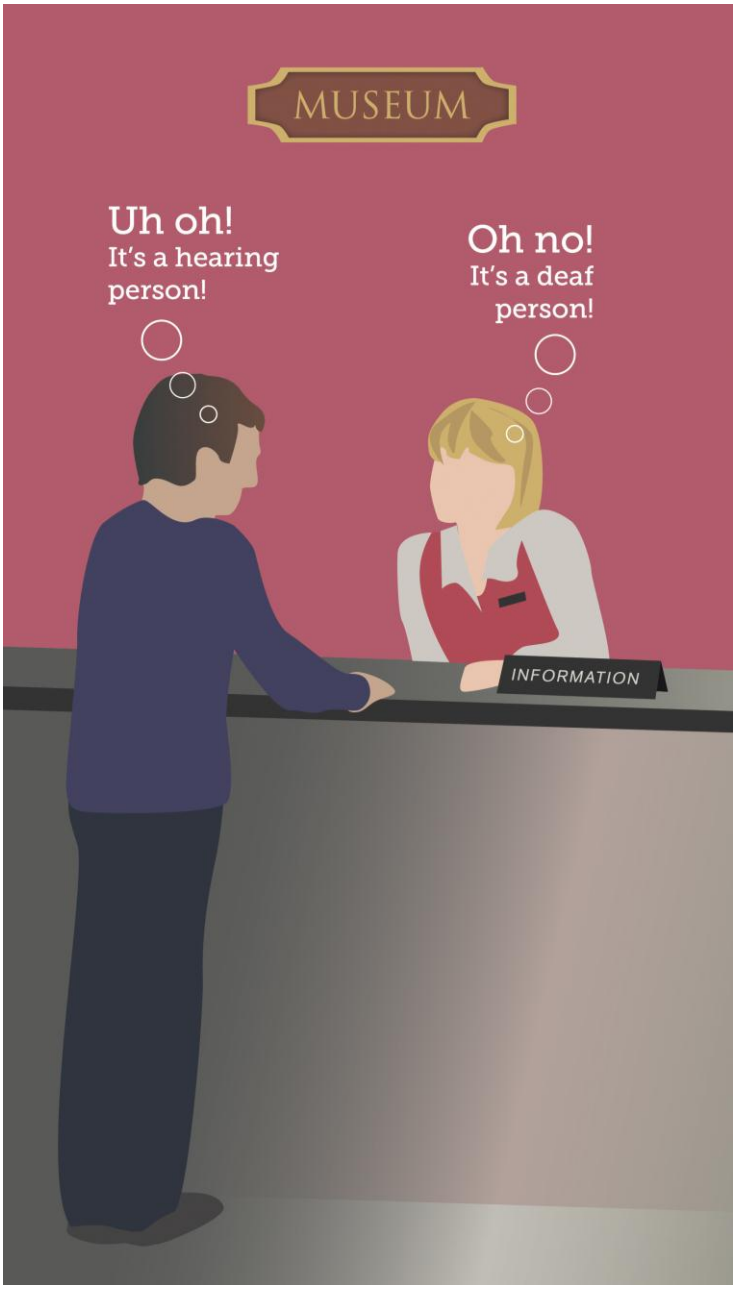
HANDBOOK OF GUIDELINES FOR MAKING
YOUR MUSEUM OR VISITOR ATTRACTION DEAF-FRIENDLY

WHETHER YOU WANT TO USE ICT OR NOT !



BY SIGNES DE SENS (FRANCE)
& HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES (UK)
& NORSK DØVEMUSEUM (NORWAY)

GRUNDTVIG PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

THIS HANDBOOK IS THE RESULT OF A GRUNDTVIG PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME :

MUSEUMS, ACCESSIBILITY AND ICT FOR DEAF PEOPLE:
FAVOURING BEST PRACTICE IN EUROPE
AUGUST 2011 – JUNE 2013

THIS GRUNDTVIG PROJECT HAS THREE PARTNERS, FROM NORWAY, THE UK AND FRANCE :

SIGNES DE SENS (FRANCE)

Signes de sens specializes in accessibility for deaf people.
Since 2003, we have developed projects and guided professionals in how to best provide the appropriate adjustments for the Deaf Community.
Our goal is to promote positive interactions between deaf and hearing people and help everyone live together in harmony.

http://www.signesdesens.com/
Contact : Aurélie Brulavoine

HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES (UNITED KINGDOM)

Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace and Kew Palace. It helps everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society in some of the greatest palaces ever built. This includes deaf visitors.
Over a number of years, British Sign Language interpreted tours have been integrated into our palace interpretation and visitor experience programmes. Each stage has evolved following feedback from the end-users - deaf visitors. But we know there is more we can do and our aim is to be as inclusive as possible.

http://www.hrp.org.uk/
Contact : Sue Whittaker

MUSEENE I SØR-TRØNDELAG (MIST), NORSK DØVEMUSEUM (NORWAY)

Museene i Sør-Trøndelag (MiST) consists of 8 museums in the region, covering music, art, arts and craft, railway and cultural history, in addition to The Museum of Deaf History and Culture - Norsk Døvemuseum (NDM), opened in 2009. NDM is one of very few professional museums internationally dedicated to Deaf history, sign language and Deaf culture. NDM's work with a Deaf audience has led to a greater awareness about accessibility in the other museums in the MiST organisation. Lifelong learning in museums has been our concern for a long time, and has a special strength in our pedagogic programmes, both in formal and non-formal learning.
By joining this Grundtvig project we wanted to explore the possibilities of using ICT in museums in a way that gives the best result when it comes to learning for a deaf audience. By developing our communication with the deaf audiences we hope to learn more about how to reach this particular group.

http://www.norsk-dovemuseum.no/
Contact : Hanna Mellemsether

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INTRODUCTION

We started out on this project focusing on the use of ICT in museums. We were eager to share our experience and craving to discover amazing multimedia projects in each other's country. It didn't take much time before we realized that most multimedia projects accessible for deaf people in museums in Europe were either disappointing or rarely used by deaf visitors.

Don't jump to the conclusion that multimedia doesn't work with deaf visitors. Just like for any visitor, it just means that there's a lot to invent and create to make multimedia attractive and meaningful in the museum setting. So, instead of creating multimedia projects for distinct categories of visitors, we all came to the conclusion that the solution is to think globally, think 'inclusive', to think 'universal design'.

Thus, in the course of the project, very naturally, we broadened our scope and we shared our experience about what has to be done to make a museum deaf-friendly. We are happy to share with you this White Book, which is the result of 2 years of exchanges - 3 seminars, in 3 countries, in 3 sign languages – including, of course, input from hearing and deaf professionals or visitors.

WHAT IS DEAFNESS?

The term 'Deaf World' is often used to refer to Deaf Culture, which specifically consists of Sign Language users - including people who are deaf, hard of hearing, their closest family, interpreters, teachers and others who use Sign Language in their communication. As a cultural group, the Deaf World therefore includes more than the deaf and, as a minority culture, it is partly inside and partly outside the mainstream national culture.

Deafness and Deaf Culture are not necessarily neatly aligned with each other. Within the Deaf Community there are different factions with different approaches to deafness - notably 'Deaf' and 'deaf'; the capital D makes a difference. Deaf mute, deaf and dumb, hearing impaired - the choices are many and not without consequences. The words used in the discourse on deafness are just as important as those within other minority discourses concerned with sexuality, ethnicity, gender, class and so on. The ill-famed 'deaf and dumb', went out of use decades ago, but still lingers on in the media. Deaf people are not dumb, in any sense of the word; neither are they 'mute'. Some deaf and hard of hearing people use the common denominator 'hearing impaired', although this is not accepted by all.

There are distinctions between people who are born deaf, those who have acquired deafness after they have learnt a language, and people who are hard of hearing. Also deaf people themselves have different views on 'deafness as disability' versus 'deafness as culture', and some feel caught between the expectations to be integrated into mainstream society and the demands from their own culture expressed through visual communication. For people who are born deaf in particular, spoken language in its written form is a foreign language.

Most deaf people have some residual hearing which can be exploited by hearing aids, cochlear implants and other hearing technology. But even with residual hearing, they will often hear too poorly to function in a speech-language group, where background ambient noise is commonplace. It is usually estimated that 0.1% of any population are deaf.

KEY FIGURES[1]

	UK	France	Norway
Inhabitants	63 million	65 million	5 million
People with hearing disability	10 million	4.1 million	400 000
Severely or profoundly Deaf	800 000	483 000	
Deaf (born or acquired at an early age)		120 000	4 000-5 000
Deaf sign language users		80 000	
Other sign language users (including parents & professionals)			16 500

[1] Not all statistics are available.

WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY?

The UN Charter of Human Rights, Article 27.1 states that: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”. Similar language appears in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone (a) To take part in cultural life; (b) To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications; (c) To benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.”

To be able to enjoy these rights, cultural institutions must be accessible for all. Nations would have different legislation on this area, and the practices differ even within countries. Accessibility to museums is often used together with the term Universal Design, which refers to a spectrum of ideas that make buildings, products and environments inherently accessible to everybody, people with and without disabilities. In the typical museum, most of the ideas will be directed towards giving physical access to the buildings and exhibitions. The digital revolution has made museum collections available online, accessible for many - if not all.

But physical accessibility does not mean that everybody can participate in and enjoy the culture a museum provides. The content of the exhibitions may need some adjustment, or translation, to be accessible to all. Some deaf visitors have Sign Language as their first language. Sign Language differs from spoken language when it comes to words, grammar and syntax. Also, large blocks of text may cause eye strain both because of the font size and lack of contrast. So although the deaf may have easy *physical* access to a museum, the content can be more or less inaccessible.

WHY SHOULD YOU DO ACCESSIBILITY?

In addition to the UN Charter of Human Rights, each country might have legislation and regulations that make accessibility for all compulsory. In Norway, for example, such a law came into force in 2009, stating that public buildings must be accessible for all. The same goes for websites.

Most museums will benefit in many ways from working with accessibility. If you make your museum attractive to a special target group, you create new groups of visitors, and thereby generate more income and more publicity. Some of the advice given in this White Book will benefit other groups as well.

Accessibility is fun! Museum professionals and museum organisations can learn a lot from working with target groups. In the process you may realize that the stereotypes don’t fit real life, your prejudices are challenged and you get a new perspective on your everyday work. Accessibility work makes the museum an inclusive institution, and the staff themselves more inclusive people.

A JOURNEY TO THE MUSEUM

how to prepare the museum for deaf visitors

THE ARRIVAL

Get it right from the start - or Deaf visitors might go no further!

Deaf people can find it very daunting visiting a museum or visitor attraction, especially a paid-for one that requires them to buy an admission ticket. Even free museums often have a set entry process - for example a bag search - or have so much to offer that it's difficult to know where to start. Just think how difficult it can be to communicate and ask for assistance if you are in a foreign country, so how much harder it will be if you can't hear the answer whatever the spoken language.

Pre-visit information

There's no point in putting lots of effort into making your venue deaf-friendly if potential deaf visitors can't find out about it!

Most museums and visitor attractions now rely on their website to let visitors know what they offer, where they are and how much it might cost to enter. This is also where access information and any special events are highlighted.

TIPS FOR YOUR WEBSITE

- Access arrangements for deaf visitors need to be obvious on your website
- Ideally you should have basic, general visitor information available in Sign Language
- At the very least any videos on your website should be subtitled

TIPS FOR YOUR MUSEUM ENTRANCE

- Ensure information on site is easy to spot and is clearly identified
- Don't rely on your website alone. Some people like to travel independently and don't do much advanced planning so either fail to use the technology successfully because the information is inappropriate or find out about it too late into their visit

Staff training

Train them to be comfortable to communicate with deaf visitors - not to be bilingual

Hearing people find it hard to communicate with a deaf person; they seem to panic! When in a Deaf Awareness training situation, staff teams come up with some good ideas e.g. use pen and paper, ensure communication is ‘face to face’ etc. but all these ideas seem to disappear once they are back in a front-of-house position or on the desk dealing with visitors. Confidence would appear to be the issue.

Bear in mind that the same probably applies to the deaf person. They will prefer face-to-face communication so that they can lip-read but their knowledge of your spoken language may be low. And while they may also carry pen and paper with them, don’t assume they can understand your written language well or easily read your writing!

Having said that, pen and paper should be your first option and you can’t go wrong by offering it. Some deaf visitors may even present you with a scrap of paper that already has a few details on.

If you have staff who have some Sign Language skills use them, but make the identification of staff who can provide support easy. Think about providing them with labelled jackets or tabards; a ‘Sign Language user’ name badge simply isn’t big enough or visual enough.

Assisting aids

Make sure your equipment works and train your staff to use it

Many museums have installed hearing loops - but they are of no use if the staff do not know how to use them, or if they are not functioning. Have routines for checking the equipment.

Check batteries in handheld devices on a regular basis. It is such a disappointment to visitors when the expectations are not met. And honestly, it is a disappointment to the staff as well.

Front desks in the museum may be staffed by part time, temporary or voluntary personnel. Make sure that ALL are informed about what you can offer; include accessibility in the training routines for museum guides as well.

Don’t panic!

All organisations want to present a friendly face, be open-minded and adaptable - whoever they are dealing with and however they plan to do it.

So do what you can, ensure your staff receive some Disability Awareness training - and preferably some Deaf Awareness training as well - and be open to new ideas. No one will expect you to get it right first time, but they will expect you to learn from your mistakes and be open to suggestions on improvement.

