

What Does a Post-Pandemic Children's Museum Look Like?

Thanks for attending!

ACM Trends

Agenda

- Project Overview
- Value Pricing and the Cultivation of Public Trust
- Data Hub
- Discussion



ACM Trends: Next Generation Data Literacy & Management Tools project is made possible through IMLS Grant #MG-80-19-0042-19





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Project Overview

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ACM Trends: Next Generation Data Literacy & Management Tools



Streamline Data Collection



Establishing on-demand datahubs



Continue producing ACM Trends Reports

Knology



Habitat Seven

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ACM Trends Program



Data Collection



**ACM Trends
Reports**



Data Hub

ACM Trends Program: Data Collection – Pandemic Pivot

COVID-19 Impact Survey May 2020
109 US-based museums

COVID-19 Impact Survey Fall 2020
96 US-based museums

COVID-19 Impact Survey Spring 2021
89 US-based museums

ACM Trends Program: Data Collection - Discussion Forums



Virtual Programming Forum

39 Participants from 27 museums

Key Takeaways

- * Education primary focus
- * Helped support/serve new audiences
- * Some museums partnered with schools/other community orgs
- * Funding/new revenue streams needed to continue
- * Museums interested in sharing resources



Strategic Planning Forum

36 Participants from

Key Takeaways

- * Strategic Planning in a post-pandemic world
- * Reaching new and underserved audiences
- * Conducting more in-depth attendance and membership data research
- * Large time-commitment, but need to include all staff, board, and potentially museum goers

Pandemic Impacts

Average days open to visitors:

2019: 326 days
2020: 113 days
2023: 312 days

Staff reductions

Spring 2021
47% of full-time
76% of part-time staff
Spring 2023
0% full-time
14.5% part-time staff

Museums Open

Spring 2021: 61%
Spring 2023: 95%

Spring 2021 Attendance:
27% compared to 2019

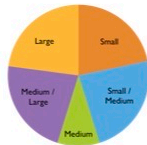
Cash Reserves as of March
2021:
10 Months

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ACM Trends Program: ACM Trends Reports

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Museums in a Pandemic: Snapshot of Impacts

June 3, 2022

To understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the children's museum field, we surveyed ACM member institutions from May 7 to 18, 2020 about their experiences. Overall, 109 US-based children's museums and 6 non-US museums were represented in the responses. Here are several initial findings; future reports will provide more detail.

- Federal Funding** – The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was the primary emergency funding source for US children's museums. For financial support, 101 US-based museums applied for PPP funds. Of those, 95 museums received PPP funding and 6 museums did not. Children's museums participating in the study cumulatively received \$29.34 million in PPP funds.
- Other Funding** – Private funds were another source of financial support for some children's museums. Of those surveyed, 36 US-based museums reported receiving a total of about \$1.61 million funds from this source. Several non-US institutions also received funds from private sources.
- Reopening** – In terms of plans for reopening, 43 US museums said they had identified their reopen dates. Of those, 39 planned to open before the end of 2020. Sixteen will reopen by June 15, 2020.
- Memberships** – For museums in the US, 9 out of 10 extended renewal dates for memberships.
- Staffing** – At the time of the survey, 75 US children's museums reported staff reductions. Of those, 32% of full-time staff have been furloughed, laid-off, or had reduced working hours. For part-time staff, 64% have been furloughed, laid-off, or had reduced working hours. We will continue to track children's museums experiences with staffing as the field navigates the pandemic.

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ACM TRENDS

#4.1

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The Expanding Role of Virtual Programming in Children's Museums

April 14, 2022

Volume 4 of the ACM Trends Report series, *Museums in a Pandemic*, reported findings from regularly conducted surveys by Knology and Association of Children's Museums (ACM) about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the children's museum field. Museums closed their doors to the public in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic. More than 70% of ACM member museums were offering virtual programming by June 2020. Last year, museums slowly began reopening for in-person visits and had reached 61% by March 2021. The Spring 2021 ACM COVID impact survey suggested that about two-thirds of museums (n = 43 out of 67) were interested in continuing to offer virtual programming or engaging with communities online even after pandemic restrictions lifted.

In October 2021, Knology and ACM launched the first in an annual series of discussion forums that aim to address emerging questions from the field. Each forum features a panel of external experts that share recent research that might be applicable to the work of children's museum operations. Presentations are followed by breakout sessions where museum professionals can consider the implications of that research to their practice, and explore their perspectives on the theme more broadly.

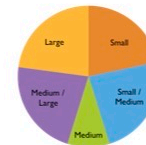
Based on the results of the impact survey, this first discussion forum focused on virtual programming. It is important to note that by October 2021, when the discussion forum took place, 91% of ACM members had reopened for in-person activities. We invited leaders and educators from ACM members to share their perspective about virtual programming. A total of 39 leaders and educators from museums across the United States attended the discussion forum. They represented museums that had offered virtual programming during the pandemic, and museums that had not done so. For this conversation, we defined virtual or online programming as programming or exhibits that require at-home or on-device screen time. This definition of virtual programming included activity kits if they offered a virtual or online engagement component.

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Value Pricing and the Cultivation of Public Trust

October 28, 2022

Members are the lifeblood of many children's museums. They are loyal patrons who trust museums to provide playful learning opportunities for their children, often complementing trips to the zoo or aquarium. But when children "age out," families may turn to other cultural institutions and start to reconsider the value of their membership. Understanding value seekers' calculations can help children's museums cultivate trust through transparency.

In this Trends report, we look at what membership pricing and attendance data can tell us about children's museums. We focus on what museums might want to think about when attempting to stabilize their membership base, and on how to forge trusting relationships with prospective members.

