Distancing: A Planning Toolkit

CCD x Smartify
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human behaviour

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Introduction

As the coronavirus crisis develops, museums across the world are planning how and when they will be able to reopen their doors to the public. In China and Germany some museums were able to open as early as 1 May 2020, while Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, France and others look set to welcome visitors back from 1 June.

The remobilisation of a museum is a huge task and requires a rethinking of the visitor experience that once was. How can museums both encourage visitor and staff confidence, and ensure social distancing and hygiene controls can be implemented? This is the challenge before us.

This toolkit is the product of many conversations over the past months with a range of partners as well as drawing on the combined experience of CCD and Smartify in interaction and mobile design in the museum and heritage sector.

We engaged with museum professionals, policy makers, academic researchers and funders as a means to situate these suggestions within the wider cultural policy context.

Since March 2020 both CCD and Smartify have been approached by museums for support in understanding the possibilities of digital and physical interventions to implement social distancing within a museum; how these tools can be brought together and suggestions on the key points to consider when designing a new visitor experience.

This toolkit seeks to begin to answer those queries. Our goal is to support museum professionals to better understand the necessary considerations and develop strategically, ethically and operationally robust mobilisation strategies.

Conscious of the urgent and fast-moving nature of this challenge and drawing on our conversations within the industry with a range of stakeholders, this document provokes critical questions and ideas from a design-led perspective.

We hope you find it helpful!

Social Distancing in Museums



When it comes to government priorities for remobilising business in most cases museums are unlikely to be the first priority. Yet museums provide huge benefits to society by raising morale and improving health and wellbeing. Like parks, museums are important public spaces and with the right physical and digital measures, can be safely reopened to the public.

Social distancing poses challenges but also opportunities to innovate your digital and physical visitor experience. This list frames a starting point from which to begin building your mobilisation strategy.

When considering visitor experience in a socially distanced world, museums need to evaluate the potential opportunities and challenges presented by new digital and physical interventions. This list frames areas for consideration and is intended as a starting point from which to begin building your mobilisation strategy.

The Bigger Picture

Recent closures have seen museums lose potentially 80% of expected income for 2020. This is compounded by social distancing, significantly reducing visitor capacity to 25-50%. For example, the V&A's Director Tristram Hunt is modelling an 85% drop in visitor numbers over the next 2 years. Going forward, operational issues will be one of the first challenges museums have to tackle. Financial feasibility, exhibition sourcing and staff availability, all whilst increasing attendance and engagement are a few of the big questions that will arise.

Sending the right signals

Visitor trust and confidence in your ability to provide a safe experience will be crucial during remobilisation. Visibility and transparency of protocol and in processes will be important players. For example, visitors will want to physically see staff cleaning and enforcing social distancing measures. This will also help to prevent behavioural fatigue, keeping both staff and visitors vigilant.

All touch-points across digital and physical must align. Begin building a narrative around the visit; be transparent about what visitors need to do and why with regards to safety measures and protocols.



Off the shelf tools

Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break from the past and imagine new futures. This is an opportunity to contemplate new ways of working. For example, museum membership programmes could be grown into global online programmes and off-the-shelf digital tools could be used to drive digital transformation. Smartify is the world's most downloaded museum app and provides audio guides safely via visitors' own smartphones rather than rented devices. Smartify can also integrate with E-commerce platforms for Click and Collect where merchandise is offered based on audience preferences. How might you re-engineer your business model for the post-COVID-19 world?

Ethical and privacy concerns

Museums may collect email addresses or send app push notifications for contact tracing purposes. In some German museums, visitors are asked to provide their names and phone numbers upon entry. When collecting sensitive data museums will need to be transparent about why and for what they are collecting data. Do you need a policy for those that refuse? Maintaining and building visitor trust is crucial.