If you do get it wrong, try to find out why and at what point it went wrong. Ask for ideas from the deaf person you are dealing with - if they know what the problem is they may also be able to come up with a solution. And if you are struggling to communicate with them, maybe communication is the problem. If writing things down doesn't work, try drawing pictures. If you don't know any Sign Language but could mime something, try that. You may feel a bit of a fool and that you are spending a lot of time not getting anywhere but you are also being seen to be trying.

And remember, you can't please all of the people - deaf and/or hearing - all of the time! Some people - deaf and/or hearing - are never satisfied and are just out to find fault, so don't worry if nothing seems to please an individual. As long as you learn from the experience and are flexible, you'll be appreciated by the wider community.

THE ACTUAL VISIT

Make it meaningful, accessible and enjoyable

whether it's an individual visit or a group tour, whether you use technology or not

In the exhibition

Space and lighting: many exhibitions are dark, particularly if they contain real objects as these need to be protected from damaging light. However, Sign Language users need space and light to see what they are saying. If possible have at least one area of light that an interpreter could stand in. A torch, used as a spotlight, and/or white gloves are also options to consider. And if you are providing tours in Sign Language, remember that the group will all need to be able to see the signer so providing some areas where they can stand without blocking access to other visitors is also helpful.

Loop : Make sure your equipment works

TIPS TO MAKE INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE

- Provide written information, just like for any other visitor (explaining what the point of the exhibition is)
- Use plain language « quick to read and easy to understand written language »
- Subtitle any videos
- Add videos in Sign Language in the rooms (on monitors) if you can

Guided tours (Deaf Guides / interpreted tours)

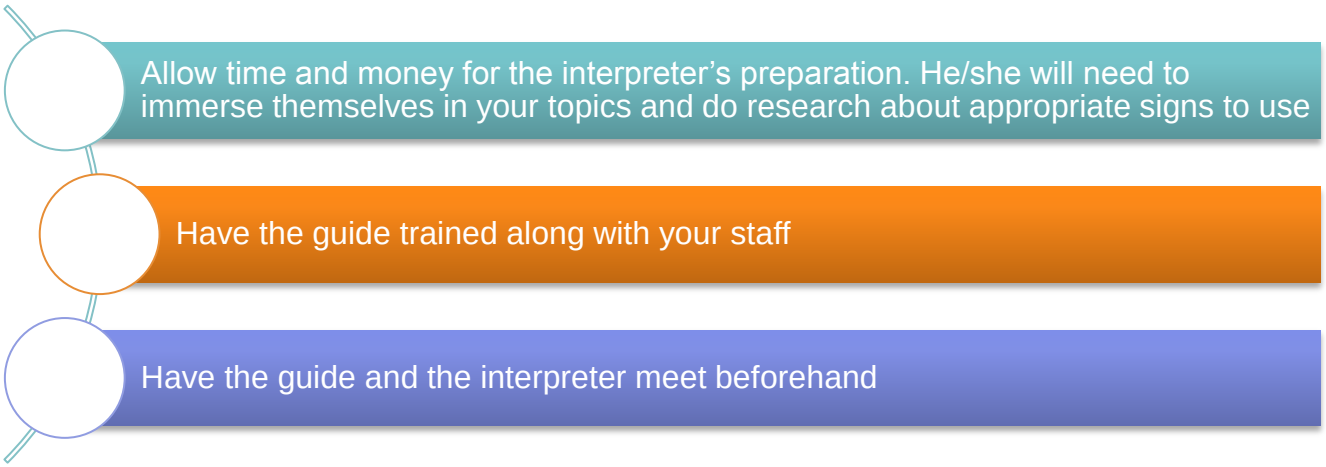
When it comes to visiting a museum, there is nothing like having a guide you can interact with. It's all the more true with deaf visitors. All three partners have experienced it: a guided tour for deaf visitors can be a social event. It often is considered as an opportunity to meet with other deaf people. Don't overlook this aspect whenever you come to programming an accessible tour.

Interpreters or Deaf Guides?

Whenever you ask deaf visitors, they will mostly prefer a Deaf Guide, giving a Sign-Language only tour. Interpreted tours can sometimes be disappointing because tour guides whose words are being interpreted often forget to allow deaf visitors time for observation, failing to remember that deaf people can't 'look' and 'listen' at the same time!

However, finding a Deaf Guide, with adequate training and knowledge, can be difficult - if not sometimes impossible! So ask other museums who they're working with. You can also train motivated deaf people to become guides: Tate Modern (UK) and Signes de sens (France) have experience of this.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH INTERPRETING SERVICES FOR TOURS



Historic Royal Palaces has successfully experienced a third way: an interpreter who is also an accredited guide – delivering a tour that is in Sign-Language only but can also be an interpretation of other tours and presentations taking place.

Museums in the USA, such as the Intrepid Museum in New York, hold tours with a Deaf Guide with interpreters for hearing people. What a great experience of inclusion!

Don’t take for granted that the topic the guides are talking about is immediately understood/relevant to deaf visitors. Many of the terms we use, for example, in art museums and cultural history museums do not have any specific signs - or the sign is little known in the Deaf Community. That may be caused by the generation gap: Sign Language is rarely transferred from mother to daughter and father to son, it is often among peers within the Deaf Community that Sign Language develops and evolves so that the generation gap might be bigger than in the hearing community.

Sometimes it is necessary to explain the meaning of the term in more signs than one: does the interpreter know the meaning of *expressionism* in art history? Does the deaf visitor understand what a *milkmaid* is?

If you have a script used by your guides, or a framework for your dialogue with the audience, make that available for the interpreters well ahead of the planned tour. This gives the interpreters time to prepare and ensure they can convey the meaning clearly in Sign Language. Also, if your museum has an object or piece of art of special interest to deaf visitors, make sure to include that in the tour. This might be a painting by a deaf artist, a picture of a deaf person, an object that has been used/owned/made by a deaf person or in other ways related to ‘our culture’ - to deafness and deafhood.

Deaf-Guide led tour of the King’s Guard Chamber at hannHampton Court Palace (November 2012).

A British Sign Language interpreter translated the tour into spoken English which was then translated into Norwegian and French Sign Languages by Norwegian and French interpreters.

Multimedia tours

In the last decade, many museums in Europe, and a few in North America, have engaged in buying multimedia guides in Sign Language. In most cases, the Deaf Community was disappointed (quality of videos, of the signing, etc…) and most museums ended up frustrated because few people ever used them.

So, be smart, don't do it all over again. Instead of creating multimedia projects for distinct categories of visitors, the solution is to think 'inclusive', to think 'universal design'. Think about something new, something fun, something widely accessible: that will maximize your chances to get funding and in the end to broaden your audience.

…BEFORE EVEN CHOOSING TO MAKE VIDEOS

- Make sure you know why you want to make videos
- Make sure technology is the answer to fulfill your goals
- Make sure you'll have resources for promotion and community outreach
- Translating audioguide scripts into Sign Language videos does not work!

...BEGIN

Having decided that you want to provide some sort of visual, technology-based system to make your museum more accessible to deaf visitors, don't go looking for a platform or supplier before you've worked out - and consulted on - what you want to put on your film.

Bear in mind the following three words:

- PURPOSE - who is the customer and why do they need what you are planning?
- OUTPUT - what do they expect or want at the end of it?
- PROCESS - now you can contact suppliers and start writing scripts.

It's a simple term to remember: POP!

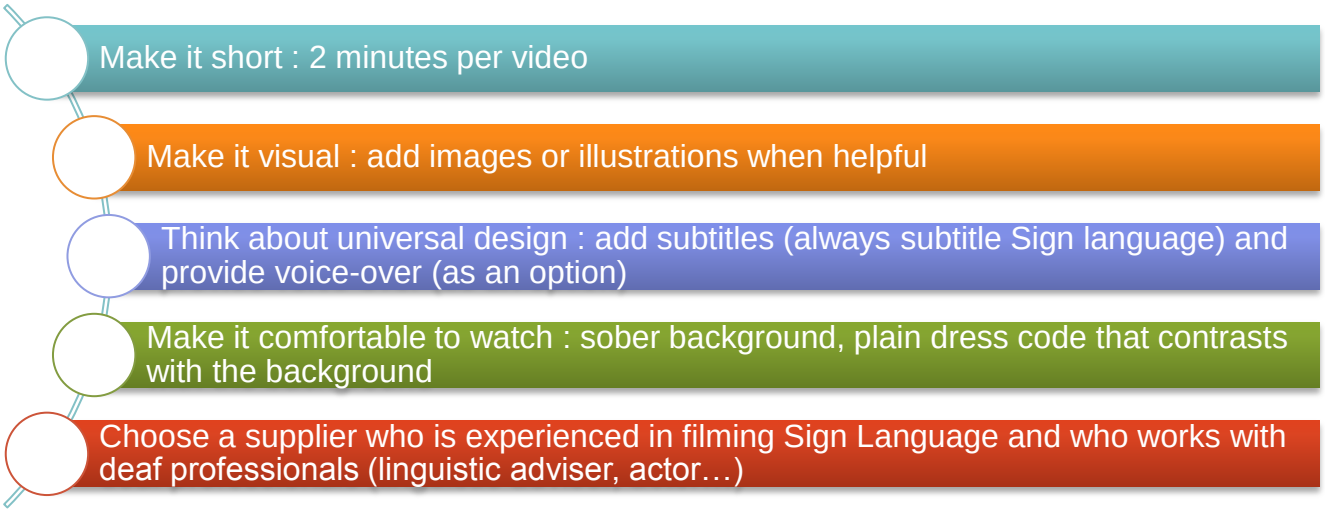
...CHOOSE YOUR TECHNOLOGY

Technology is only a means to an end… so choosing the device must come at the end of the process.

It's all too easy to choose the device or application and then create a programme to fit it. This is unlikely to give you the best outcome, and may tie you into medium or long term contracts that are expensive or aren't appropriate. Remember that if the end result doesn't work for deaf people, they won't use it - and you may become known as the museum that tried and failed rather than the one to visit because access is good!

Keep in mind that your museum should provide the device on which to watch the videos. Studies have shown that visitors are reluctant to use their own devices (i.e. their own smartphones).

TIPS FOR MAKING VIDEOS



AT THE END OF THE VISIT

Keep asking your audience what they think.

Regardless of how appreciative deaf visitors are of your efforts to make your museum accessible, there will always be improvements that can be made.

TIPS

- If you have Visitors Books or comment cards, encourage deaf visitors to fill them in. You want their positive feedback as well as any ideas for improvement!
- If you do annual or periodic visitor surveys ask deaf visitors to participate, even if you are only able to canvass them on one day when a Sign Language interpreter is present
- If you can, chat to them at the end of their visit or over a cup of coffee/tea during an afternoon refreshment break in your cafe - not just to find out what could be improved but how the offer could be developed and to get ideas for the future

A - Z

Access Panels

Why set up an Access Panel?

It's vital to have an advisory group of disabled people who can provide you with information about the real experience of living with, and getting about with, a disability. They provide a point of view you may not have thought about and can prevent you from making access mistakes that might be costly to correct; they often come up with small, simple, cheap solutions that can make all the difference.

They are also a good sounding board for ideas; you can ask their opinion before launching into something that may have little impact. Finally, they are ambassadors when you do get it right and/or have implemented one of their recommendations. Word of mouth is a powerful promotional tool!

Things to consider before you start.

COST : At Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) we pay our Access Panel members a set fee for attending meetings as they are giving up their time on our behalf. Many organisations recruit unpaid volunteers and pay them limited travel expenses. However you set them up, bear in mind that maintaining an Access Panel will involve some cost, including for making the meetings accessible to all members.

ACCESSIBILITY : You may need to pay for Sign Language interpretation at meetings to facilitate deaf access. Blind members may need minutes and agendas translated into Braille. At the very least you may want to provide refreshments. Allow for these costs before you start and plan meetings accordingly - for example, organise meetings every two months instead of every month to halve your costs if your budget won't last for a full year. Don't abandon making your site accessible halfway through because of the cost of maintaining an Access Panel.

USE : Don't give your Access Panel too large a remint. They won't be able to assist on how to improve disabled access to your building at one meeting, especially if it is a large site. Equally, don't have too little for them to do or they will lose momentum and enthusiasm. At HRP we have three panels covering five palaces: the three large sites have their own with two of the panels having 'watching briefs' over the two smaller sites as there isn't enough at those sites to justify their own Access Panels.

And don't feel you have to consult the whole panel all the time. If you are working on making something more accessible to deaf people, just consult the deaf panel members; if it is a tour for the blind, just ask the blind/partially sighted representatives.

Recruitment

You want a range of disabilities covering at least the main categories: mobility, sight, hearing. Also have a minimum and maximum number of people on your panel. A minimum of 7 still gives you enough people to have a discussion if some members can't attend a meeting; more than 12 can be difficult to manage and get a consensus from.

It's useful to have someone who always uses a wheelchair and someone who occasionally does. Balance difficulties and hidden disabilities are also good to include. The Carers perspective is good too

although you can't really justify having a 'carer' on your Access Panel unless they come in support of a disabled person. However, making their lives easier often means that the disabled person will have a better time.

You may also want to recruit a Chair and Minute Taker from within the panel. This can provide an ideal training opportunity for panel members to broaden their skills. However, please note that the Chair won't have access to site-specific data - someone within your organisation will have to send out any plans or documents in advance - and the Minute Taker can struggle to take notes and contribute to discussions. However, taking notes during the meeting can be a good way of involving a carer if the panel member they are supporting is then able to type up and circulate those notes.

If possible, recruit local people onto your panel so that they can advise on the local environment as well i.e. it's all very well you making your attraction disabled friendly if getting to it requires two bus journeys, which might put disabled people off visiting.