National data related to membership pricing has been of particular interest to the ACM leadership community in recent years, especially as it relates to post-pandemic operations. Prompted by a specific request from an ACM member, this report contributes to these ongoing discussions. We used data from the Spring 2022 targeted ACM member survey and collected additional information from member museum websites. We developed a dataset from 90 children's museums to see if there were differences in membership costs between small, medium, and large museums. We also compared admission prices across these categories and calculated a "pay less" point—that is, the number of times a family of four would need to visit in order to make the purchase of an annual membership a cost-saving act.

Our analysis yielded two main findings. First, even though admission prices and membership costs are highest for large museums, the number of single visits needed by a family of four to "pay less" is lower for these museums than it is for their small and medium-sized counterparts. Second, we confirmed that admission prices and membership costs tend to rise in parallel, which means that even though base admission prices may be determined based on local cost of living concerns, ACM members can still compare their rates to other children's museums. Taken together, these findings can help children's museums determine how to align pricing decisions with the needs and interests of value-seeking visitors—that is, those who purchase memberships based on a calculation of savings.

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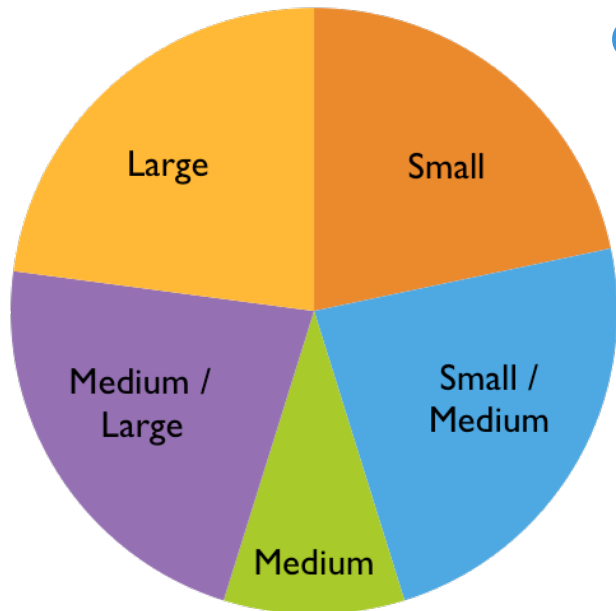
Trends Report 6.1: Value Pricing and the Cultivation of Public Trust

Inspiration for this report

- Post-pandemic recovery needs?
- What is the right price-point for membership?
- Are there standards in the field?

What data did we use?

- Spring 2022 ACM Member Survey
- Website review (stratified purposeful sampling)
 - 30 Small Member Children's Museums
 - 30 Medium-sized Member Children's Museums
 - 30 Large Member Children's Museum



What did we find?

| | Small (n = 30) | Medium (n = 30) | Large (n = 30) | All (N = 90) |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Average admission | \$29.80 | \$40.60 | \$59.20 | \$43.19 |
| Average yearly membership | \$112.00 | \$138.00 | \$151.00 | \$134.28 |
| Average # of visits equal to a membership (for a family of four) | 3.88 | 3.52 | 2.62 | 3.33 |

Why we don't use "Break Even"

- Value-seekers
- Affinity members

Savings Calculators: Children's Museum of Atlanta

<https://childrensmuseumatlanta.org/memberships/>

Find out how much a membership can save you!

No. of Adults

No. of Children

No. of Visits

Regular museum admission price: \$159.60.

Save as much as \$20.60 with a 12 month, 100% tax-deductible Family Museum Membership.



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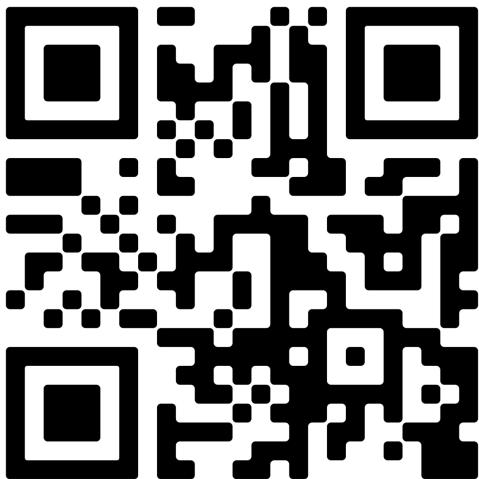
Data Hub

ACM Trends Program: ACM Data Hub

- All member museums
- Based on 990 Data and information collected through ACM x Knology surveys
- Visual representation of Attendance, Income, Expenses, Staffing, Volunteers
- Normalized data
- Trends Reports!

ACM Trends Program: ACM Data Hub

<https://datahub.childrensmuseums.org/>



What can you do:

- Access your museum's data & all other museum's data
- Benchmark against other museums (location, size, etc.)

Information pulled from:

- Publicly available 990s (updated yearly)
- Membership Surveys
- Membership Renewals



Questions

Discussion Questions

- How has your museum changed since the pandemic?
- What is the long-term impact of the pandemic on your museum?
- What information or data is your museum using to plan for the future?

Discussion of the data



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The ACM Trends Data Hub: Understanding National Averages

| Year | Mean Net Revenue | Median Net Revenue | # of Children's Museums Reporting |
|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2016 | 362,116 | 15,607 | 266 |
| 2017 | 622,210 | 4,948 | 272 |
| 2018 | 602,456 | -2,822 | 276 |
| 2019 | -58,520 | -29,603 | 274 |
| 2020 | -129,402 | -23,917 | 182 |