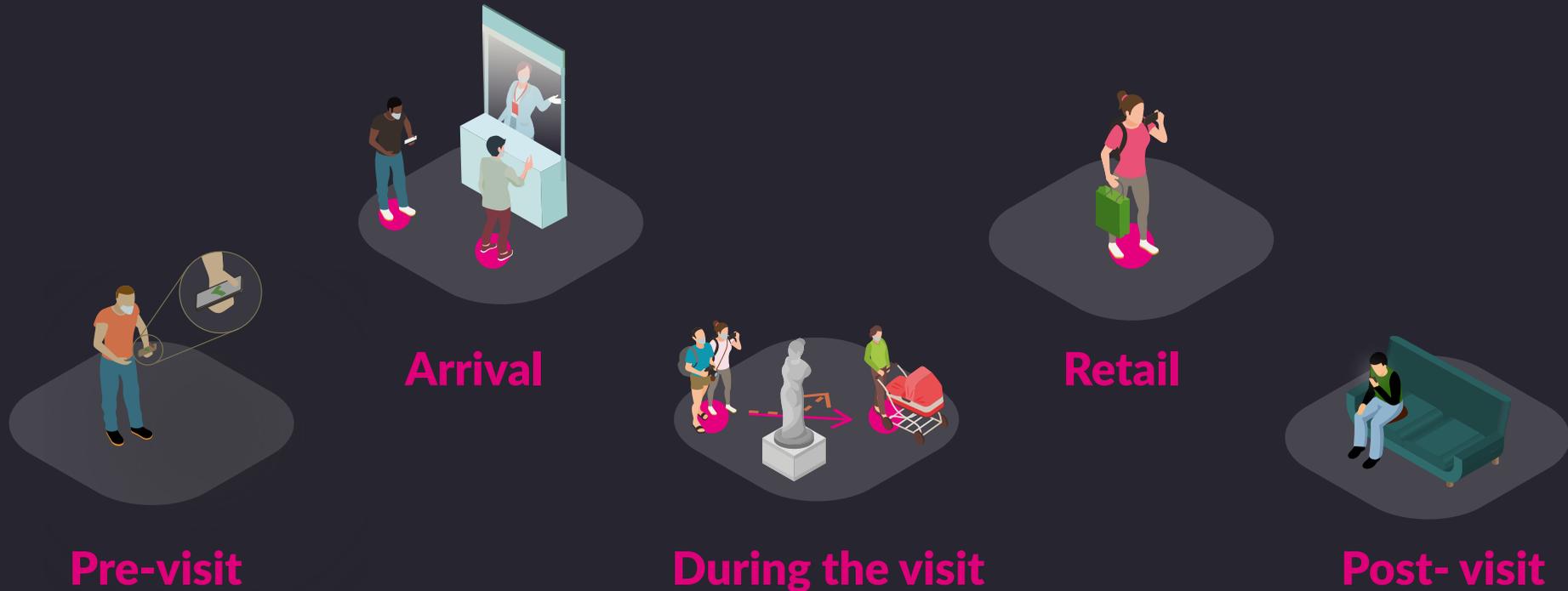
Temporary wayfinding

Most venues will need to go beyond statutory signage to take visitors safely on their new journey. Communicating to visitors in a clear, concise, and brand-appropriate voice will reassure them during their visit, promote good behaviour and reinforce confidence in the experience.

Any temporary signage needs to stand out and be seen but also needs to be human; visitors don't want to feel like cattle. For larger venues, you may need separate journeys so consider colour coding different routes and one way systems to guide visitors.

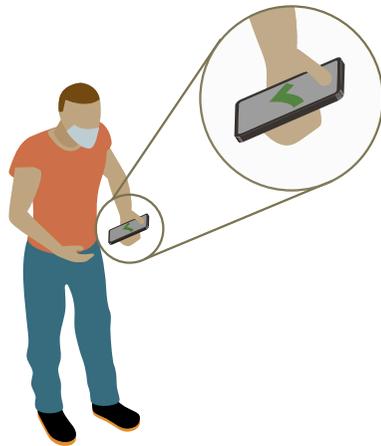
You may need temporary signage solutions for longer than expected - anywhere from 6-24 months. There is a balance between quality and durability of materials, effectiveness and cost. Allowing time for a period of testing is recommended.