Recruit panel members in your normal manner with the sort of advert you would normally place for casual staff or volunteers. Produce some Terms of Reference setting out the scope, aims and objectives, as well as what is expected of panel members. It is worth re-issuing/re-confirming these each time there is a change of membership.

Having recruited your Access Panel, what next?

You can either meet regularly or periodically. At Historic Royal Palaces, our Access Panels generally meet once a month but we only get together if we have something to talk about or ask them. Some museums meet their Access Panel once a year, others as demand dictates - maybe weekly for a short period and then not at all for months.

Advise your panel which you intend doing at the start so that they know and don't think you've forgotten them if you want to meet annually. It also means they can forward-plan to ensure your meeting is in their diary.

Their advice is best applied at the beginning of a project, at the tender and design stage so that access ideas can be built into a programme. It's generally too late once the build has begun for them to offer ideas and suggests. It's also nice to schedule a meeting at the end of the project so that they can see the results of their comments.

Make sure your meeting room is fully accessible! Sounds obvious but it has been known for meetings to be arranged in rooms that can't be reached by wheelchair, or are too dark for anyone with partial sight to see any papers or the deaf person to see their Sign Language interpreter.

If you don't yet have anywhere accessible - and maybe that is why you've recruited an Access Panel - then make reasonable adjustments. Hold the meeting outside under a gazebo or in the café. Beware of background noise, though; it can be difficult sustaining a meeting in a noisy environment. Access Panels will be tolerant if building work is going on but only for a short time.

Each person will come with their own needs upper-most in their mind. They probably won't be aware that accommodating their needs may have a detrimental impact on someone else with different needs. Give panel members time to adjust to the needs of other disabled people, which may mean that your first few meetings are as much about getting to know each other as about access advice.

Begin - how to begin?

Don't panic! Consult with the deaf. A museum probably can't do it by itself so various partners will be needed e.g. deaf-run organisations who can rewrite audio scripts to make them 'deaf-friendly' and therefore more accessible and easier to understand.

Bring in experts with specialist knowledge (or provide access to it as a minimum) so that deaf people aren't on the receiving end of a poorer offer than other visitors.

Might seem strange but no Sign Language is probably better than poor Sign Language!

Anything visual is a help e.g. the recent listing of paintings held within private collections in the UK now viewable on the internet means deaf and hearing people can access the information in the same manner.

Projects - whether access related or interpretation orientated - are much more successful when deaf people are involved from start to finish.

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How Hampton Court Palace started with access for deaf visitors

Captioning

Captioning is popular in theatres where the script is projected onto a screen - either above the stage or to one side. Different colours are used to indicate who is talking and sounds or stage directions (i.e. *doorbell rings*) are shown in italic. It is particularly helpful to people who are hard of hearing who may hear some of the production but not all of it and for whom it confirms the missing text.

It is now routinely used at opera venues in the UK where it not only translates the original language of the opera (often Italian) into English but also helps the audience 'hear' the performance when the volume of the orchestra threatens to drown out the singers. Opera lovers can keep up with what the singers are singing about and so appreciate the drama all the more. Productions of Shakespeare's plays often benefit from captioning as the 16th Century language can be difficult to translate into meaningful Sign Language.

Having captioning at the side of the stage or above it is also an example of a different cultural experience being translated into the native language of those present. An example was cited at our London Project Conference where a delegate from Latvia described how she had seen a theatre production that had been in spoken Russian but was captioned in Latvian so the Deaf in the audience could experience the play in a written language they understood. It also benefitted those hearing Latvians whose knowledge of Russian was limited.

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Speech-to-Text Transcription and Subtitles

Deafness and Deaf Culture

Deafness and Deaf Culture are not necessarily neatly aligned with each other. Within the Deaf Community there are different factions with different approaches to deafness - notably 'Deaf' and 'deaf'; the capital D makes a difference. Deaf mute, deaf and dumb, hearing impaired - the choices are many and not without consequences. Words have many meanings, they convey attitudes and prejudices and may hurt, even when used in a well-intended context. The words used in the discourse on deafness are just as important as those within other minority discourses concerned with homosexuality, ethnicity, gender, class and so on. During the time we have worked with the Museum of Deaf Culture and History in Norway, we have found it necessary to revisit definitions and the terms we used at the outset and to change our use of certain words. We do not, of course, use the ill-famed 'deaf and dumb', which went out of use decades ago, at least amongst the well-informed, but which lingers on in the media. Deaf people are not dumb, in any sense of the word; neither are they 'mute'. Some deaf and hard of hearing

people use the common denominator ‘hearing impaired’, although this is not accepted by all. In a Norwegian study, Haualand, Grønningsæter and Skog Hansen (2003) found:

“Thirty nine per cent of the respondents said they identified themselves as ‘Deaf’ and 60% said they identified themselves as ‘hard of hearing’ or ‘hearing impaired’. Language competence appeared to be strongly connected with self identification. Of those identifying as hard of hearing/hearing impaired, 91% said they had Norwegian as their best language, while 80% of those saying they were Deaf had NTS (Norwegian Sign Language) as their best language. Approximately 80% of all respondents know both NTS and both/either written and spoken Norwegian.”

There are distinctions, both practical and cultural, between people who are born deaf, those who have acquired deafness after they have learnt a language, and people who are hard of hearing. In the museum we have a need for definitions that are either intended to create discussions and reflections or that can be used in specific contexts in order to help clarify and explain different elements in the museum exhibition or educational programme. Also deaf people themselves have different views on ‘deafness’ as disability versus ‘Deafness’ as culture, and some feel caught between the expectations to be integrated into mainstream society and the demands from their own culture.

Funding

The amount of money a museum has to spend on visitor facilities - for everyone, not just the deaf - will vary from country to country depending on their local funding arrangements (i.e. state funded, self-financing, etc.). Opportunities for sponsorship of specific projects will also vary from place to place - within countries as well as across them. However, museums shouldn’t use their financial position as an excuse for not doing anything; there is always something a museum could do to improve deaf access irrespective of the size of their budget.

Examples:

- Keep the language on websites and in brochures as clear and precise as possible.
- When making new materials, either physical or digital, if you can’t add a Sign Language video use plain language and be as precise as possible.
- Have a written manuscript/guide available for Sign Language users - and let your staff know that you have it.

These things don’t cost much extra and when you integrate deaf access into the planning process it does not involve as much extra effort as when you have to add it after the project is finished.

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Plain Language

Hard of hearing needs

Most people get reduced hearing as they age. Some of them use hearing aids, but not all, and most don't use Sign Language. In museums we can't always choose spaces with the best acoustics as we have to conduct guided tours wherever the 'history takes us'. For people with hearing aids, a hearing loop is a very great help.

Generally it is important that a guide talks clearly and allows for lip-reading. Lip-reading can be a support when the hearing is reduced, so remember not to mumble or hide your mouth when speaking. If there is a microphone available: use it! Do not trust that your voice carries so well that you do not need a microphone. Even if most people easily can hear you, there are many who can't. And they do not always protest when you ask: "Can everybody hear me?". It can be because they are embarrassed or shy - or maybe they do not hear you!

Hearing loops

People who use hearing aids benefit from hearing loops. These can be either stationary or mobile. As mentioned elsewhere, hearing loops are of no use if the battery is flat, if it is not turned on, or if the staff do not know how to use it. So get all your loops checked regularly, preferably weekly, and train your staff in how to use them and turn them on.

Interpreters

You may need to pay for Sign Language interpretation to facilitate deaf access. In some countries it is a free service; in others interpreters are freelance and self-employed so need to be paid by you!

Either way, you will need to pre-book an interpreter so a degree of pre-planning is essential.

If possible, consult with the interpreters in advance of an event/programme and make manuscripts and other material available for the interpreters in advance to ensure the best possible interpretation. Remember that not all concepts and terms used in your museum are immediately understandable to others - and that includes the interpreters.

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How to organise an international seminar involving deaf people

Involve the deaf audience

No matter what your personal experience - whether you have family or friends who are D/deaf or are D/deaf yourself - you, as a museum practitioner, won't be able to come up with all the answers. Despite what you might like to think, you will be too close to the product - more concerned with ensuring that what you produce is accurate and not how others might see it. So involve the end-users.

This may sound obvious, but is easily overlooked. Hearing people, with all the best will and intentions in the world, won't necessarily make the best decisions for the deaf - they need their advice and input!!

TIPS

- If you already have an Access Panel, then start with the deaf person/people on that - simply ask their opinion of what you plan to do, and ask them to ask their friends.
- If not, contact some deaf groups (i.e. Deaf Clubs or Deaf Sports Groups) to get their feedback.
    - This can be daunting if you can't use Sign Language or don't know any deaf people who could provide an introduction so it might be worth contacting some Sign Language interpreters, which you could do via an agency, to see if they know of a way in.
- If you already have deaf visitors - perhaps you provide people-led guided tours - speak to them.
    - Again, this may require the services of an interpreter but you could also produce a feedback form to be filled in.
- You may be able to use Social Media to canvass opinion.
- A brief online search may locate some deaf-led companies who would be worth approaching for advice. They may have some user-groups already set up, and would certainly be able to advise you on what to consider.
    - But bear in mind that they will also be after your business! If you are going to produce a hand-held device, they will want to produce it and won't be too free with their assistance in the early stages - but they will certainly have the expertise to do a proper, high-quality job so the benefit of involving them may outway the cost.

LEARN MORE PAGE 37

Comment cards

Keep it visual

Space, image, object, etc. is crucial as deaf people gain most of their information using their visual sense. So focus on the visual elements of any presentation. Direct translation of a written script into Sign Language does not work - unless the script has been written for the radio!

Languages

Sign Language is a language in its own right, with its own syntax, vocabulary and grammar. Sign language develops wherever Deaf Communities exist. And contrary to what many believe it is not international: discover how Sign Language can be different: http://www.spreadthesign.com.

What is called International Sign (IS) is a kind of 'pigdin' Sign Language, and not a separate language. It is often used at international conferences and events as a supplement to other languages.

Some Sign Language users are able to understand another national Sign Language, if signed clearly and in a paced manner. Lip-reading is a support in international communication, provided they know the words in the foreign language.

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Interpreters

Manuscripts

Do you have a manuscript of the guided tour? Consider if this can be made available in a readable form for your deaf visitors. But do not give them a long, detailed, unedited script of your audio tour - they don't want to spend their whole visit reading. If you can incorporate pictures into the manuscript - perhaps removing descriptions of objects in favour of an image - that is even more helpful.

A manuscript is also very useful to interpreters. Consider if you can make it available on your website, or at least provide an email address where it can be obtained.

Networking

Working as an Access Officer and/or a Deaf Guide can be a lonely task and our project seminars clearly revealed the frustration on both sides (the Deaf Community and the museum staff) when a relationship has been established and lots of work, research etc. has gone into improving accessibility but the information seems to go with the person when the Access Officer leaves to go to another job!

Building up relationships between museums and the Deaf Community is vital and establishing a network of Access Officers and/or Deaf Guides helps sustain the work done in the past and carry it forward into the future i.e. provide the consistency and continuity required.

Objectives

Before starting anything, in access matters as in any project, identify your objectives! Then how you plan to meet them - and include deaf people in your plans!

Promotion

Make it clear and visual:

- Avoid long and complex sentences
- Write in plain language
- Make it visual (use pictures that are relevant to what you want to promote)
- Make it in Sign Language whenever you can

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ON PROMOTING

Can too many people turn up because lots of people share information on Facebook?

There is often a lot of interest from Facebook users but they do not necessarily turn up so most museums now require email booking in advance to ensure an audience.

A museum in Paris uses lots of methods but has found Facebook and video release is the best - they've been getting more visitors since they started using this in February 2012. There are pros and cons - they found people said they were coming but didn't turn up, or they simply didn't tell them, but lots did come so it has been successful for them.

So what is the best way of attracting young deaf people?

One of our London delegates commented that he is an active member in a Deaf Association, Deaf Sports Club and cultural clubs for the deaf. In the last 6-7 years he has found paper notices attached to walls to advertise events or email/Facebook promotion do not necessarily work with young deaf people so he has been discussing this with them. They have agreed that Sign Language is the best way and so he has to record the information, but he has noted that email is being used more and more by young people.

We are living in an increasingly visual world with more electronic based communication and so posters etc. seem 'old hat'. This applies to all of us not just the Deaf Community! However posters are a good basis and the more ways there are the better.

Museums often need to be creative to attract young people and to get them to the venue in the first place e.g. 'Saturday Night Fever' – organise dancing as well as visiting the place.

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Plain language

Pictograms

Deaf people like visual references and pictures, or pictograms, tell a thousand words. Use the proper pictograms for your activities and remember to specify whether it's accessible to Sign Language users, and/or to people using hearing aids.

In most countries, you'll find (more or less) two official 'deaf' pictograms:

- one with an ear => specific to hard of hearing people
- one with hands => Deaf who use Sign Language

Make it clear if you have Sign Language, subtitles and/or voice-over. You may not have official, national pictograms for these but this doesn't mean you shouldn't mention them!

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Historic Royal Palaces & pictograms

Plain language

Over the decades we've got used to reading documents that are in an official style of writing which is inefficient and often unfriendly. It can also come across as patronising or complicated. The Plain English Campaign has worked for years to encourage organisations to think about the reader so that their message is clear, concise and has the right tone of voice (usually a friendly and thoughtful tone).

