

Practical advice for audience research at un-ticketed cultural festivals and other events



# Researching audiences at outdoor events and festivals

**Audiences London is here to help you understand audiences and develop public engagement and reach.**

We work with over 400 arts and heritage organisations every year, and are now offering our tried and tested services across London, the South East, South West and East of England. We offer the UK's most comprehensive audience data-sharing initiatives, expert research services and specialist consultancy in audience development and community engagement. We also run a professional development programme of regular seminars to refresh and build skills and knowledge.

[www.audienceslondon.org](http://www.audienceslondon.org)



Cover image: Taxi at Greenwich and Docklands International Festival 2011.  
Photo: AVK Photography

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# Introduction

from Anne Torreggiani  
Chief Executive at Audiences London



Photo:  
Simon Jay

**Let's face it, capturing insight about audiences at any free event, let alone one in an outdoor setting, can be a challenge.**

Apart from anything else, it seems to run counter to what outdoor arts is about – incongruous in an experience where audiences and participants are free to come and go as they please, to dip in and out on their own terms. But art for free, in and around the places we live, work and visit, makes an increasingly important contribution to our sense of wellbeing. If we are to be able to demonstrate that impact, we need evidence. We also need to know whether or not we are meeting and exceeding public expectations. If we don't ask, and don't do so meaningfully and rigorously, we run the risk of making the wrong assumptions, believing our own myths, and losing that vital connection with community.

It's not as difficult as you might think. Audiences London has been grappling with the challenge of evaluating outdoor arts and other non-ticketed events in ways which are meaningful and sustainable. Over the past 5 years, we have worked with numerous festivals and outdoor events and have also developed a standard multi-venue survey for non-ticketed galleries across England. These recommendations draw on that experience, and reflect some tried and tested approaches which are practical and suitably robust.

Choosing the right methodology is key, and will always be a trade-off between resources, accuracy and scope. These recommendations will help you feel confident in making those choices, and help you decide when you need a bit of expert help.

One of the aims of these guidelines is to establish a flexible but standardised approach to audience research, which will enable the development of crucial benchmarks across the sector. We are developing a toolkit to make that even easier – details of which you will find in the last section.

People often wonder if they can afford meaningful research and evaluation. My question to the outdoor arts community this year is: can you afford not to? Outdoor arts is clearly enjoying a golden age and the extraordinary happenings scheduled for 2012 are set to establish the sector at the heart of the UK's cultural offer once and for all. More, I'm hopeful that we'll also see an enlightened approach to evaluation prompting a mature, informed debate about public engagement that will enable the wider sector to learn from outdoor arts.

Make sure 2012 counts by making sure you count!

**Anne Torreggiani**

Chief Executive – Audiences London

# Principles of good research

**“Marketing research is like a taxi: it will go anywhere you want (providing you have the fare) but the cab-driver must know how to drive, must have a working knowledge of the Highway Code, and the passenger and driver must agree at the outset as to the final destination.”**

Webb, 1993, Understanding and Designing Market Research

At Audiences London our approach to audience research is always based on clearly-defined objectives.

It is important to address the following questions:

- **Where are you now?**
- **Where do you want to be?**
- **How might you get there?**
- **How will you know when you’ve arrived?**
- **What will you do when you’re there?**

It is only with these in mind that audience research and evaluation can be useful and meaningful to any organisation.

Overleaf, bottom left: Commissioned by Arts Agenda for Derby Festé 2010, Nutkhut’s *Lotus Flower* featured as a mobile sculptured installation within a new show, Sari Sari Nights - a twilight parade, an explosive Sari Shop on the streets - the opening event of the festival attracted over 12,000 people to the city centre. Photo: Kevin Ryan

# Original context of this work

**Audiences London** was commissioned by **Arts Council England** to consult with organisers of festivals and outdoor events around data collection and comparisons across the sector.

This project began by looking at what data festivals were collecting about their audiences, and how they were doing it. The study involved semi-structured interviews with twelve festivals, members of the culture teams of eight local authorities, the events team at the Greater London Authority, the Director of Independent Street Arts Network, the Creative Programmer for the five Olympic host boroughs and CREATE 09. A questionnaire was also circulated to all of the festivals that took part in a consultation session in June 2009. Five festivals were also offered three days of Audiences London consultancy time to support them in developing a better understanding of their audiences.

From this work we have developed this set of guidelines to support festivals with their data collection.



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# The challenges we face

**Our research has found that the sector faces a distinct set of challenges.**

**We're all different:** There is a wide range of festivals with many shared issues, but also some considerable differences in the aims, organisational structures and programmes presented.

**We can't compare data at the moment:** Most are regularly collecting audience information. However, there is currently little opportunity for meaningfully comparing data between festivals, or creating a set of audience benchmarks for festivals and outdoor events. This is due to the non-standardised nature of current audience research in this area, in terms of questions (lack of consistent question areas and wording) and methodology (self-completion questionnaires, interviewer-led questionnaires, different sampling methods etc).



Walk The Plank's *Fire Garden* at Derby Festé.  
Photo: Pete Carr

**Avoiding reinventing the wheel:** Overall, there is widespread support for standardising the types of information collected, and the ways of collecting information, particularly amongst stakeholders.

**It takes time, resources and expertise:** Whilst festivals appreciate the value of capturing and using audience information, they often are not able to do it as effectively as they would like to. This is because:

- they are focused on delivery of the event and collecting audience information is not a priority;
- they lack the specialist skills to do it confidently;
- they lack the staff resources to do it effectively;
- they lack the financial resources to pay external consultants.