The new visitor journey



How will you streamline booking to build trust and safety before arrival?

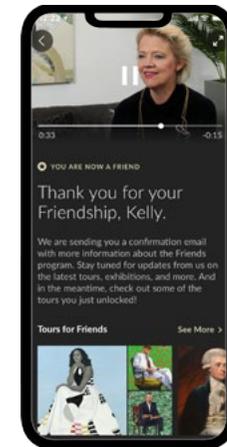
Pre-visit > Arrival > During the visit > Post-visit



- Pre-booked timed slots, even for the free permanent collection.
- Extended hours or separate slots for vulnerable groups, young people and members.



- How to 'fail gracefully' if some visitors cannot book in advance or find online ticketing confusing.
- What should visitors expect? Be clear about what exhibitions/galleries are open.
- Contact tracing - how and when will visitors register their details?



- Using booking confirmation messages to explain new measures and build trust. For example, using Smartify to display a pre-recorded video message from the museum Director.

How will you welcome visitors and share museum information?

Pre-visit > **Arrival** > During the visit > Post-visit



- Protection for front of house/reception and security personnel e.g. PPE, plexiglass screening and distancing on the floor.
- Encouraging visitors to have tickets and e-tickets to hand and ready to show.
- Removing reception reading materials to reduce dwell time.



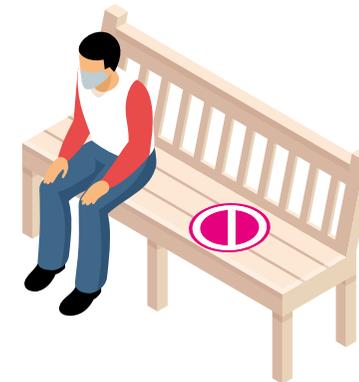
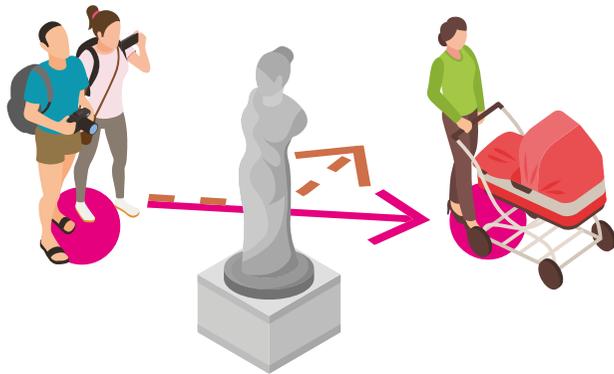
- Temporary signage in multiple languages and pictograms to support the new visitor journey. For example, if you have a one way system or will be using multiple entrances for separate experiences.
- Large museums with multiple entrances are likely to have multiple visitor journeys. Consider how you will communicate this to visitors, for example colour-coding different routes.



- Placing a QR code at the front desk for fast onboarding of the museum app to visitor's devices.

How will you create an engaging experience whilst allowing visitors to safely explore?

Pre-visit > Arrival > **During the visit** > Post-visit



How will visitors move safely through the building?

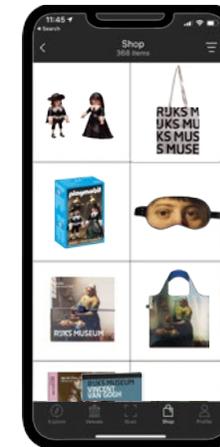
- A one-way system to avoid congestion in doorways and stairwells.
- Delivering a highly curated experience with timed start and stop points.
- Using multiple building entrances to confine visitors to separate parts of the building and specific routes only.
- Colour-coding different routes may help to keep visitors separate.
- Rehanging big, iconic objects rather than smaller works or objects in cabinets.
- Collection 'icons' and highly popular works may need extra processes such as separate queue systems.