There are some basic guidelines that everyone can follow:

- Keep sentences short - you'll get your message across better if sentences are limited to 15-20 words.
- Use active verbs, not passive ones. In other words put the subject before the verb and object so that the sentence isn't clumsy or too wordy. It is particularly important that sentences aimed at a deaf audience aren't clumsy or contain too many words as British Sign Language generally puts the object first for clarity!
- Use 'we' and 'you' as these are more friendly.
- Say exactly what you mean, using simple words. This does not mean 'dumbing down' or not using long words, just words that the reader will understand.
- Avoid using jargon unless you are specifically writing to people who will understand it. The same goes for abbreviations.

- Use lists with bullet points to break up instructions.
- Be professional, not emotional. Even if you have to be firm you can be helpful and polite as well.

So when writing anything - whether it is a leaflet, a letter or a piece of museum interpretation - think about your reader before you start writing and use everyday English that they will understand. And, while you shouldn't assume they are ignorant, they may not understand the subject or have the same background knowledge as you.

For more information about the Plain English Campaign and their fight for crystal-clear communication - and to view their extremely helpful guides - please visit their website: http://plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html

Similar advice about Plain Norwegian can be found at: SPRÅKRÅDET om KLARSPRÅK.

Sign Language on film

Access to technology has improved greatly and this has resulted in museums uploading 'home videos' so they can use Sign Language to promote events etc. This can result in poor quality and be off-putting so some basic ground rules need to be included.

- If you are planning to turn an audio tour into a Sign Language video, please note that direct translation of an audio tour script into Sign Language does not work! You need to focus on the visual elements of any presentation as space, image, object, etc. is crucial to deaf people who gain most of their information via their visual sense.
- There should also be a consensus on the signs associated with the museum - using a focus group to define them is a good idea especially as new signs may need to be devised.
- Unfamiliar signs will need to have a bit of background explanation, which may eat into your video time.
- 'Expert knowledge' should be translated by deaf people as a straight translation of the transcript may not provide the clarity and comprehension that deaf people may need to understand the subject.
- The person signing needs to be framed properly so the signing and any other visual information is clear.
- Using a deaf person for whom Sign Language is their first language provides more animated signing but don't ignore Sign Language interpreters who can be good for little known subjects.
- If you have a number of videos, ideally you want to use different people each time or at least for each theme i.e. one person for information videos, someone else for transcriptions of audio tours, etc. If deaf people don't like someone's signing - whether it's a deaf person or a hearing Sign Language interpreter on the film - they won't watch regardless of how interesting or useful the information is.
- Videos - and this goes for all videos, not just Sign Language ones - need to be short (1-2 minutes - 3 minutes maximum).
- Use common sense: if the person signing something takes 5 minutes to get through the 'script' then the script is too long. Don't speed the film up to make it fit the 1-2 minute video timings as this will render the Sign Language unintelligible.
- Subtitles should be used on all information videos but should be optional on films that are translating audio or written information. Not all deaf people are happy with both Sign Language and

subtitles; however using subtitles for finger-spelling is an excellent third option as this is hard to see on most videos.

- Sign Language videos need careful lighting so body shadows are not created.
- Using plain language is helpful for everyone.
- Create a set of guidance notes that includes length, lighting, framing, speed.
- Finally, remember that all signing should be descriptive: is the object the size of a door or the size of a postage stamp?

Pay attention to contrasts:

Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (USA)
http://americanart.si.edu/education/asl/

Whitney Museum, New York (USA)
http://whitney.org/Education/Access/Vlogs

Adding images can be helpful but be careful; the signer must contrast with the background.

Musée de Seine et Marne, France

Videos are great but aren't they expensive to produce?

Yes and no! It depends on the complexity of the message you want to get across. You can easily use a smartphone or a small video recorder if you want a video in Sign-Language only. If you want to add logos, texts or subtitles, it may take more time and require specific skills.

So don't forget that leaflets and flyers still have a place, especially when spreading the word via local Deaf Clubs which tend to include those who do not have or do not want to use the internet and/or Facebook. Remember not everyone uses the internet on a regular basis. We need to adapt to our local audiences and the way they get and send information. It may be lots of work but it is a good way to reach lots of people. We also need to note that it is not just young deaf people who are not going to museums - it is all young people.

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« Muséo »

Speech-to-text transcription

- Speech-to-text transcription and display is a way of providing access to talks, meetings and conferences for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people. Using the latest technologies, the spoken words are displayed instantaneously so that everyone attending enjoys full access to the event.
- It is also useful to people whose first language is not English and, in the case of museums and galleries, anyone with an academic interest in art and cultural activities.
- A specially trained speech-to-text reporter (STTR) creates a live, verbatim transcription of talks and discussions using a special shorthand, phonetic keyboard and a computer with the required software. The speakers' words appear on either a large projection screen or TV screen so that deaf, deafened and hard of hearing delegates can follow the talk and join in any discussions afterwards.
- STTRs can produce a word-for-word account of what is being spoken at speeds of more than 200 words a minute. They may also give additional information, such as *[laughter]* or *[applause]* to keep the deaf people informed of the mood of the talk or meeting.
- Accuracy of the text is very high (95%) as long as the STTR has received the relevant information in advance. In order to provide a high quality transcription service, the STTR will need a summary of the talk(s) - especially any key words and proper names - plus the names of any speakers. They then put these into the dictionary in the speech-to-text software prior to the talk.
- In order to provide live speech-to-transcription at an event, it is essential that the STTR can hear all the speakers clearly without unnecessary visual or audio distraction. This can be achieved by them sitting somewhere suitable in the venue itself, or remotely via an audio link. Using a hand-held microphone for Question & Answer sessions will improve audibility, but if one is not available the Chair or speaker should repeat any questions before responding. It's good practice to repeat questions before answering them, anyway.
- The speech-to-text is displayed or projected onto screens which should be positioned so that deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people can read them clearly and comfortably.
- If it is not possible to have the STTR in the room, or even in the same building, the service can be provided via an audio link from the event location. The live data is fed back to screens on site.

Subtitles

As a general rule, subtitles should be used on all information videos but should be optional on films that are translating audio or written information.

Not all deaf people are happy with both Sign Language and subtitles; using subtitles for finger spelling is an excellent third option as this is hard to see on most videos.

Subtitles/captioning are now routinely used at opera venues in the UK to translate the language of the opera (often Italian) into English. The captioning is usually above the stage and pre-typed so that it matches the opera text.

Train your staff

Basic Deaf Awareness training is really important for all front of house staff. Having some staff with more specialized Sign Language knowledge as well is the best possible option. Invite front line staff, the people who meet the visitors first and are the first face to welcome people, to attend a 'crash course' in how to communicate with people who do not hear.

The Deaf Museum in Norway has put together a course containing the following elements:

1) What?

- What is universal design
- What is accessibility
- What is deafness, Sign Language and who are the deaf

2) Who?

- Let your deaf co-workers meet the front-line staff, or invite people from local deaf organizations to be present. Take a tour in an exhibition together, look at lighting, space, etc.

3) How?

- Meet the Sign Language interpreters. Invite an interpreter to talk about their work
- How to book an interpreter / where are they / what do they do
- How to use an interpreter

4) Practical exercises in visual communication - try to communicate as non-hearing

This is not an advanced or expensive course and any museum could do it in cooperation with deaf organisations and/or Sign Language interpreters. It does not cost a lot, but it will make a world of difference both to deaf visitors and to the front-line personnel receiving people who are deaf.

Universal design

Universal design makes life *more convenient for everyone*.

"Universal design means: the design of products, environments, programs and services in such a way that they can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Universal design shall not exclude assistive devices for specific groups of people with disabilities when it needs it." (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

A very useful site with information about universal design in Norwegian is available from Deltasentret.

Universal design is not only important in our physical environment, but also on the web. Is your website accessible?

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Web accessibility

Web accessibility

“Web accessibility refers to the inclusive practice of making websites usable by people of all abilities and disabilities. When sites are correctly designed, developed and edited, all users can have equal access to information and functionality.” (source: Wikipedia)

For hearing impaired and deaf people, international rules of web accessibility don’t say much!

So remember:

- subtitle any videos
- write in plain language
- make the pages about access programmes accessible and easy to find
- add videos in Sign Language (with subtitles). For example: videos you have produced anyway for your multimedia guide

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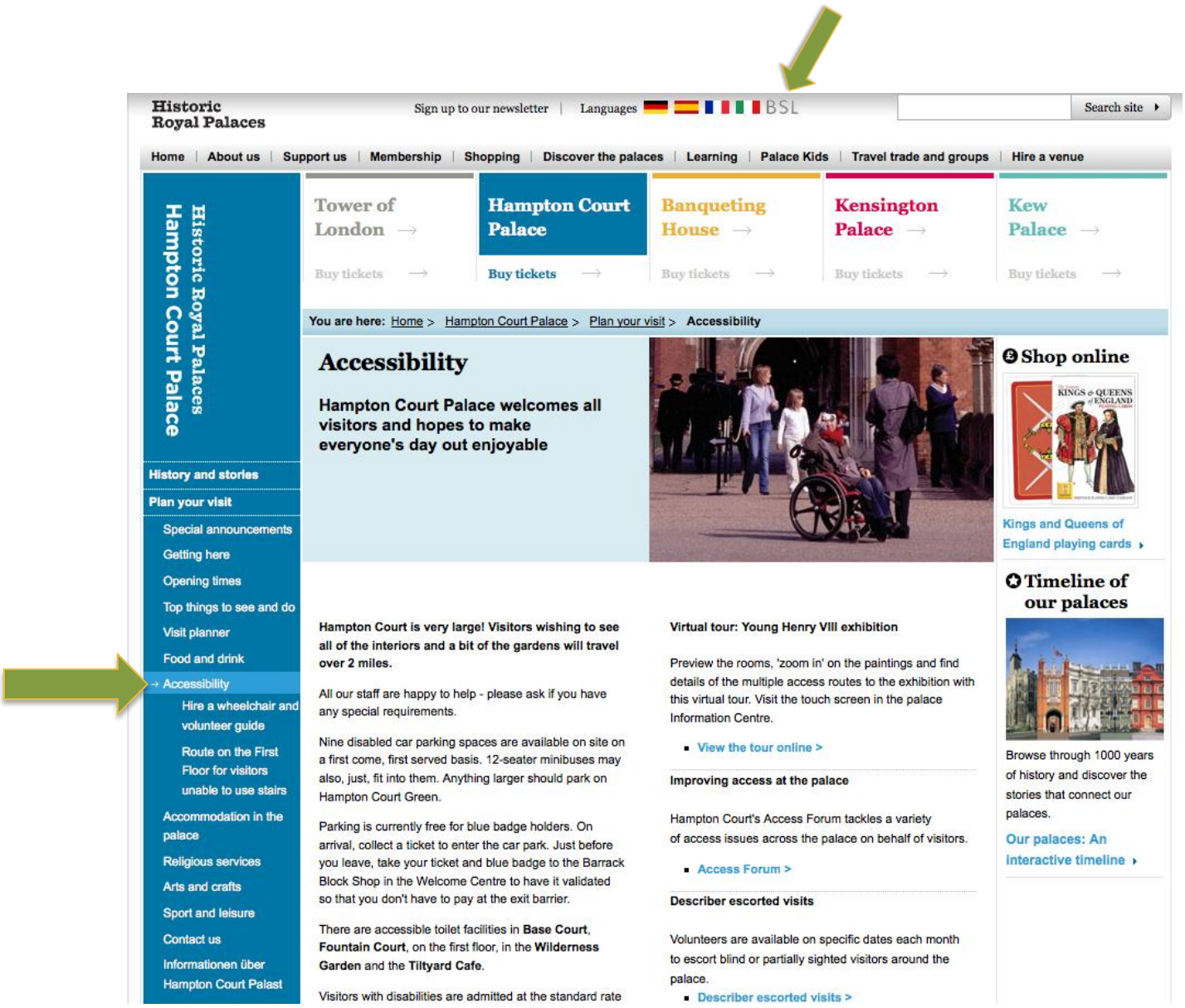
Accessible websites