**These challenges are not insurmountable and the following guidelines focus on specific ways in which research can help you understand your audiences and the impact of your event.**



# How to use these guidelines

In most cases, it's best to employ the advice and/or services of a specialist researcher or agency. However, we know that festivals do not always have resources available for this. Therefore these guidelines have been developed to help disseminate some of our knowledge and recommendations to festivals, to support them in collecting and using high quality audience information.

## What are the main uses of audience research?

- To report to funders, supporters, board
- To record what happened
- To test new ideas and inform future plans
- To generate evidence to support decision-making processes
- To be able to respond to changing circumstances more quickly

## What questions can audience research help to address?

- Who are your audiences?
- How satisfied are they with the service you offer?
- What are their perceptions of your organisation?
- What are the motivations of your audiences?
- Are your marketing materials reaching the right people in the right way?
- How have recent changes in policy been received by your audiences?



Astral at Greenwich & Docklands International Festival 2011.  
Photo: Doug Southall

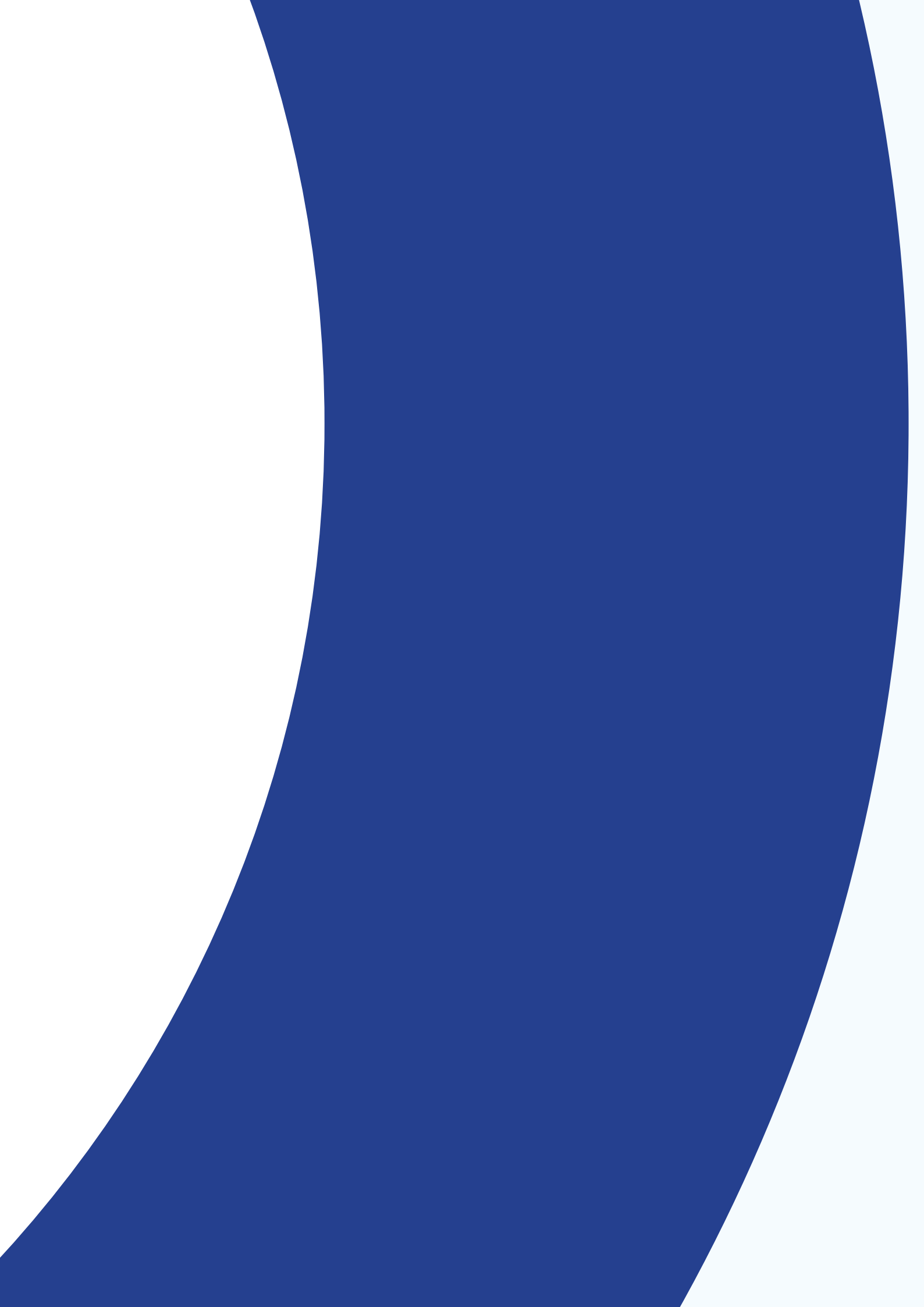
## What these guidelines will do:

