Call for papers

Are we trying hard enough?
Making museums and historic houses relevant to audiences in the twenty-first century

14-18 October 2017, Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace, UK

Main theme

The theme for this conference is _relevance_ and the role of museums and historic houses to provide value and meaning for its audiences. We know audiences matter, but how are museums and historic houses making a difference to the people we engage with and is it enough? Are audiences having new and authentic experiences in our spaces? Are objects and stories that unlocking meaning for them?

> _Instead of thinking of relevance as a link, I started thinking of relevance as a key. Imagine a locked door. Behind the door is a room that holds something powerful – information, emotion, experience, value. The room is dazzling. The room is locked._
>
> _Relevance is a paradox. It is essential; it gets people to pay attention, to walk in the door, to open their hearts. But it is also meaningless without powerful programming on the other side of the door. If the door doesn't lead to valuable offerings, if nothing touches peoples' hearts, interest fades. They don't return._
>
> - The Art of Relevance, Nina Simon, 2016

Theme 1: Heritage and communities

Museums and historic houses sit in local communities, but how can they connect to the audiences on their doorstep? They also often form key narratives in national histories. How can we ensure these narratives stay relevant to our audiences as ideas of national identity change over time?

- How can museums and historic houses attract new and more diverse local audiences?
- How can our local communities find value and meaning in our stories, buildings and collections?
- How can we measure and demonstrate our value to and impact on local communities?
- How can learning programmes connect museums and heritage sites to local communities?
- How have museums and historic houses been used to develop national identities?
- What is the role of the museum and historic house today within narratives of national identity?
- Can museums and historic houses promote or consolidate social cohesion? Should they be instrumental in developing this?

Theme 2: Learning in the heritage environment

Museums and historic houses are places of learning and engagement. What is their particular value as a tool of education and/or learning, and how can we stay relevant to formal and informal learners and teachers?

- Learning inside the building: What is the value and impact of learning in a heritage site?
- Taking the historic house outside: can the unique experience of a heritage site be taken outside the physical space?
- Beyond history: what subjects can be learned through visits to historic houses?

Theme 3: Innovation and learning
Technology and society are changing rapidly. How do we connect to audiences that are accustomed to change and the 'new'?
- How are we telling our stories, sharing our buildings and collections creatively and differently?
- How can we integrate digital learning seamlessly to audiences which meet their expectations of technology today?
- Innovation for innovation's sake: when is newness not the answer?
- Doubling up: how can we use partnerships to make our sites more relevant?
- How are we establishing ourselves as entrepreneurial and independent?

Key dates
- 10 February 2017: Submission deadline, midnight (London time)
- Late March 2017: Acceptance notification
- 14-18 October 2017: Conference

Submitting a proposal
Developing your proposal

We are inviting the following submissions
- **Research papers**: 20 minute talks on recent research or theoretical issues
- **Lighting or Express talks** for the Market of Ideas: 7 minute talks which cover one idea or provoke thought and debate
- **Theme papers**: 5 minute introduction by 4 people, followed by 40 minute discussion. We invite panels and individual papers
- **Workshops**: 75 minute session. This must include practical or skills-based elements
- **Posters**: A1 posters on any topic related to the theme or strands. Poster presenters will be required to talk about their posters for one 75 minute session.

Submitting your proposal
Please submit proposals online at www.hrp.org.uk/relevance2017

All papers will be reviewed by our expert panel of heritage and learning professionals from CECA, DEMHIST, Historic Royal Palaces and host partners.

Papers will be selected according to the following criteria
- Papers which address the conference themes
- Papers which are deliverable in the format and time allotted

The selection panel reserves the right to suggest alternate formats for proposals. The selection panel's decision is final.

Enquiries: relevance2017@hrp.org.uk

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Guidance for speakers

Our audiences

• Are international

There will be an international audience so please provide enough context for the delegates to understand your site or museum. Pictures are very helpful visual aids so show us your museum or heritage site rather than list text on bullet points.

• Are here to learn

Be clear about learning objectives of your talk from the start. We value presentations that are honest and open about failures as well as successes.

• Want to see every paper

Timing is really important and people who exceed their allowed time may not be able to finish giving their paper. This is so all speakers can present their work. There will be an international audience, so speak slowly. This way everyone will be able to understand and the translators will have a chance to work.

• Will be online

We will record speakers and may also livestream audio and/or video from the event.
We will be live tweeting the conference, so include any twitter usernames or URLs in your opening slides for maximum impact

Presentations

The main conference language will be English, but papers in any ICOM language are welcome. There will be translation available at the conference.

As a speaker, you agree to provide your slides 2 weeks **before the event**. Usually, slides are in PowerPoint or Keynote format: please get contact us if you would like to use another format.

We prefer having one presenter per talk. You can include multiple presenters in a proposal and nominate one person to represent if part of a group on the day.

We don't ask for full papers in advance, but presenters may be asked to submit a written paper for online publication in the Conference proceedings. As a speaker you agree to provide us with your slides for upload to the Conference Slideshare space and embedding on the DEMHIST and CECA websites. You retain full copyright over your slides but grant DEMHIST and CECA the rights to use these as appropriate on the DEMHIST and CECA websites.

There will be a fee charged for the event, but this will be discounted for one speaker per paper. Bookings will open in April/May 2017.

Please make all submissions through the dedicated website at www.hrp.org.uk/relevance2017

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