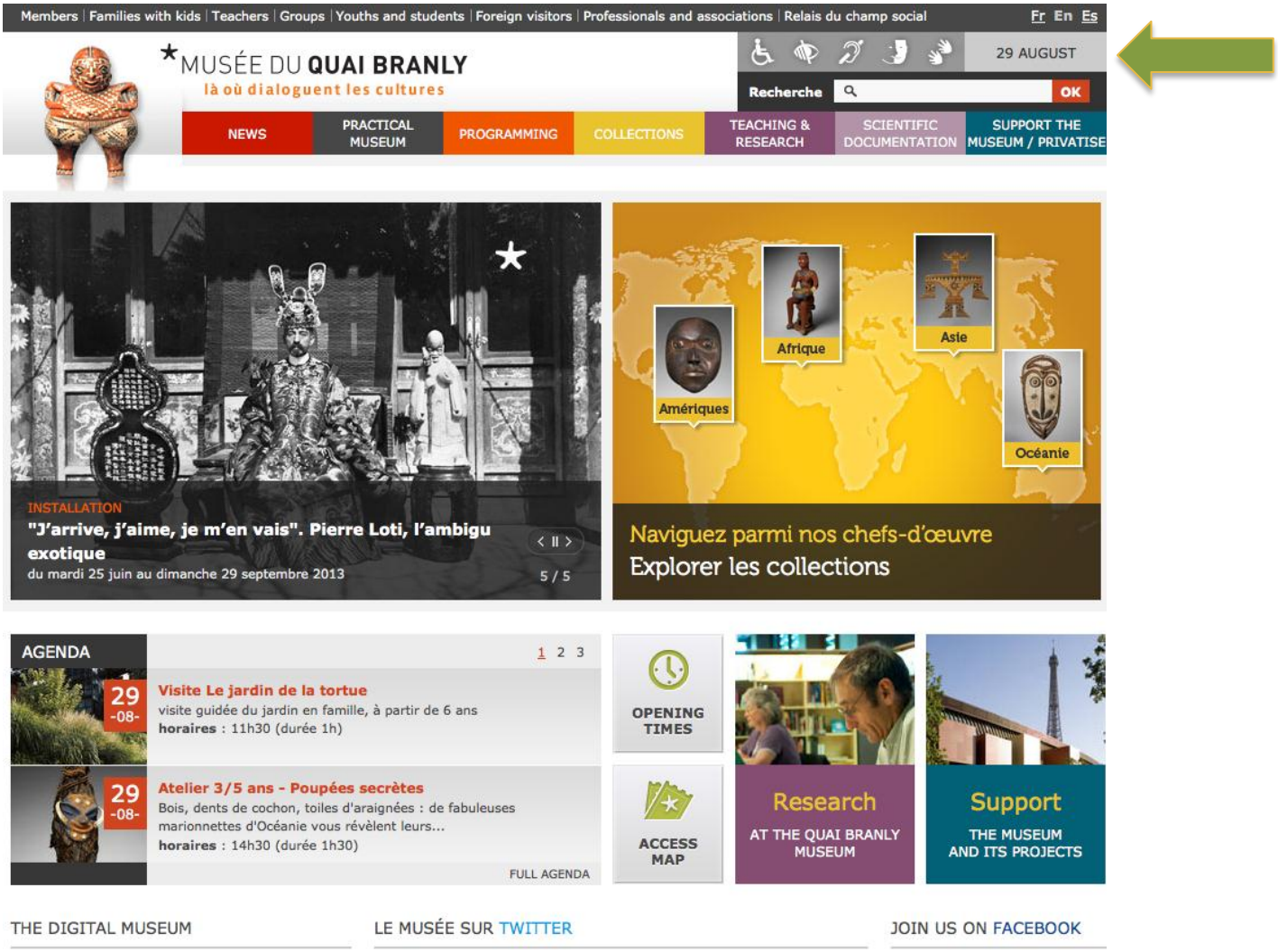
ATTACHMENTS

BEST PRACTICE

Accessible websites

Access information has to be easy to spot from the main page!




Members | Families with kids | Teachers | Groups | Youths and students | Foreign visitors | Professionals and associations | Relais du champ social
Fr En Es
MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY
là où dialoguent les cultures
29 AUGUST
Recherche
OK
NEWS
PRACTICAL MUSEUM
PROGRAMMING
COLLECTIONS
TEACHING & RESEARCH
SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTATION
SUPPORT THE MUSEUM / PRIVATISE
INSTALLATION
"J'arrive, j'aime, je m'en vais". Pierre Loti, l'ambigu exotique
du mardi 25 juin au dimanche 29 septembre 2013
5 / 5
Amériques
Afrique
Asie
Océanie
Naviguez parmi nos chefs-d'œuvre
Explorer les collections
AGENDA
1 2 3
29 -08-
Visite Le jardin de la tortue
visite guidée du jardin en famille, à partir de 6 ans
horaires : 11h30 (durée 1h)
29 -08-
Atelier 3/5 ans - Poupées secrètes
Bois, dents de cochon, toiles d'araignées : de fabuleuses marionnettes d'Océanie vous révèlent leurs...
horaires : 14h30 (durée 1h30)
FULL AGENDA
OPENING TIMES
ACCESS MAP
Research
AT THE QUAI BRANLY MUSEUM
Support
THE MUSEUM AND ITS PROJECTS
THE DIGITAL MUSEUM
LE MUSÉE SUR TWITTER
JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

Comment cards

Historic Royal PALACES

Comments Card

Let us know your thoughts on this Historic Royal Palace

We are always looking for ways to improve the experience for all our visitors and would love to hear what you thought of this Historic Royal Palace

Palace visited: _____

Date and time of visit: _____

Your comments: _____

Overall experience

Please rate the following:

	Excellent				Poor
Staff helpfulness and friendliness	1	2	3	4	5
Overall value for money	1	2	3	4	5
Overall enjoyment of your visit	1	2	3	4	5

Would you recommend this palace to a friend?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you a member of Historic Royal Palaces?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you are happy for us to contact you about your comments, please fill in your details below:

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

If you would like to receive our e-newsletter, please tick here ☐

« Muséo » - a new experience of the museum - whether you're deaf or not

Muséo was an experiment, led by Signes de sens in 2010, in the Quai Branly Museum (Paris). Since December 2012, anyone can now discover the museum's collections with 4 iPad™ applications, available on site, called "Les Experts Quai Branly".

What is Muséo?

Muséo is a multi-media concept aimed at facilitating access to cultural contents for children from 8 to 12 years old. It offers an innovative visual pedagogy based on French Sign Language (LSF), and induces a questioning on the various ways to access knowledge through information and communication technologies (ICT).

The Muséo experiment combines different techniques (multi-touch, touchless, 3D...) and social innovative uses through a didactic method based on a visual approach.

The first version of Muséo, tested in the Quai Branly Museum (Paris), links the iPad™ visit to the collections with two activities, one on a tactile multi-touch screen and the other with a system of gesture recogition in the workshops.

Knowledge transmission takes place through the visual channel: Sign Language and gesture. Animation, cartoons, drawings, off-screen voices and subtitles lead to accessibility for all.

Why?

- Because all children should have access to culture and knowledge, whatever their initial skill level is
- Because new technologies offer real opportunities to improve learning processes and to renew mediation types
- Because everyone understands gestures and images
- Because disability can be a source of innovation for all...

Muséo is for anyone who is convinced that tools have to be adapted to children, not the opposite.

What is the secret?

The originality of this project relies on the team structure and work methodology. Accessibility is not dealt with as a final-step question in the production process, with a simple translation of content to Sign Language but as our initial reference point in the conception. We worked with professional software developers for the technical part and with a scientific referee for the content.

No project without partnership.
Our first experiment took place thanks to the support of the Vivendi's « Create Joy » programme and to the French Ministry of Culture and Communication's « Services numériques culturels innovants » 2010 programme (Laureate of the call for projects 2010). The Quai Branly Museum welcomed the project and put its resources at our disposal to try to ensure its success.

No innovation without evaluation.
A partnership has been set up with the Sciences of Communication laboratory of Valenciennes and Hainaut-Cambrésis to enable us to show how adapted multimedia documents give back access to cognitive acquisitions previously inaccessible to specific people (deaf visitors in particular); it leads to their rehabilitation in a social community with a common culture.

Evaluation is based on three indicators: learning urge, understanding, sharing.

Tate Modern BSL multimedia guide - the right way to do it

Tate Modern, in London, houses 20th Century and Modern Art. It opened in 2000 on the south bank of the River Thames opposite St Paul's Cathedral and is part of the 'Tate' group which operate four sites dedicated to art (Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool, Tate St Ives and Tate Modern). It is very popular with 40 million visitors to date. Entry is free but admission is charged for special, temporary, exhibitions.

Tate Modern already provides a regular programme of live tours and talks for deaf visitors.

- On the first Friday evening of each month Tate Modern provides a British Sign Language (BSL) talk, delivered either by a Deaf Guide in BSL or by a hearing guide interpreted into BSL.
- On the second Friday evening of each month Tate Modern provides a Lip-speaker interpreted talk, which is delivered by a hearing guide in spoken English, and which is supported by a Lipspeaker interpreter, portable induction loops and notes.

Their sister attraction in London, Tate Britain, offers a BSL talk on the third Friday of each month, usually provided by a Deaf Guide in BSL and which is supported by spoken English voice-over.

In addition to this, the free daily guided tours (4 at each site) are supported by portable induction loops.

In 2008/9 the Tate group discussed the possibility of creating a tour for deaf visitors with the provider of their gallery guiding handsets. They wanted to add to the live tour programme and improve access to the collection for their deaf visitors by having a self-guided tour which could be used at any time of the month.

The multimedia tour was to include the following features:

- A selection of 50 artworks from the Tate collections, interpreted into BSL video clips. It is a 'highlights tour' and does not cover everything that can be seen within the gallery
- Each artwork stop to have its own number
- A map to accompany the handset indicating where these artworks are located. The map is then updated and reprinted every time the collection is changed or re-hung
- Each stop to have a number of sub-chapters which would include video clips and "vox pops" of deaf people talking about the artworks
- The handsets to be available at Tate Modern, Tate Britain and Tate Liverpool
- The BSL video clips are subtitled into English. The subtitles can be turned on, off or on to display finger spelling only; this third option is available because the display screen on the handsets is small

Even though 50 artworks were BSL interpreted, a smaller number than that are on display at any one time due to conservation and the general rotation of displays. Usually only a third to a half of the interpreted artworks are actually on display at any one time.

To avoid continually reprogramming the guides, all 50 stops are kept permanently on the handsets and it is the paper map that is updated when re-hangs occur.

The content is in 3 or 4 short 'chapters', each 1–2 minutes long, which can be paused or rewound. A bar indicates how much has been seen and how much is left to see. Video streaming takes up much of the memory and although technology has moved on since this project started each video clip is very short.

The information is a combination of facts and opinions. The latter are deaf visitors' opinions garnered by inviting them to a 'cheese and wine' evening with the chance to talk about the artworks; this was videoed and edited prior to transfer onto the players.

Archive material, e.g. artists at work in their studios, is also available - so there is a lot of variety.

How they went about it.

Tate were lucky to receive external funding for this project from The Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust. The grant covered the project management, recruiting a media partner to undertake filming and interpreting, scriptwriting and holding a series of consultative events with deaf audiences.

The Visitor Team at Tate involved deaf people at nearly every stage of the process. There already was English Language content available for the 50 artworks chosen as well as the regular audio guide material but they didn't want to just translate them into BSL as they wanted deaf peoples' viewpoint too.

The media partner was a Deaf-led company based in London. Their scriptwriters helped to rewrite the English Language scripts so that they were ‘deaf-friendly’ and therefore were more accessible and easier to understand. Subtitles were added to include those deaf people for whom BSL is not their first language. As subtitles can be distracting when watching BSL they made sure that the subtitles could be turned off.

The multimedia guides were cutting-edge design when launched and Tate produced a lot of marketing and publicity to promote them. There was therefore a good take-up with about 20-30 people per month initially - not all of them natural art lovers!

Possible problems and suggestions for improvements – what they would do if they were to start the project again!

Tate have a contract with an audio tour / multimedia supplier whose staff run the distribution point; although skilled at communication and customer care - and they were given Deaf Awareness training - a high staff turnover, as staff are sent to other museums, means that it is questionable as to whether the staff are as Deaf Aware as it is necessary for them to be. Consequently, Tate needs to run regular Deaf Awareness training sessions for this team.

The multimedia guide is a bit complicated to use. The keypad is small, it doesn’t always respond quickly and there are rules for its use as it is a piece of technology. So there are also user issues; the first page of the guide is a tutorial in BSL on how to use it!

With regard to the content, the scripts were reworked so that they would be easier to sign but they are scripts of about 34% opinion and 66% facts. If doing it again they would include more deaf opinion (66%) and fewer facts (34%) because users are finding the deaf opinion the most/more interesting. They would also have more content created by deaf people, rather than do what they did which was to re-edited existing content and then translate it into BSL.

SHARING EXPERIENCE

How Hampton Court Palace started with access for deaf visitors

A costumed guided tour of Henry VIII's Apartments, lasting two hours, was arranged and a BSL interpreter, from an agency, was booked. A local Deaf Club was invited to go on this pilot tour and then give feedback on how they had found the experience - what had worked and what didn't. We found the local Deaf Club via a colleague who knew someone who attended.

Our next step was then to advertise these tours of Henry VIII's Apartments as being available on a monthly basis, using a BSL interpreter who had a real interest in history and the palace. The tours lasted 1½ - 2 hours.

We very quickly received more feedback: "If I pay the same price for my ticket as hearing people, and the ticket is valid all day, I want more than two hours". This led to us introducing access to a BSL interpreter for a full day, which quickly became a full weekend! We now include a qualified Deaf Guide in the programme and offer it on the second weekend of every month. Additional dates can be booked in advance if required.

Personal stories from our London seminar (November 2012)

MARK:

My name is Mark and I am a big believer of experiential learning. So here is my own personal experience of museum access.

I am from a deaf family, in fact I am 6th generation Deaf. I had a somewhat typical upbringing - I had a great family life which included many family outings, trips to the seaside, parks, etc. In all of these outings we rarely went to a 'museum'. I did enjoy visiting the Imperial War Museum in London as a small boy, I loved seeing the planes hanging from the ceiling and climbing on the tanks. We wouldn't really visit the 'arty' museums - I never went to London's Natural History Museum and to be honest I don't think I stepped into an art gallery until I worked with Tate Modern as an adult!

From about 2002 things started to change. A handful of museums and galleries started to provide British Sign Language (BSL) interpreted tours. This was fantastic! I could finally access what other people had been accessing. The only downside was that we usually only had one session in which we could attend - normally the first Friday of every month. This was still better than no provision, and I certainly wasn't complaining, but it meant there was a big rush and you were herded along like sheep!

Then came the translation of 'hand held devices' - BSL versions of audio guide scripts. BSL users now had the chance to go to a museum when they wanted; I could simply arrive and ask for the BSL tour, no more waiting for a scheduled tour. At last we were equal to every other visitor.