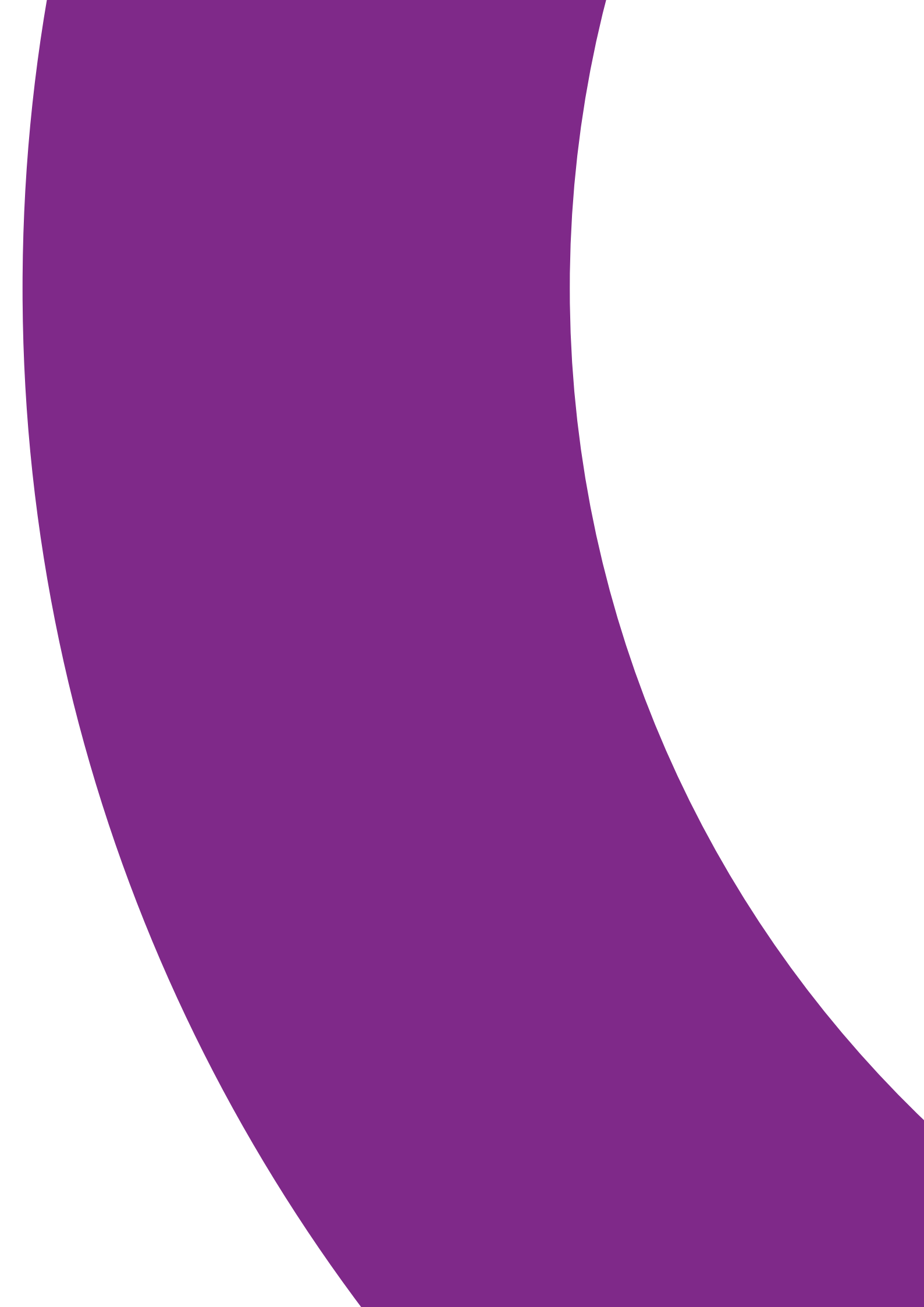
- Give you a guide to good practice
- Inform the setting of audience objectives
- Give you an overview of different methods
- Give you confidence in selecting approaches and briefing others
- Signpost useful tools, standardised methods and further resources
- Take the first step towards comparing information & performance with others

## What these guidelines will not do:

- Give you a ready-made toolkit to evaluate events
- Be a complete manual for audience research
- Be prescriptive or exhaustive









# Evidencing success

The definition of success will vary from festival to festival, event to event. This section will suggest how you can evidence the success of your festival against its aims and objectives, and which methods of data collection will best achieve this.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are both important processes for evidencing the success of your event, but be clear that they have quite different purposes:

- **Monitoring** is about regularly measuring tangible aspects of your festival, including demographics of audience, etc.
- **Evaluation** is about assessing whether your festival achieved its intended aims

## What data might I need to collect as evidence of success?

The type of data you'll need depends on how you're defining success; this should come from the aims and objectives of your festival. Our consultation with a number of festivals found the following types of information to be commonly used to evidence their success.

Showing that your festival was a success is usually a combination of evidence about the numbers and types of people you managed to reach, and the impact that the festival had on them. Therefore, you're going to need a mixture of data.

