

Research consultancy brief:

Evaluation of Learning online project

Introduction

Learning online is a 3 year project funded by Partners for London to develop educational content for the Museum of London's website. Features were developed for three key audiences, KS2 children, their teachers, and adult learners. A number of features were conceived and developed for these audiences, based on their stated interests in an online survey.

The project is due to end in December 2005 and a consultant is needed to evaluate the success of the project.

Scope of work

The appointed consultant is required to

- conduct 3 focus groups (or equivalent), one with each of the three key audiences, record and analyse the responses
- analyse user survey results
- analyse server logs (in Webstats)
- draft report evaluating the project's performance against the original aims
- suggest priorities for future development of the site
- submit draft report for comment
- amend in line with comments
- submit final copy of report in hard & soft copy

Aims and evaluation criteria

The original aims of the project were as follows:

- To improve the quality of our service to existing and potential educational users by supporting visits with advice, resources, activities and project work
- To use the power of the web to provide learning resources for virtual visitors
 - To create a new section of the website specifically for educational and community¹ content, presented in a format and structure suited to the target audiences

¹ Please note, Community content is now located in a separate section of the website outside the scope of this evaluation.

- To create a site that will showcase the breadth and quality of our collections, and make them relevant to people in every local area of the city
- To create appropriate educational content for children, teachers, families² and adult learners, independent and in groups
- To provide guidance for teachers on using the museum, follow up activities, and resources to enable the collections to be utilised as teaching aids
- To create interactive units that support museum-based learning
- To create a framework that can be developed iteratively, either through the creation of new cross-gallery materials or through development of pages for new permanent galleries.

The original scope of the project was as follows:

- The creation of a new section on the website aimed at educational users, with a feature project on the front page, and links to sub-sections for our existing types of user
- Sub-sections for teachers, children, adult learners and community groups. These sub-sections will have new materials developed to meet the needs of the target audiences. Much of the content will have long term relevance and will be produced under a rolling programme of works
- A programme of collaborative projects with schools and community groups to test and evaluate materials produced in-house, and to produce additional content jointly.
- Ongoing evaluation and research

Detailed targets are attached as appendix 1, and together with the aims and scope above will form the evaluation criteria for this consultancy.

Further information

The Learning website is available at www.museumoflondon.org.uk/learning.

The Learning online project has consisted of the following developments:

- Re-design of the core Learning website, including fact packs, what's on and practical information pages etc
- Digging up the Romans
- Target the Tudors
- Online teachers packages for art & design, literacy, citizenship, and geography
- Picture bank
- Virtual object handling
- Postcodes project
- Virtual inset (in development)

² The target audiences of the Learning online project were later redefined as KS2 pupils and teachers, and adult learners

Details of project aims, objectives, targets and prior evaluation reports will be provided to the appointed consultant, along with access to the online user survey results and webstats.

As consultants may be able to advise on methods other than focus groups for consulting the target audiences a precise methodology can be suggested in the proposal, and will be agreed in a meeting after appointment.

Rooms are available at the Museum for use with focus groups etc. Additional funding is also available to pay for participant's expenses and refreshments. We may also be able to help in the recruitment stage by providing contact details for schools who have previously visited etc. A proportion of people could also be recruited from the museum-floor if appropriate. We will however require a proportion of non-visitors so this should be taken into account when planning the research process.

Timetable, Fees & conditions

Deadline for submission of proposals: Monday 5 September, 10am
Interview date: Tuesday 27 September
Deadline for submission of draft report: Monday 30 January 2006
Deadline for submission of final report: Monday 20 February 2006

A fee of £5,000 is offered for this work, inclusive of all personal expenses; travel, phone calls etc. Stage payments can be made by agreement, and must be tied to project milestones with deliverables.

The appointed consultant will be responsible for the payment of income tax and national insurance.

The report will be copyright of the Museum of London.

The report and any information provided to the researcher are in confidence and may not be passed on to any third party for any reason without the written permission of the Museum.

How to apply

Any consultants wishing to be considered for this work should submit a proposal, in hard or soft copy, to address below.

Proposals should include:

- Research plan addressing evaluation criteria
- Schedule
- Details of person(s) to be conducting research including:
 - Evidence of working with both qualitative and quantitative data
 - Focus groups or equivalent
 - Experience of using Webstats would be desirable
 - Evidence of experience evaluating web projects
 - Evidence of experience of evaluating museum learning would be desirable

Contact details

For further information, or to submit a proposal, please contact:

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Please note that Jane works part time so is usually only in the office on Mondays and Tuesdays, and will be on leave from August 8th.

Appendix 1 Project targets

Project management

- To produce detailed guidelines regarding target audiences and their requirements in relation to each subject and content type.
- To create and maintain a pool of users to participate in evaluation, and to consult them at least once during the development of each new type of content.
- To liaise with staff of MOL, MoLAS and MOLSS in year 1 and identify ways to integrate the 3 sites and address users' interest in archaeology in a more joined-up way, and to implement the most appropriate solution by the end of year 3.
- To evaluate the project every year, and update plans according to user preferences.
- To provide 6-monthly progress reports.

Scope

- To create 20 new fact packs.
- To create content on the 3 subjects most frequently requested by each user group, with appropriate sections targeted at requesting groups.
- To create the top 3 material types most frequently requested by each user group, as identified in "Group preferences" section of report.

Usage

- To increase the number of views the Learning home page by 50% over 3 years. (From the current average of 302 to 453 views per week).
- To increase educational users of the site as a whole (as identified by known education service provider addresses) by 10% per year. (from the current average of 21,839 sessions per week to 24,022 / 26,425 / 29,067 in years 1-3 respectively.)
- Learning homepage to rank in the top 10 most requested pages of the whole site for 42 weeks in year 3. (current average ranking = 14)

Satisfaction

- 75% of respondents completing the Learning survey to wholly or partly find what they were looking for. (currently 42%)
- For a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 (5 being excellent) to be most commonly selected by respondents of the Learning survey asked to evaluate the content of the section in terms of information, looks, relevance, and ease of use.
- 75% of respondents would definitely recommend the site to other people (currently 50%)