JEAN:

Jean loves visiting museums and is a member of The National Trust and English Heritage as well as Historic Royal Palaces. Although she likes to have a Sign Language interpreter present as she often has lots of questions to ask, she is happy to be independant and go on her own. She has had both negative and positive experiences!

Negative - Jean went to an attraction on the south coast of England with a hearing friend mid-week. She couldn't judge facial expression on arrival and she paid the full admission price. She returned to the admission point after they spotted other visitors wearing headphones to make enquiries about information and learned that they have an audio tour which is included in the admission price. As this wouldn't be appropriate for her, she was given an enormously thick script of the audio tour. However, she couldn't make sense of it or relate it to what she saw so she gave it back, receiving the response 'Oh Ok'! They walked round and round and found it hard to relate the information to what they could see which was, visually, very beautiful. It was not enjoyable but she did get something from her visit: she found the ideal booklet in the gift shop at the very end! It would have been helpful to have had a copy, with a 'Not for resale' sticker on it, at the start. Jean acknowledged that deaf people cannot expect everything they want in this hearing world but just printing out the transcript of the audio tour does **not** work. At the very least remove obvious hearing references (like 'press the green button when you are in the next room' - there's no green button on the printed page so change it to 'carry on reading')!

Positive - at an English Heritage property Jean found that many of their staff and volunteers were happy to try communicating face-to-face with her. They did very well and were comfortable with gestures etc. There is information to read in each room and the volunteers were generally very patient too. More Deaf Awareness training would still be beneficial but at least they tried. While it is desirable for some staff to have more specialized knowledge of Sign Language, it is really important for all front-of-house staff and volunteers to have had some Deaf Awareness training so that they feel confident trying to communicate.

‘Mind the Gap’ at Rockheim - how do deaf visitors experience a music museum?

By Helene Møllevik and Hanna Mellemsether

In the autumn of 2011, the Norwegian Deaf Museum invited 14 deaf people on a visit to Rockheim, the Norwegian museum of pop and rock music. This museum is one of the most visited cultural institutions in Trondheim, and is known for its high-tech exhibition techniques and a multitude of interactive installations.

But how do people who are deaf experience this museum? Is music a part of Deaf Culture at all?

The Visit

The 14 deaf people that joined us at Rockheim had very different degrees of hearing loss. They were also of different ages and both genders.

We did not bring an interpreter or provide a museum guide as we wanted to explore what experience the deaf and hard of hearing visitors had when they visited the museum without having pre-booked a tour or a translator, much like hearing people do when they visit any museum. Could this interactive high-tech exhibition communicate to deaf visitors? Do deaf visitors experience any level of learning through such a visit?

We walked through the exhibition at Rockheim together, sharing thoughts and opinions as we walked. We finished the visit in less than an hour. Hearing visitors to Rockheim may spend three hours or more, and still feel that they didn’t get it all.

Rockheim is an auditory experience - but also a visual one with flashing lights, big screens with videos, touch-boards with written information; there are lots of possibilities for interaction. The interaction however is dependent upon explanation about how to use the technology. No such instructions were available for the deaf people. And most of the videos were without text, which further limited the experience for our visitors. Although some of them recognized famous artists, they did not connect memories or knowledge of the connection to their own culture. It was a foreign country.

As we went through the museum, a gap opened between the group of deaf visitors and the exhibition. Some of them got more and more uncertain about how to use this exhibition, and some got quite bored. Hense why everyone finished the visit in less than an hour. The exhibition did not communicate very well at all.

Despite that, everybody quite enjoyed the total experience of the visit to Rockheim. They felt like pioneers, asking if they were the first group of deaf visitors ever to see this museum. Deaf people are like most people, different individuals with different degrees of understanding of culture and music in general. If you are born deaf it is obviously more difficult to relate to a hearing culture like the culture of music than if you went deaf later in life so had some hearing early on.

After the visit everybody was asked to complete a questionnaire about the visit and their relationship to music in general. The bulk of the group answered that they do not experience music in any way. A small part of the group regularly listens to music in private, with friends or at a disco. Others *feel* music as vibrations, and they like to dance when the music is loud and they can feel the bass. Only a few answered that they recognized some of the musicians, videos and pictures. And only one said that the exhibition evoked memories from childhood and adolescence.

At the end of the visit, the group concluded that they were impressed with the museum and its exhibitions. They highlighted the technology, the size and the visual parts - like most people visiting Rockheim do. Everyone in the survey answered that the museum is a “great museum”.

There’s a contradiction between the statements in the questionnaires: although the deaf said the museum was a “great experience”, the answers also showed that the group did not experience any form of learning and that part of the museum was boring and not interesting.

Conclusion

The surprising challenge for deaf people visiting Rockheim is not the fact that the museum is about music. The problem is that many of the deaf visitors do not belong to the musical culture - or the auditory culture - that Rockheim represents. In the exhibitions there is no attempt to interpret this culture to a deaf audience: the exhibition takes the auditory culture for granted and thereby misses the gap between deaf and hearing cultures.

In our opinion, this explains the paradoxes in the feedback from the deaf visitors: they appreciate the technology and the presentation of the music culture but find it hard to learn from and relate to the content. For music museums to be relevant to deaf visitors, they would need to ‘mind the gap’ between hearing and deaf culture. Knowledge of the target group is vital in order to choose the right methods for the cultural translation that could make a museum of music relevant to deaf visitors.

HANDTAG - a local project about deaf visitors to our museums MiST, Trondheim, Norway.

As part of this Grundtvig project, we did a survey about accessiblilty for the deaf in all 7 museums in MiST. For each museum we came up with some recommendations for how the museums could be made more attractive to deaf users. We looked into the museums website as well as the exhibitions, brochures and the manuscripts used by the guides.

Here are some of the general measures we proposed to the museums. Some of the things we suggest are costly and perhaps more for an ideal world than reality. But other things are simple and cost no more than some thought and maybe some adjustments.

- Website: We suggest that the museums make a short informative video in Sign Language explaining how people can reach the museum, the cost and what they may expect to find when they get there. Many museums in MiST are in small places, and it is not as simple as taking the number 1 bus or underground. Also the video should include information about how to order a tour, are there more things to experience than the exhibitions? Can you get around with your rollator/walking aid? This video would function as 'bait' to entice someone to come and also help to explain what you can expect when you arrive.

- In addition to information about the museum, the museum may also provide a bit more information about what the museum is about, such as in the form of a short film from the exhibitions. By doing that you may show both the deaf visitor and a possible interpreter which topics they might encounter so they can be prepared. Do you have a script or similar that the interpreters might find useful - make it available online or state clearly where it can be obtained.

- We also recommend making the script for guided tours available for deaf audiences. But do not simply give them a thick book! Make it attractive, easy to read and adjusted to the tours people take in the museum exhibitions.

These measures might not double the number of visitors, but could help to 'sell' the museum as a destination for deaf associations and similar organisations across the country. It may be an idea to show that you have thought about the target group: "Look, we have a script ready that interpreters can be sent in advance", "we have a script that you can take with you into the exhibition" - and make sure your staff know where it is! Everybody likes to be seen - also deaf visitors.

Making your museum accessible for Sign Language users, on site and online.
By Pål Ødegård
Written for the Norsk Døvemuseum

Introduction

To start:
The aim of this document is to identify the technological tools available, which can be used to provide public access to Sign Language material in museums.

Technology as a tool

Basically it is not important if you use Wordpress or Tumblr, YouTube or Vimeo. The technical solutions are only tools. Content and target group must be at the centre of your work. Many projects use too many resources on the technical solutions. The problem is that today's technology becomes outdated terribly fast. If all you have is a hammer, all problems look like nails. The same goes for digital communication: the choice of tool limits what you think you can build.

It is important to do things in the right order. Here are some key points:

- Let the content guide your choice of technical solution
- Do not try to reinvent the wheel. You cannot make a better mapping service than Google, or a better video sharing service than YouTube. Focus on what you can do better than anyone else - in this case Sign Language materials for museums
- Take control of your own communication! Choose solutions that can be managed by those who produce the content. The time when all publications had to go through an agency or a webmaster is long gone
- Do not be afraid of a perpetual beta phase! Test out solutions, receive feedback from testers and resource groups, and make changes. Therefore, one must choose technical platforms that are dynamic and easy to update
- Think of the digital initiative as a process, not a product
- The PC era was short. All new solutions must be designed primarily to work on handheld devices. **Mobile first**
- Choose solutions that are independent of platform. Do not lock yourself to either Android or iOS.
- Consider universal design throughout the process! Do any of the solutions exclude people who are hearing or visually impaired? Then it is a bad solution
- Competence is more important than technology
- "Content is king," is often said. But it is more accurate to say "quality content is king". It does not depend on how much information is available, but how good it is. It requires good professionals who can impart knowledge in a good manner

Developing Sign Language information for museums should, of course, imply as good a quality of the videos and the technical side as possible. But the technology is there only to serve as an

intermediary between the Sign Language communicator and the audience. Thus begins the process, with a good script and a skilled Sign Language user.

The technology should not be used as a crutch. Although museums have provided information in Sign Language, reception staff should nevertheless be trained to deal with visitors with hearing and visual impairments, and other related groups.

Video

Before filming

Writing scripts for Sign Language communication is more extensive than usual. A common way of doing it, which we used when we created an exhibition in The Deaf Museum, is writing the script for the written Norwegian first. Then we worked this into Sign Language. Ideally (if you have the skills and the resources) we would recommend that the original script is in Sign Language instead of being a translation from another language.

- Clarify the rights and permissions. Performers and camera operators must sign agreements with museums about their rights. Specify whether the final product and raw material should be subject to Creative Commons license
- Right expertise in front and behind the camera. One begins to ensure the quality of the planning phase. The person filming, must familiarize themselves with the technical framework for Sign Language communication. A Sign Language mediator must make time to practice and become familiar with the content, before getting in front of the camera

A plan to deal with the digital video and sound raw files. This is called Digital Asset Management (DAM). The system must be set up in advance and procedures must be established before it is used. The procedures include:

- Secure backup of all files on hard drives. Double backup before the memory card is formatted
- File names follow a standard format, whether they include the date, or follow a record number system
- Metadata associated with each file corresponding to data fields in the DAM system. This would include things such as date, location, actors, camera operators, etc.
- There are many different DAM solutions, but this report recommends using open source software. A DAM who communicates well with Wordpress could save work and make your workflow more elegant. Some possible options:

NotreDAM: http://notredam.org/
Razuna: http://blog.razuna.com/
Resource Space: http://www.resourcespace.org/about.php
Watchlist: http://www.opensourcedigitalassetmanagement.org/

Proper equipment

- Camera which films in full HD (1920x1080p), not interlaced, and suitable storage medium, preferably not loose. Newer DSLR cameras that film HD video will be well suited
- Sturdy tripod, preferably one with a fluid video head
- Digital audio recorder, for example Zoom H4N, or the like
- Suitable light for filming, depending on location
- Two sets of storage media, which are held separately. Most often, external hard disks. These must have USB 3.0 connection, or faster if the video clips are edited directly from them

During recording

- Sign Language actor must be well lit, with no harsh shadows
- The actor must have the most neutral clothes with colours that stand out from the background
- Section: from the hips and up. And include space for signing and placement
- No visual noise in the background. This does not mean that the background must be absolutely solid and empty, just make sure that it does not detract attention from the actor
- Actors face and hands must remain in focus. This must control the choice of aperture
- Normal lens works best: 50mm on a full frame camera
- Avoid reflection on clothing or background - run tests first
- Record audio in high quality on-site, even if you do not plan to use it in the finished video
- Sign Language must be quality checked by experts during recording. Any misunderstanding or unclear signs cannot be spotted by the camera operator alone during the filming

After recording

- Please take double backup of all files and log metadata in the DAM
- Raw files should be saved as Master Files, and not used directly in the editor programme

Editing and processing

- Make work-copies of the video files to be edited. Keep these separate from raw files!
- Record voice tracks with great sound quality and an accomplished voice actor. Please remember that good universal design means that your videos should have Sign Language, audio and text!
- Add subtitles on the videos! This can be done directly in YouTube, or by means of open software. For the exhibition in The Deaf museum we used the Media Subtitler: http://www.divxland.org/en/media-subtitler/?lang=norwegian. Subtitling videos does not necessarily take a long time and does not require unreasonable resources. We managed texting three to four short films in one hour, with scripts in hand
- Project files from video editing programmes must be taken good care of, and be filed systematically and tidily. Then they can be needed later to make adjustments or new versions.
- Export in a format suitable to the selected video solution. Right now it's okay to use mp4 and h.264 - but it can obviously change in a few years

Publication

It is recommended to use video services such as YouTube or Vimeo for publication. To run the video from your own servers would put high demands on uptime, maintenance and bandwidth, and result in a great danger of obsolescence.

- Create your own YouTube channel drop, and gather all the videos there
- Publish your videos in full HD, or at least 720p. Avoid lower resolution and limited formats like flv, wmv or mpg older versions
- Mark the videos clearly with rights, CC licenses and acknowledgments
- From YouTube, videos can easily be harvested for each museum website via embedded codes or Wordpress' own video function. This is also easy to share on social media like Twitter and Facebook. YouTube's own statistical functions keep good track of the number of clicks and of which parts audiences watch.

How to make the public aware of your Sign Language content? Besides spreading the videos through the museums' websites and social media, it is important that information is available at certain physical locations, tourist information centres, hotels, museums, in receptions and so on.

I recommend using Wordpress because it is free and open, and the world's most widely used content management system (CMS) as of today. The system is easy to use for beginners, while providing ample opportunities for more advanced features. Wordpress is constantly being developed by countless programmers, and has guaranteed longevity.