## Types of evidence

Type of evidence	How to get this information
<b>Number of people who came</b>	Most commonly achieved by an estimate of the number of people in an area, or a headcount. See the Methods section for some ideas.
<b>Number of people who participated</b>	<p>This is usually easier to measure than attendances, especially if participation is through structured sessions. Often activity leaders will be able to provide numbers of people in each session.</p> <p>For larger participation activities, using other 'props' can be helpful. For example, knowing how many chairs there are in an area, and counting the empty ones; or knowing how much of a resource you have supplied (e.g. drums, paintbrushes etc), and counting how many are used.</p>
<b>Types of people who came</b>	<p>This information needs to be provided by attendees themselves, so a form of questionnaire/survey approach will be needed. For the best approach to sampling, a face-to-face method involving interviewers is usually most reliable. Other methods that could be used include self-completion questionnaires and e-surveys, although these are less likely to produce samples representative of the whole audience. See the Methods and Sampling sections for more on collecting information.</p> <p>Collecting this information in a standardised way can open opportunities for comparison with previous years, with other festivals, or other activities within the borough/city. See the Questionnaires section for suggestions on the wording and responses for some of these key monitoring questions.</p>
<b>Types of people who participated</b>	Again, this has to be provided directly by the participants themselves, but this is often a little easier to collect, depending on the activity. It may be possible to ask participants to complete a short registration form, which includes key monitoring questions (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity etc). See the Questionnaires section for how to word some of these key monitoring questions.
<b>Levels of satisfaction and enjoyment</b>	<p>Getting direct feedback from audiences about their experience is important for you to learn from your festival, as well as evidence its success. A survey asking a good sample of respondents to give ratings for elements of the festival is one way of gathering this.</p> <p>Gathering more qualitative data through vox pops and other feedback channels can also give you some brilliant sound bites about people's experience of your festival. See the Methods and Questionnaires sections for some top tips about this.</p>

Type of evidence	How to get this information
<b>Audience perceptions of the festival</b>	<p>Gathering audiences' opinions on the extent to which a festival has achieved particular aims/objectives can be good evidence for the success of the festival.</p> <p>For example, asking about the extent to which audiences think that the festival offers a chance for artists to show new work, or the extent to which it reflects the diversity of the area.</p> <p>These kinds of questions are usually best asked through one-to-one contact with audience/participants, probably an interviewer-led questionnaire, although it may also be possible to collect data through mini-interviews, or an e-survey.</p>
<b>Impact on community cohesion or community relationships</b>	<p>Any questions in this area should reflect your festival's aims and objectives.</p> <p>Note that this kind of impact often isn't realised by people until a while after an event, and so it may be better to explore this after the festival, perhaps through a community engagement approach to working with those audiences.</p>
<b>Economic impact</b>	<p>This is a complicated exercise if done properly. See our section on Assessing Economic Impact, which describes what's involved, and offers recommendations on how to go about this.</p>
<b>Key performance indicators</b>	<p>It is important to make sure that you are specifically addressing the key performance indicators that matter to your funders and stakeholders. For example, this might mean using customised questions in your questionnaire to tie in with your reporting.</p>
<b>Information about the local population</b>	<p>Free resources such as UK National Statistics (<a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk">www.statistics.gov.uk</a>) and the CASE programme by DCMS (<a href="http://www.culture.gov.uk/case">www.culture.gov.uk/case</a>) are rich sources of information about specific areas, profiling the characteristics of the local population. This can be useful in discussing the types of people that the festival is likely to impact, given its geographic location.</p>

## Reporting your evidence

**Pulling all this evidence together into a report, which describes the aims of your festival, and the extent to which these aims were realised, can be a powerful tool in advocating for future support from partners and funders.**

Some of the key things to include in this kind of report would be:

- the aims and context of your festival
- any information about the local areas in which your festival is located
- clear tables of figures about attendance and participation
- tables or charts of other data (like satisfaction ratings for example) – remember to give information about the sample sizes
- some quotes from vox pops or other feedback, which illuminate the data by giving real examples of audience experiences
- a conclusion that reflects on the aims of the festival, and whether they have been achieved.

When reporting on any findings from surveys or audience research, it is important to clearly state your methodology and sample size in order to give a picture of how representative of your audience the results are likely to be.

### **Presenting data in reports - a checklist:**

- What was the methodology?
- How was the sample created, what size was it and from what base?
- How many responses are the percentages based on?
- What claims are being made on the basis of the sample?
- Who undertook the research? Did they have any training?
- What were the questions asked?
- What are the key findings?
- How do your findings relate back to your aims?
- Do the findings fit with your own comparisons with other findings and other datasets?
- Have you been able to put the findings into a wider context?


# Methods of data collection


## Choosing the best method for you

There are a variety of research methods to find out more about your audience and/or festival, and each has its pros and cons. Some are more complex and resource-intensive than others and some are only appropriate for certain uses; it is always recommended to seek advice from those with expertise and experience of research, to ensure that the methods used are robust and that the data produced will be meaningful and useable.

Always think about what you need the findings to show – do you need to come away with robust figures and numbers, or a more rounded view which may pick up on areas you hadn't considered? Each method has its strengths and weaknesses, so to help you think about what will work best for your festival we have created the following key:

**Staff resources** - do you have enough staff members or volunteers to carry this out?


 can be done by an individual


 small team

 labour-intensive


**Timing** – how much time will you need to commit?


 quick


 reasonable amount of time

 time-intensive


**Accuracy** – will it give you robust and useful data?


 very robust


 quite robust

 not very robust

**Access issues** – is it compatible with an open and representative access policy?

 fully accessible

 some access challenges

 not well-suited

**Cost** – how much would you need to budget?

 affordable

 reasonable cost

 expensive

**Results** – will it give you numbers to crunch or sound bites to quote?

 data & figures

 quotes

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## Face-to-face audience surveys



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Interviewer-led questionnaires, either using an agency or trained festival staff/volunteers.

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### Pros

- Gives good quality data
- Representative, and can calculate the accuracy of findings using standard statistical tests
- Can provide staff/volunteers with useful transferable skills

### Cons

- Large numbers required to be statistically valid
- Instrumentally driven, snapshot evidence, necessarily reductive
- Interviews at the event get reactions of the moment
- Not appropriate for events with small collection window due to length of interview
- Difficulty of completing surveys at night events, so timing matters

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## Follow-up e-survey



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Collect email addresses on the day and send a link to an e-survey shortly after.

