

Immersive Exhibitions (cont.)

- Do immersive exhibitions engender more sociability?
- Are immersive exhibitions more memorable?
- Do they draw visitors? Do they attract different audiences?
- Do visitors return for immersive experiences?

This set of questions could investigate if and how these exhibitions affect visitors' sociability and overall experience.

Someone recently said to me that learning comes out of having an experience and reflecting on that experience. Our jobs as exhibit professionals is to present our messages via media that give visitors experiences they cannot get in school or elsewhere. Do immersive exhibitions provide visitors with an experience on which they can look back and reflect for years to come?

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Immersive Exhibitions: A Bibliography

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What Is Immersion?

Bitgood et al., (1990) defined "simulated immersion" as "the degree to which an exhibit effectively involves, absorbs, engrosses, or creates for visitors the experience of a particular time and place."

Gilbert (2000) recognized two distinctive types of immersive exhibits.

- Immersive environments: Re-created realistic settings intended to make visitors feel as if they are visiting a particular time or place.
- and

- Immersive experiences: Creating a situation and experience distinct from merely the physical re-creation of the environment.

Pspotka (1995) and others have extended the term to include virtual reality experiences.

If you don't recognize these uses of the term, you're not alone. Gilbert (2000) found that many exhibit professions were not aware of the range of meanings of the word "immersion," or used the word in a restricted sense.

Below is some of the literature available on immersion exhibits. Many of these papers are referenced in one or more online databases, including:

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center): Search for online abstracts at <http://askeric.org/Eric/> using the ERIC # or author's name in Simple Search.

MLC (Museum Learning Collaborative): Search for online abstracts at <http://mlc.lrdc.pitt.edu/Annotatedlit.html> using the author's name or the paper's title.

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