So far we have gone through the basics: to plan, produce and publish Sign Language information from museums. The rest of the document will explore opportunities for development, advanced features, and how to invite the public to engage.

Interaction

Engage your audience

- Create a detailed plan for how the information should be made available. Be detailed and specific, know your target group!
- Make sure the communication is universally designed. An excluded public cannot engage!
- Ensure quality in all stages: video quality, skilled Sign Language actor, a good script, good sound, easy to read text, professional materials that don't use scraps of paper written in Word.
- Learn from other institutions. Collaborate and share experiences. A good example to look at is: Tate Modern's Sign Language multimedia guide: https://sites.google.com/site/museumsictdeaf/home-seminars/london-visit
- Let the audience share the information. Wordpress and YouTube are great tools for sharing on social media like Facebook and Twitter. Use these, and encourage the public to share! Here are some recommended Wordpress plugins for social sharing:

Digg Digg: http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/digg-digg/
GetSocial: http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/getsocial/
Social Media Widget: http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/social-media-widget/

If you engage the audience and encourage interaction and sharing, you must be available. What does that mean? One or more persons must have interaction as a fixed task, and be present on Twitter, Facebook and so on. Research on institutions' commitment to social media shows that those who respond and follow up its audience continually often succeed in reaching out to many, and to create greater engagement. Research also shows that those who take longer to respond, and use social media only occasionally can actually damage the institution's reputation.

One of the main characteristics of digital distribution is that the audience becomes the master of time and place, and controls much of the 'tour'. In traditional mediation in museums, the audience has to show up at a certain time, at a certain place, and follow the guide's pace, and generally be a passive recipient. This is now undergoing rapid change, and it is important to know how to utilize the strengths of the new communication forms available. Let the audience be able to pick, choose and take things at their own pace.

How do people who are deaf or hard of hearing use museums? What about deaf people using social media and smartphones? Good communication requires that you knows your audience!

Let the public help!

Museum audiences are no longer passive recipients. They want to interact with the museum. Let them have the ability to make their own ways, and pick offers from menus that are easy to use. Let them share it with their friends. Let them ask the experts and get answers. Lead them on to more in-depth information. Challenge them. Let them tell their own story.

Services like Flickr and Instagram has revolutionized the way we share images. Such imaging services address the public and institutions on an equal footing, and share material in the same manner. Photos marked with tags are easy to share. There is no longer one-way communication - it's all dialogue and sharing.

Video is the Sign Language medium. Facebook added features that lets us record and share video directly from our phones. Here are other interesting candidates:
Viddy: http://www.viddy.com/
Socialcam: https://socialcam.com/
Klip: http://www.klip.com/#popularize
What about live broadcasts from the museum's events? Veetle: http://veetle.com/

The challenge is of course to integrate video sharing with the rest of the museum's web activity. Wordpress already has good plugins to include video sharing: this widget allows the public to enter comments in the form of videos, streamed from the phone or tablet's camera:
http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/video-comments-webcam-recorder

OpenTok Video Chat allows you to set up video calls between many users directly on the website. Can be used in tours and dissemination context - or in teaching: http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/opentok-video-chat/

Social video sharing services are still in adolescence. Universally designed mediation can take many forms, such as a multi-sizable guidebook: http://www.museum-fuer-

alle.de/en/1/the_guidebook/facts_about_the_book/ Programmes that target multiple senses simultaneously - and not only vision and hearing - give a better and richer experience for all.

Competence

All the points in this report require special expertise. Museums already have a lot of solid expertise to build on, communicators, museum educators and experienced writers. Often it will be necessary to hire external expertise to special tasks. If you are to hire external experts to film Sign Language videos, make sure that they know the basics about Sign Language requirements. Have one of the museum's deaf employees participate in the filming, in order to develop competence for future use.

Skill is also essential when it comes to the use of Wordpress, social media and other online platforms. You may want to bring in external expertise, but also treat the process as training for your own staff. Cultural institutions must take control of their own communication, so it is important that the staff learn to master digital media.

The process of creating the exhibition at the Norwegian Deaf Museum is a good example of internal expertise. Before we started, most of the project group had limited knowledge of universal design. Throughout the project we learnt about the requirements and regulations, and turned to experts in the field. After working on the project for over a year, we had acquired such knowledge that we could even provide advice and training to others.

Practical implementation

If you want to explore, develop and adapt tools for interaction in Sign Language, you may need some initial help from experts. You can start with existing tools; many of them are listed earlier in this report. Then you can hire the encoders with PHP and Wordpress skills to customize the tools for the purpose. The most expensive, but the most common is to hire a local web agency. It is inexpensive to hire international freelancers via services such as elance.com or freelancer.com. There would hardly be a quality difference between the two options.

All online communication must be available and configured for different platforms. It must work on smartphones and tablets, as well as computers with larger screens. Furthermore, it must be equally available on Android as in iOS.

This means:

- No use of Flash or Java. These technologies have significant limitations and uncertain futures
- No "native apps" that must be downloaded from Android Markets or App Stores. Opt for online services

Wordpress is written in PHP, which is a kind of advanced HTML. Therefore, extensions and customizations also require expertise in PHP.

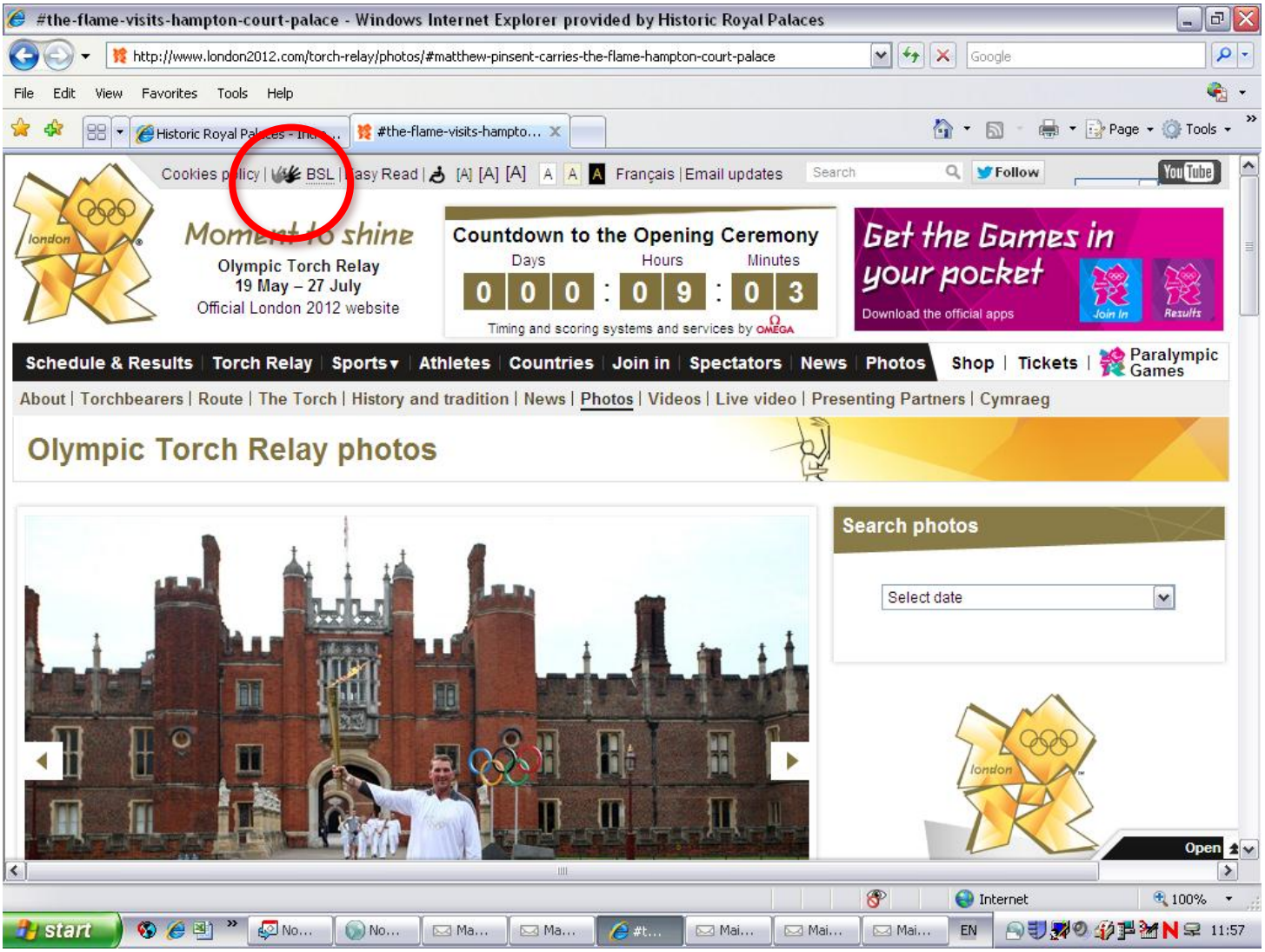
HTML5 and jQuery Mobile framework is widely used currently to create mobile websites. This is a stable and proven tool, which is highly recommended.

As much as possible of the website's appearance, fonts, layout, etc., must be made in the style sheet. This is written in CSS, a style sheet language that communicate seamlessly with HTML and PHP. By using CSS and minimal file-based graphics, websites are now faster and more dynamic.

Historic Royal Palaces & pictograms

Below is the British Sign Language logo used on the London 2012 Olympics website. It linked to a sub-site that was all in Sign Language.

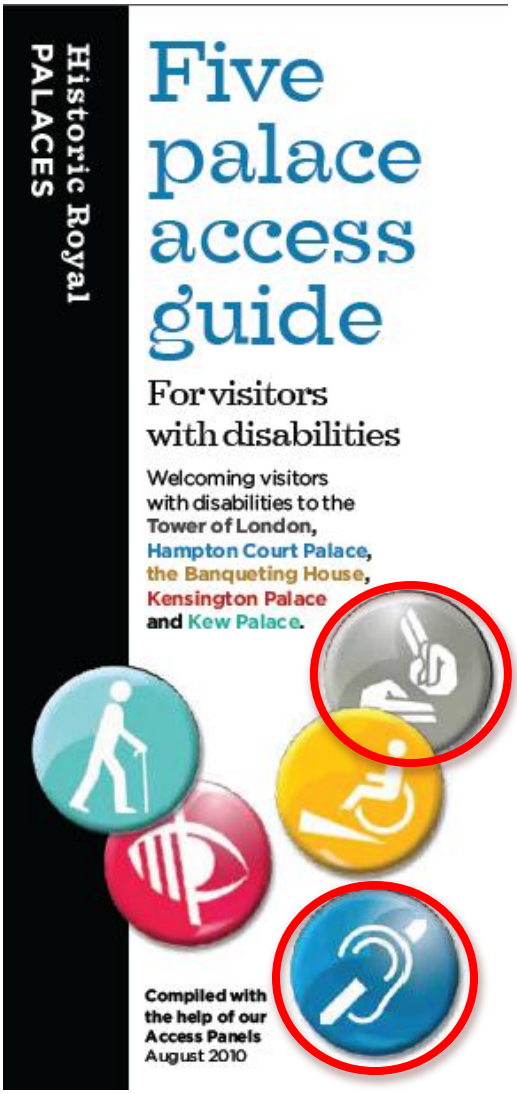
It shows a pair of open hands, of slightly different shades, and is next to the letters ‘BSL’.



The symbols/pictograms used in our Historic Royal Palaces Access Guide are shown below.

The logo for hard of hearing (an ear with a line passing behind it) is universally used in Britain.

However, we struggled to find a definitive one for British Sign Language. The one we've used - two BSL 'U' hands at about 45° to each other - seems to be fairly common on printed material. We copied it from the West End Theatre guide on accessible shows.



Hear it from a multimedia guide supplier

The supplier's point of view - from a specialist media company based in London that creates British Sign Language (BSL) multimedia guides. Many of the staff are deaf and all the staff mainly use BSL.

The Translation Process

British Sign Language - and the same is true of other national Sign Languages - is a visual language. They say that 'a picture paints a thousand words' and each BSL sign is a picture on its own. But this can also be a negative - with spoken English you can be vague, you can leave your words open to interpretation but with signing you can't. If you say 'vase' is it big, small, curved, etc? The deaf are very visual so could go looking for something large only to find it is very small unless the translation is clear!

You need to see it first hand to get that appreciation - then you can translate the text and the BSL presenters can accurately reflect it in their signing. Having that background knowledge really helps to translate the script into signing that really reflects what the item is - much more than just words on a piece of paper could.

English is the basis of BSL but it is very vague and it is hard to express meaning sometimes - if you use 'large' or 'big' you'll find that deaf people want to know how big is 'big'? BSL is a very literal language so you also need to have hearing people involved (as it can be difficult to translate background information well) and it is also very important for deaf signers to be bi-lingual (BSL and English). It also helps a great deal to have a Curator with you when filming.

If you are thinking of providing BSL translations of your interpretation you need to factor in a visit from the translators. If a company says they can do it without seeing the item then be very suspicious!

The Production Process

Poor filming can ruin the good will and good intentions of museums. If the presenter has been framed incorrectly he/she will be tiny, really difficult to see and have masses of headspace above him/her. Where the production process is poorly executed, the museum can end up with something which - far from being an improvement to access - is actually inaccessible. It is also a waste of time and, more importantly, valuable resources.