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### Pros

- Cheap and quick to gather addresses – one fieldworker could gather up to 50 contacts in one hour
- Extensive reach – can put link to survey in emails, on social networking sites etc

### Cons

- Difficult to get a decent representative sample - may only get a 10% response rate from those you collected from, therefore likely to be quite skewed
- Follow-up phone calls may be required to boost sample
- Costs of incentives

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## Mini interviews



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Very short interviewer-led questionnaires, either using an agency or trained festival staff/volunteers.

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### Pros

- Great at asking a few key questions when time is limited
- Can achieve a robust sample more easily than more time-consuming methods
- Provides great quotes and sound bites

### Cons

- Limited length, so only able to ask key questions – limits depth of analysis possible



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## Vox pops



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Audio or video recording quick interviews to get immediate impressions/impacts.

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### Pros

- Good for getting actual comments/quotes
- Flexible

### Cons

- Cost and time needed for transcription and/or editing
- Cost of equipment – not too expensive, but more so than paper and clipboards

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## Documentation



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Collecting images and anecdotes in e.g. a scrapbook.

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### Pros

- Can paint an overall picture of the festival

### Cons

- Non-theorised and unstructured qualitative evidence often fails to convince development agencies and local authorities
- Needs to be backed up by research expertise

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## Postcards



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Capturing data in a small number of questions.

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### Pros

- Quick and easy to distribute and for audience members to complete
- Can provide some useful quotes

### Cons

- Self-completed so little control over sample or quality of responses
- Only likely to attract responses from those with something particular to say, so not good for overall monitoring

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## Mystery shoppers



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Pre-recruited researchers go 'undercover' to test your festival, and feedback using a structured form.

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### Pros

- Can give good insight, as the mystery shopper will be actively noting more aspects of your festival than the 'average' audience member
- Mystery Shoppers can be chosen to be representative of your expected audience members

### Cons

- Can be time-consuming to administer
- Incentives should be used
- Not achieving a wholly 'realistic' view of your festival
- Hard to calculate statistical robustness of findings due to necessarily small sample

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## Headcount



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Use clickers or stickers to count audience members.

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### Pros

- Gives relatively accurate number of attenders (as long as errors are known, i.e. people leaving and returning)

### Cons

- Tells you nothing about the makeup or experience of audience

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## Comments books, letters, word of mouth



### Pros

- Good for getting quotes for marketing, press etc.

### Cons

- Sample will be skewed towards those with strong opinions
- Not statistically robust at all

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## Focus groups



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Meet with audience members following the festival.

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### Pros

- Gives a lot of depth, so you may find out about issues you'd not previously considered
- Give a vivid picture of the audience experience

### Cons

- Need to be held soon after the festival
- Need to spend time recruiting at the festival
- Groups may be made up of more engaged audience members, so not necessarily truly representative of your audience
- Expensive and time-consuming
- Requires skilled facilitation, usually best done by a specialist

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## Compiling press cuttings



### Pros

- Can indicate how effective your marketing was
- Can provide useful quotes and perspectives of the festival

### Cons

- Unlikely to satisfy funders or other stakeholders
- Nothing new learned about your audience

## Observations



Record what audience members do at your festival, and how they engage with the content.

### Pros

- Gives an indication of how the audience actually acted, rather than what they reported they did

### Cons

- Analysis can be time consuming
- Doesn't tell you why the audience acted in a certain way