How will you keep shared amenities clean?

- Near constant visual cleaning of surfaces to support visitor confidence.
- Prioritising lifts for those who cannot use the stairs. Waiting points in lift lobbies could also be marked for social distancing.
- Providing wipes to disinfect benches and hand sanitizing stations at the entrance of galleries and elsewhere.
- In toilets, changes such as employing an attendant to manage one-in-one-out policy; installing touch-free soap dispensers; where sink banks are installed, taking every second sink out of use; replacing touch dryers with paper towels.

How will you create an engaging experience whilst allowing visitors to safely explore?

Pre-visit > Arrival > **During the visit** > Post-visit



How will you engage people with the collection?

- Removing interactive touch screens and rented audio guides.
- Offering information directly to visitors' own smartphones, for example using the Smartify app.
 - » Smartify's scanning feature identifies objects from up 10 meters and encourages people to read from their personal devices rather than "leaning in" towards exhibitions panels.
 - » Staff can quickly create and edit multi-media guides.
 - » Offline mode allows visitors to download tours for areas without signal.
 - » In-app payments can be integrated with donations, E-commerce or loyalty programmes.

How will you generate revenue from the shop and cafe?

- Creating a Click and Collect shop journey. For example, using Smartify, integrate your online shop into the visitor journey with online transactions and a pick up point.
- Closing some cafes and members rooms. If you do open, ensure that your safety measures are consistent.
- Venues should look to offer takeaway options and extend cafes to outside. Visitors will feel more comfortable to sit in well-ventilated open spaces.
- Selling museum branded face masks with artworks from your collection printed on them.

How will you connect with visitors after the visit?

Pre-visit > Arrival > During the visit > **Post-visit**



- Sending a follow-up message to visitors to thank them, share more information aligned to their interests and ask for a donation, shop purchase, membership etc.
- This could be done via email or if using Smartify via a push notification in the app. Increased use of digital technology in the museum post-COVID-19 creates an opportunity to deliver mass customised communications based on visitor interests and the artworks they engaged with onsite.



- During the extended period of privation, audiences will have become more accustomed to accessing information online at home. Consider what digital experiences you can offer to visitors from home, such as games, educational resources and virtual tours.
- For example, Smartify allows users to place artworks into their own home through Augmented Reality.

Your worksheet

Remobilising your museum will require resources and skills to gather, train and implement the necessary changes.

The goal of this worksheet is to help you plan a safe new experience. It will allow you to see the implications of changes across every stage of the visitor journey, both in operational and visitor needs.

	Pre-visit	Arrival	During the visit	Retail / F&B	Post-visit
Visitor needs					
Operational/Venue needs					



About us

CCD Design & Ergonomics

CCD is a human behaviour-focused design consultancy with 40 years in practice. Using human factors and behavioural insights, we deliver better experiences and commercial benefits for our clients' customers. We specialise in wayfinding that helps people to explore and discover their environment with a unique blend of scientific strategy and creative design.

Clients include Tate St Ives, Royal Museums Greenwich, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and British Library.

Our wayfinding strategy and design for National Maritime Museum won Gold at the 2019 Transform Awards.

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Smartify

Smartify is the world's most downloaded museum app with over 1.3 Million registered users and a 4.7 star rating on the app stores. Partners include London's National Gallery, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery and National Galleries of Scotland. The app has won three Webby Awards; the 2018 GLOMO for Most Innovative App at the Mobile World Congress; and the 2019 UN Award for Culture and Tourism.

During COVID-19 Smartify is offering new partners 20% of all membership tiers.

 @smartifyorg
 @_smartify
 @_smartify
 info@smartify.org.uk

**Download
Smartify app
for free:**

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