BSL is a 3D language. To accurately capture it you need to light it correctly, to give it the texture it has when you are face-to-face with a BSL user. Good lighting is paramount. There are usually three lights on the presenter for TV but four soft lights work best on BSL presenters. This is because four lights around the presenter don't create any shadows on the body compared to lighting from the front which does cause a shadow (and can make the signer appear to have four hands!). It also creates a 3D effect and the signer doesn't look flat which is much better for communicating.

The correct camera is also important for filming; it cannot be done very well on a hand-held camera and it definitely doesn't work using cameras on mobile 'phones!

Use native Sign Language users as signers because of their story-telling capability. Sign Language interpreters and ‘voicers’ do a great job but don’t have the same style and fluidity as a native user. There is a richness to the BSL when a deaf person is doing it compared to when someone else does it.

Don’t skimp on the filming - factor in correct lighting, correct cameras and employing a native Sign Language user. Although this may be more expensive, it’ll give you a better, longer-lasting product in the end.

The cost!

Museums want to add BSL, their intentions are good, but money is tight so they sometimes try to do it ‘on the cheap’ which can often result in something meaningless. It also applies to websites - the video is shot so that the deaf person is very small in the middle of the frame and the signing is not clear. Sometimes the film speed is increased to meet the necessary time frame and that definitely doesn’t work! In this supplier’s experience you can tell when hearing professional companies have been involved!!

A number of visitor attractions in London now have BSL provision on their multimedia guides but it is very expensive. Most of the expense is the programming. Smartphones are now amazing and tiny, and can be used to read QR codes to gain access to pre-filmed BSL information that is hosted on a website and not the device. It is a much cheaper way to do it and may be the future of BSL translation.

It may seem more expensive to ensure the people you hire have the correct experience of working for, and preferably with, the deaf but it really isn’t cost-effective to do anything else.

Some examples where organisations have got it wrong!

For every good BSL tour there is at least one bad. Why? Because most of the contracts for audio guides in foreign languages that include BSL are provided by foreign language companies who, whilst expert in spoken languages, do not possess the same knowledge of BSL. Companies who have specialist BSL skills wouldn’t be able to provide the spoken languages - but they wouldn’t try!

Example 1

A new gallery guide that had included BSL was launched. The BSL was done by a BSL user signing to camera and the backdrop was beautiful - a very old room with row upon row of books behind. The problem was the video had obviously been too long for the tour and so the speed had been increased to fit! The signing was completely inaccessible. The editors must not have had any knowledge of BSL; in their mind you could see ‘signing’ and the video was the same length as the other spoken languages so what was the problem?! Whilst the thought had been there, the execution had been very poor. If they had had the involvement of a deaf person the whole incident could have been avoided.

Example 2

Another museum used a particularly famous BSL presenter on their website, someone who is incredibly well known and respected within the Deaf Community. On this particular site he looks tiny as he has been framed incorrectly so that he is really difficult to see and has masses of headspace above him. With a deaf crew this wouldn’t happen. The presenter concerned has had some rather unfortunate feedback from the Deaf Community - they seem to think it was his fault when it wasn’t at all.

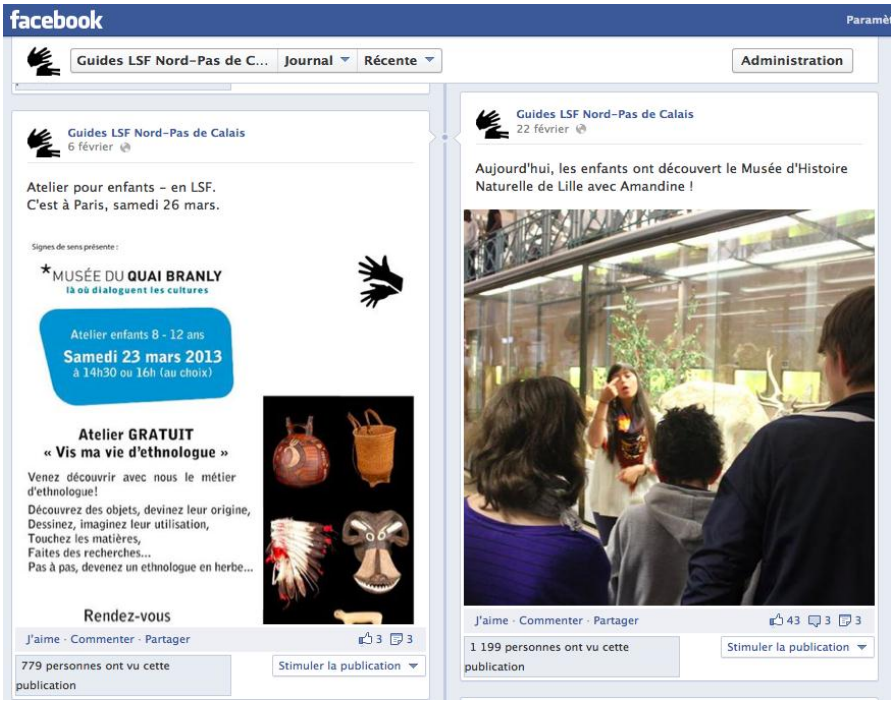
Community management

Francoise Casas has been a guide for 9 years and has looked at different ways of presenting information to attract people to Deaf Events, such as posters, but she is aware that it is hard to attract deaf people to cultural events. She has found video to be the most successful method.

She creates the videos with Signes de sens or just with the organisation involved; she also provides training to explain what needs to be done at the museum and then the film comes to Signes de sens for extra information to be added. She herself prefers to learn more about the exhibition, event etc. and then she uses her own words in the presentation to attract people's interest.

The videos are sent to the customer by email. They use 'word of mouth to ear' as well as 'hand to eye' to share information within the hearing world and Deaf Community. Booking is usually via email, which enables the organiser to know numbers, and is also very useful as an email list can be compiled to promote other events, stay in touch etc.

Remember that most countries now require customers to give their permission to be added to mailing lists; organisations can't automatically assume permission has been given.



Want to see more of the above videos? Go on Facebook and look for "Guides LSF Nord-Pas de Calais".

Why you should make your videos as visual as possible

At the 2012 seminar in Lille, we launched a research project to compare Deaf peoples' perception between two videos:

Video with incrustration

"Incrustation" refers to adding pictures/images in the video.

Enhanced video

"Enhanced" refers to adding "animations" in the video

11 deaf people participated:

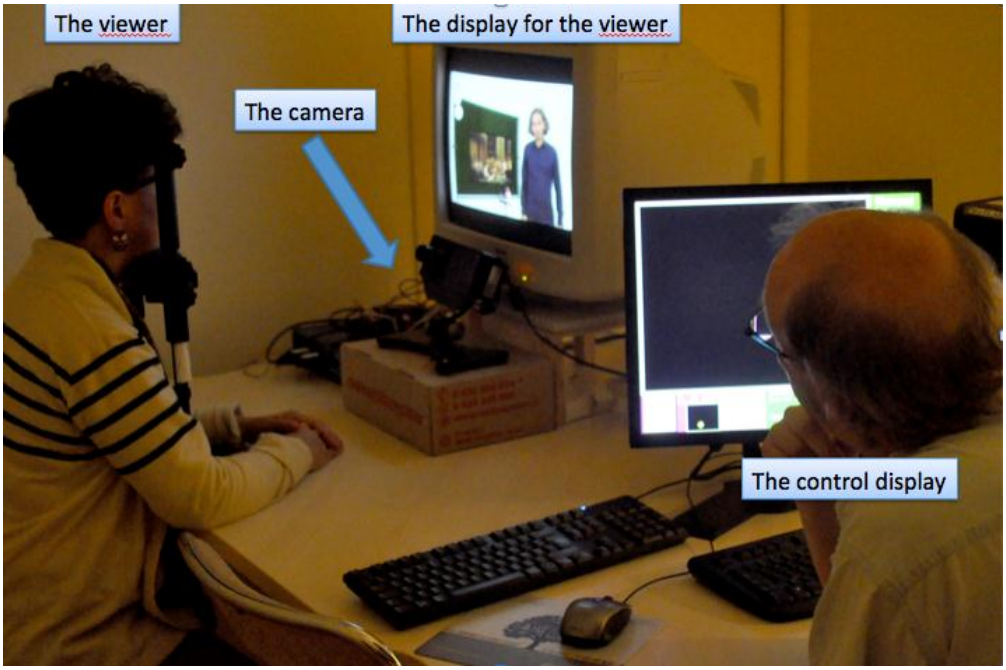
- 7 French
- 2 English
- 2 Norwegian

Protocol was:

- Look at one of the videos
- Answer yes/no questions
- Answer multiple choice questions / questionnaire

Scientific frame was:

- Signal's detection theory
- Perception
- Retention
- Memorization



Conclusion:

- The trace memory is stronger in the enhanced video than in the incrusted one
- Enhanced video is more effective at keeping the information in the users memory
- With the enhanced video the subject focused more, there was more eye movement. More interest = more attention

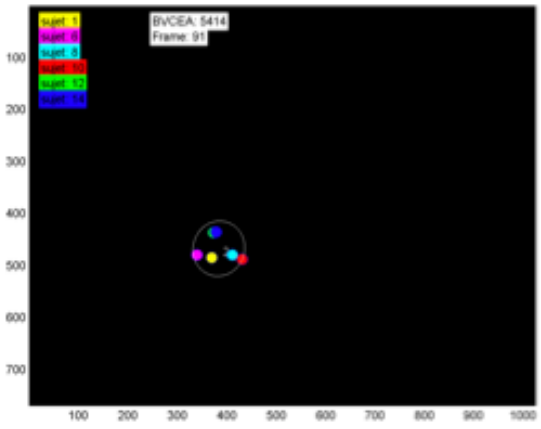
Limits:

- Small groups
- Not enough foreign participants to have significant results

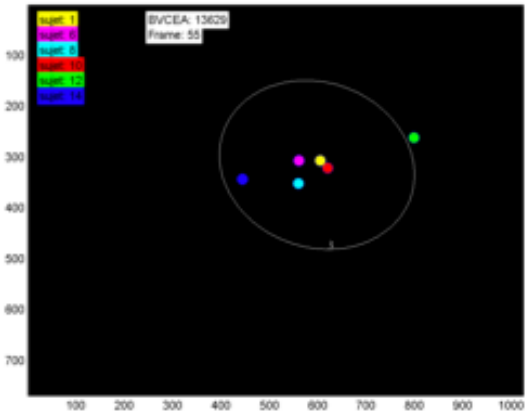
This research project will be continued…

Eyetracking shows us where people look. We can see the location of the subjects' gaze - so by using this information we can create videos that are easy to understand and remember.

subjects' gaze are focused on the same point, the area of the ellipse (BVCEA) is small



subjects' gaze are dispersed, the area of the ellipse is bigger



We at Signes de sens plan to do more research using this technology.

Why you should ask customers' opinion

After our first meeting in November 2011 in Norway, the next seminar happened in Lille in June 2012. This seminar dealt with good practices in museums and the rise of video. It gathered together the three main partners plus other professionals interested in the topic: some in charge of access issues, others being museum presenters or project managers.

Pompidou Center (Paris), Grenoble's Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of New York were also represented.

At the end of the first day all participants were invited to visit the Fine Arts Museum of Lille to try the new multimedia guide in LSF (French Sign Language) created by Signes de sens. It was a good opportunity to showcase the museum's proposition for deaf people and it seemed important to have the opinion of the various professionals from the seminar, even more so because fifteen of them were deaf. They had a questionaire to fill in, covering the following three categories:

- General offer for deaf people
- Sign Language videos
- Device and navigation

General offer for deaf people
In general, the French professionals were satisfied with the visit: 76% said they liked the visit. Foreign visitors were more ambivalent: 50% were slightly satisfied.

Sign Language videos
100% of the professionals liked the video. They agreed about the video's quality (100%) and the signing quality (88%). Rhythm and subtitles were also appreciated.

Device and navigation
The device selected pleased everybody: 100% of the French and 80% of the foreign visitors were satisfied.

Despite the enthusiasm aroused by the device, it seems that it was not so easy to use. Results showed that its use was easier for the French (88%) than for foreign visitors (36%) and, for all of them, the navigation within the device was quite hard (50% for French and 46% for foreigners).

The main data from the questionnaire pointed out concerns with:

- the location of the artworks in the museum
- the use and navigation within the device

About the artworks' location, this survey helped reveal the difficulties visitors had in finding the artworks that were described/commented on in the multimedia guide with LSF. Both the digital location (on the visioguide map), as well as the physical location (on the orientation map), need to be reviewed.

For the foreign professionals, the use of French Sign Language, the speed and the French subtitles used in the visioguide were not totally satisfying. Even with these negatives points though, they nevertheless underlined the quality of the videos.

Delegate using one of the multimedia guides

How to organise an international seminar involving deaf people

This was the first time that any of us had organised an international event for and involving deaf people. The language of our project - and so the spoken language at all our seminars - was English.

We learned early on that most deaf people don't use or can't understand International Sign Language so both our Norwegian and French partners had to find native interpreters with high levels of spoken English who could translate the conference presentations from English into Norwegian Sign Language or French Sign Language. The British Sign Language interpreters had a distinct advantage!

We were lucky to be able to get the same British, Norwegian and French interpreters for each of our three seminars. However, although the host nation could afford three, or even four, interpreters to spread the load, none of us could justify taking more than two interpreters abroad which put them under a lot of pressure during the foreign seminars.

Tired interpreters also make for tired deaf delegates and we realised after full two-day seminars in Norway and France that the London seminar should be held over three shorter days so that it was not as demanding on everyone - but especially on the interpreters. This proved to be a much more successful format: shorter sessions spread over 2½ days.

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