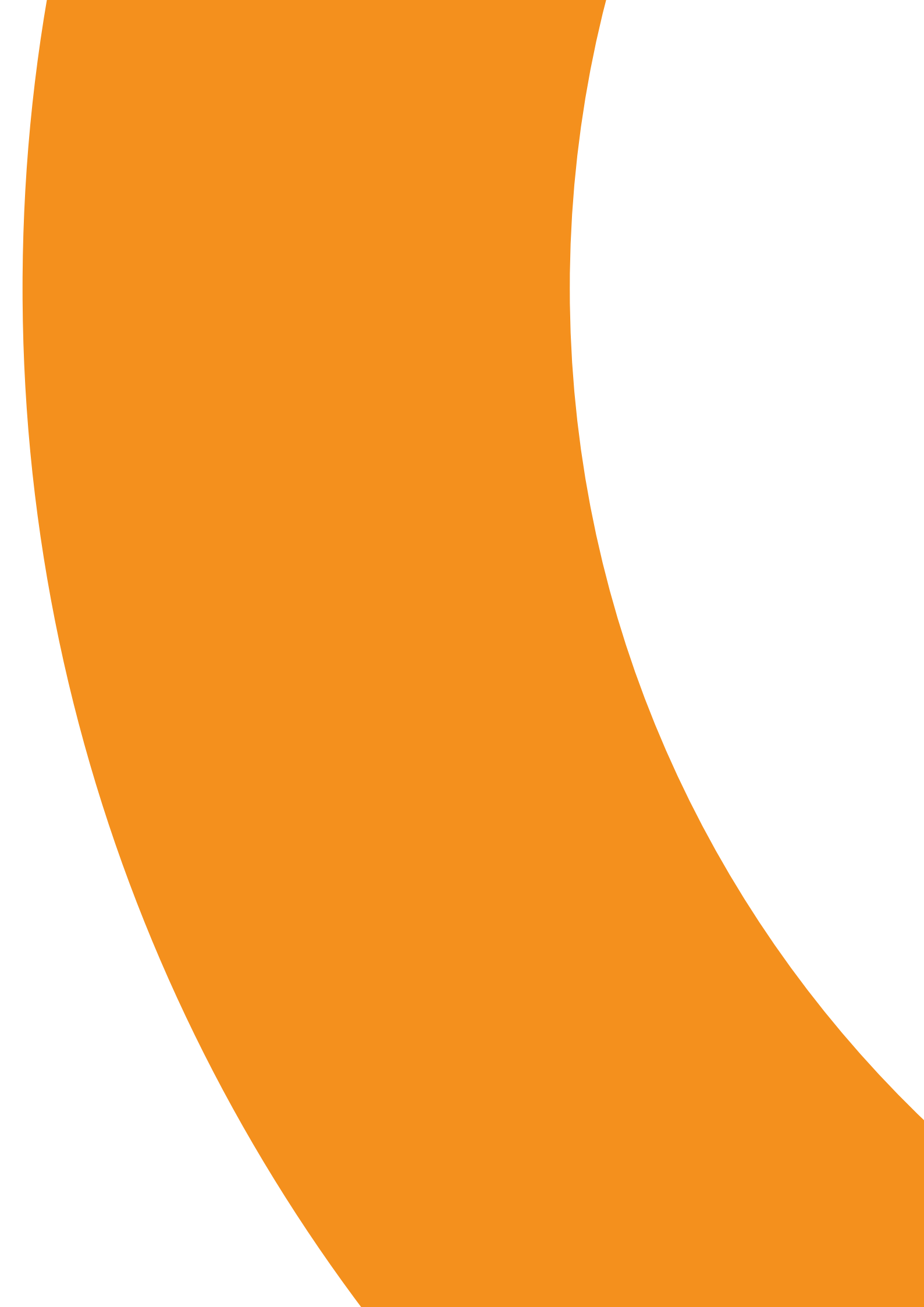
We are always happy to advise you in more detail on any of these methods, and can either supply these research services ourselves or will be able to put you in touch with appropriate suppliers.

## A note on monitoring diversity

All the usual research principles apply when monitoring diversity, but these are some particularly important things to bear in mind:

- It must be based on the audience's own perspective, rather than an estimate based on observation of the audience. 'Head-counting' is not appropriate.
- Any exercise involving monitoring diversity should have a clear purpose, and it's important to communicate this to the audience to build their trust.
- Gathering sensitive data means it's vital to reassure people about confidentiality.
- Ensure an inclusive approach that doesn't systematically omit any groups.
- When using questionnaires, use recognized standard categories, best displayed using tickboxes, and include an 'Other' option.

There is a report on Audiences London's website called [Monitoring Audience Diversity](#), which outlines areas of best practice, as well as including discussion about different concerns and issues around monitoring diversity.



Fuse at Royal Parks' Kensington Gardens in July 2010.  
Photo: Anne-Marie Briscoombe



# Using questionnaires

When they are designed well and used correctly, questionnaires can give robust findings on a wide range of objectives. In this section we suggest how to gather this information most effectively.

## Common questions

We have produced some suggested common questions which have been explored with a selection of festivals. Discussions revealed that there is a shared need to find out certain core areas of information.

We would strongly recommend that organisations ask questions in the same way, including offering the same response codes to increase the potential for comparisons and future data benchmarking. There are some types of question in particular that we would not advise altering, and these are highlighted.

## What are you trying to find out?

It's important to refer back to your research objectives and be clear about what you want to learn from the research, and what change or improvement might come from this new insight. You should only use the questions which are relevant to your festival's objectives, or your reporting requirements. In addition, the response codes that you use should align with any internal standards, reporting needs and data gathered for/by partners. Our full set of recommended questions and answer codes can be found on page 21.

Question objective	Question text	Notes
<b>Repeat attendance</b>	Have you been to <b>[event]</b> before? If Yes, how many times?	Use this question if you want to see if people are coming back from previous events, or if you're reaching new audience members.
<b>Information sources</b>	How did you find out about <b>[event]</b> ?  And which of these was your main source of information?	This question is about which information sources have been used to find out about the festival, not which were most effective at encouraging a visitor to attend.  Make sure you list the most likely information sources, but leave room for 'Other' responses.
<b>Motivations</b>	What made you decide to come to <b>[event]</b> ?  And which was your main reason?	
<b>Gender</b>	Are you ... male / female?	
<b>Age</b>	Which of the following age groups do you belong to?	The age groups we recommend are fairly standard, but make sure they tally with any other data sources you need to compare to. Also, our recommended age ranges group under 16s together as we do not recommend interviewing under 16s. This means your results will only be representative of adults at your event.
<b>Disability</b>	Do you consider yourself to be ... Deaf / disabled / neither.  Do you have any particular access needs that you feel we should know about? <b>[free response box]</b>	This is how the census asks about disability, so is best for monitoring how representative your audience is of the wider population.  This question is not directly comparable with population data, but will help you make changes to improve your event's access.

Question objective	Question text	Notes
<b>Ethnicity</b>	How would you describe your ethnic origin?	<p>We recommend using the standard census responses. You can add in particular groups of interest, but be aware this will likely cause other groups to appear to decrease in number. (For instance if you add 'Japanese', it is likely that the proportions of those identifying as 'Other Asian' and 'Other' responses will decrease).</p> <p>The 2011 census now gives some slightly different answer options, but we still recommend using those in our sample questionnaire to allow you to compare with existing data sets.</p>
<b>Geographic info</b>	What is your full postcode, or country of residence if living outside the UK?	It is important to try to collect full postcodes in order to carry out the most comprehensive data analysis.
<b>Cultural activity</b>	Not including today's event, have you attended or participated in any creative, artistic, theatrical or musical events in the last 12 months?	
<b>Social impact</b>	<p>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</p> <p>(Scale: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, Don't know/N/A)</p>	Choose statements that will clearly link back to your social impact objectives e.g. 'This event has made me view my local area more positively.'
<b>Context</b>	What is today's date? / What is the time?	You can collect information to identify the context in which the questionnaire is completed, helping you differentiate responses from different dates, times of day, locations etc. This can provide useful background information e.g. how the weather affects audiences and help ensure that your data is not skewed by any particular time or site.

## Designing your questionnaire

The design of your questionnaire can help ensure a good response rate by encouraging the respondent to get to the end of it! When designing your questionnaire, make sure you...

### DO:

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- **Provide enough information** – get buy-in from potential respondents by keeping them informed. Start off by telling them your reasons for doing the survey and reassuring them about data protection and end with information about the research, a data protection statement and contact details.
- **Make it inviting** – the introductory part should be friendly and match the tone of your festival.
- **Consider it from the respondent's perspective** – imagine how it will feel working through the questions and remember that they may not be familiar with your organisation.
- **Guide the respondent through it** – use grouping of questions, headings, instructions, explanations, question numbers etc. Try not to jump between subjects and position more sensitive questions towards the end.
- **Use a clear layout** – make sure you include some blank space on the page to keep it uncluttered, be careful about positioning and alignment of tick-boxes, and consider using pre-defined formatting for responses (called input masks).
- **Make sure it's relevance and purpose are clear** – a respondent is more likely to give up if it doesn't seem important.
- **Make it easy to return** – Have the return details in an obvious place at the end of the questionnaire
- **Consider offering an incentive** – offer an incentive, such as entry into a prize draw, and make sure this is clearly placed in the introduction.
- **Give it a test run!** Ask colleagues to try the questionnaire and give feedback.

### DON'T:

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- **Don't be repetitive** – are there different ways of asking questions that might seem repetitive? Or are you just repeating yourself unnecessarily?
- **Don't use biased responses** – make sure that your rating scales are balanced (i.e. same number of negative categories as positive categories, e.g. Very Good, Good, Neither, Poor, Very Poor) and avoid leading questions and subjective ratings.
- **Don't risk potential contamination** – this is where one question is likely to lead the respondents to give certain answers in following questions.
- **Don't overcomplicate it** – it doesn't need to look fancy and try to avoid using difficult or confusing words or jargon.
- **Don't make it too long** – think about the visual length as well as the time it will take to complete.
- **Don't ask unnecessary questions** – always refer back to your objectives and only ask what you need to find out.



## Sample questionnaire

We are carrying out a survey to get to know more about our audiences and to understand how well you and other members of the public are being served.

We'd be delighted if you could spare 5 minutes to answer some questions. As a thank you, we'll enter your name into a prize draw to win [prize]. Find out what we do as a result of audience feedback at [website].

Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used by [organisation] for research and development purposes.

You will not be added to mailing lists or receive junk mail as a result.

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### Getting started

Have you been to [event] before? Please tick one box only

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_

Yes - how many times? \_\_\_\_  No  Don't Know

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### What brought you here?

What made you decide to come to [event]? Tick as many boxes as apply

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I found the description interesting    | <input type="checkbox"/> I am participating in it           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I wanted to see a particular performer | <input type="checkbox"/> I know someone participating in it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To spend some time with friends/family | <input type="checkbox"/> I was just passing by              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy outdoor festivals              | <input type="checkbox"/> I've been before                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a professional involvement      | <input type="checkbox"/> [Other specific motivations]       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It was recommended by someone          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below)       |

And which was your main reason? Circle or highlight your one main reason in the above list

How did you find out about [event]? Tick as many boxes as apply

- A brochure or leaflet through the post
- A brochure or leaflet picked up – where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Poster – where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Listings (e.g. Metro, Time Out...) \_\_\_\_\_
- Newspaper
- TV/Radio
- A colleague/ friend/family member told me about it
- [event] website
- Email from [event]
- Through social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) – which? \_\_\_\_\_
- [Other festival-specific marketing channels]
- Other – please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- None of these – I was passing and decided to visit

## What did you think?

How would you rate your experience of the following? *Please tick one box for each statement*

	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know / n/a
Information about [event] before coming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Atmosphere at [event]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility of [event]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Artistic quality of [event]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The whole experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? *Please tick one box for each statement*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know / n/a
[event] has enhanced the sense of community in [area]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[event] has shown me that there is a good range of things to do in [area]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[event] has made me view [area] more positively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was able to meet new people at [event]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[event] has increased my knowledge of people whose backgrounds are different to my own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any other comments about [event]? *Please describe below*

---



---

## Other things you do

Not including today's event, have you attended or participated in any creative, artistic, theatrical or musical events in the last 12 months? *Please tick one box only*

Yes - *how many times?* \_\_\_\_\_  No  Don't Know

Which (if any) of these activities have you done or tried in the past 12 months? *Tick as many boxes as apply*

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attended a theatre      | <input type="checkbox"/> Attended classical music  | <input type="checkbox"/> Attended dance           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attended a cinema       | <input type="checkbox"/> Attended other live music | <input type="checkbox"/> Performed or created art |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attended an art gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> Read a book for pleasure  | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these            |

---

## About you

Your answers to these will help us to understand if we are offering an equally good service to everyone in our community.

Are you... *(please tick one)*  Male  Female  Prefer not to say

How old are you... *(please tick one)*

- Under 16  16-19  20-24  25-34  
 35-44  45-54  55-64  65 or over  Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to be... *(please tick one)*

- Deaf  Disabled  Neither

Do you have any particular access needs that you feel we should know about? *(please tick one)*

- No  Yes - *please describe* \_\_\_\_\_

### How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Please tick one description (as recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality) with which you identify or write in another answer below.

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> British	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> African	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Other *please state
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean		<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Other White *please state	<input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Black *please state		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Mixed *please state	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian *please state			

If other, please state: \_\_\_\_\_

### What is your full postcode, or country of residence if living outside the UK?

This will be used to help us understand our audience and will not be personally identifiable

Postcode:

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Prize draw

Would you like to be entered into the free prize draw?  Yes - complete details below  No

The closing date for the free prize draw is **[closing date]**. The winner will be notified by telephone or email within 14 days of this date.  
The prize of **[prize]** is non-exchangeable.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_





*The Wheel of Death* by Studio de Cirque de  
Marseilles at the National Theatre.  
Photo: Ludovic des Cognets © National Theatre

# Sampling for surveys

This covers what sampling is, how to define who should be in your sample, appropriate sample sizes and methods for achieving a representative sample, when surveying your audiences.

## What is a sample?

A sample is a selection of everyone that you are interested in. In an ideal world, any research would find out about each and every person that you are interested in, which is called a census. As it is usually impractical to carry out a census (i.e. to include every member of the audience in the survey), a sample gives an indication of the attributes of the wider population by looking at the attributes of a smaller group within that population. In your case the population will usually be everybody visiting your festival, and the sample will be a group of randomly chosen individuals.



## Choosing an appropriate sample size

Your sample size should be large enough that the results you see from the sample are applicable to your wider audience, to an appropriate degree of accuracy. Your target sample size (i.e. how many people you want to speak to) will depend on how many respondents are needed to give a strong indication that their profile will be similar to that of the population as a whole. The following table shows appropriate target sample sizes for different expected audience numbers.

## Sample size

Total number of people attending	Sample required for 5% margin of error	Sample required for 8% margin of error
20,000 or more	377	149
10,000	370	148
5,000	357	146
1,000	278	131
500	218	116

Confidence level: 95%

The 'margin of error' relates to the extent to which you can generalise findings about your sample to the wider audience.

What this table shows is that if you created a good random sample of 278 from an audience of 1,000 people, the results you produce would have a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$  (plus or minus 5%). So, if you find that 55% of your sample are women, this means that you should report that between 50% and 60% (i.e. 55% plus or minus 5%) of your audience were women. If you had a sample size of 131, of which 55% were women, the margin of error would increase to 8%, and you should report that between 47% and 63% of your audience were women.

The above table and examples use a confidence level of 95% - that is to say, that if a sample was randomly taken from a population 100 times, 95 out of 100 of these samples would share characteristics within the margin of error given. So, using the above example, with a sample of 278 from a population of 1,000, between 50% and 60% of each sample will be women in 95 out of 100 samples.

## Random sampling

Random sampling is based on the aim that each person attending your event in theory has the same chance of being included in the survey. A truly random sample will be as representative of your audience as possible, and not favour certain types of visitors over others.

There are always certain elements that affect a random sample, which can be hard to overcome (e.g. language barriers, physical or practical considerations), but there are some elements that can be minimised such as interviewer bias, time of day or location of interviews.

Time of day and location factors should be minimised by creating a 'sample frame' that proportionally reflects your whole offer. You should make sure that the survey is conducted in a range of spaces, on a range of days, and at a range of times according to the numbers of audience members you expect in each space over the duration of your event or festival. In practice, if you expect twice as many visitors on Saturday as you do on Friday, you should aim to conduct twice as many interviews on Saturday than Friday. Likewise, if you expect Saturday afternoon to attract more people than Saturday morning, more interviews should be conducted in the afternoon than in the morning.

Interviewer bias, where interviewers tend to be more likely to approach audience members who look more likely to respond, can be minimised by removing the element of choice from an interviewer in terms of who they can approach, by:

- asking every third person passing by;
- giving stickers to all audience members when they enter the festival site, with every tenth sticker being a different colour - interviewers then only approach those with the differently coloured stickers;
- not avoiding groups, but if approaching a group, select the person whose birthday is soonest.



## Sampling from a crowd

Interviewing people at busy events can seem daunting at first, with lots of potential respondents on site. There are some ways of making it a bit easier to single respondents out from the crowd:

- Position the interviewer near an entry/exit gate, where there is a steady flow of people passing, rather than in an open area where people are moving in all directions.
- If it's not practical to interview at an entry/exit point, still try to be methodical by choosing a small, central area (e.g. between two trees or other landmarks) and approach anyone entering that space.
- Another way to do this is to walk to and fro in a straight line between two points and, for instance, ask every third person that comes within five metres.
- Use one of the random sampling methods described in the previous section.

## How to maximise response rates

### Interviewer tips

If you are using an interview-led methodology (such as face-to-face interviews) you can maximise the number of completed interviews by ensuring that:

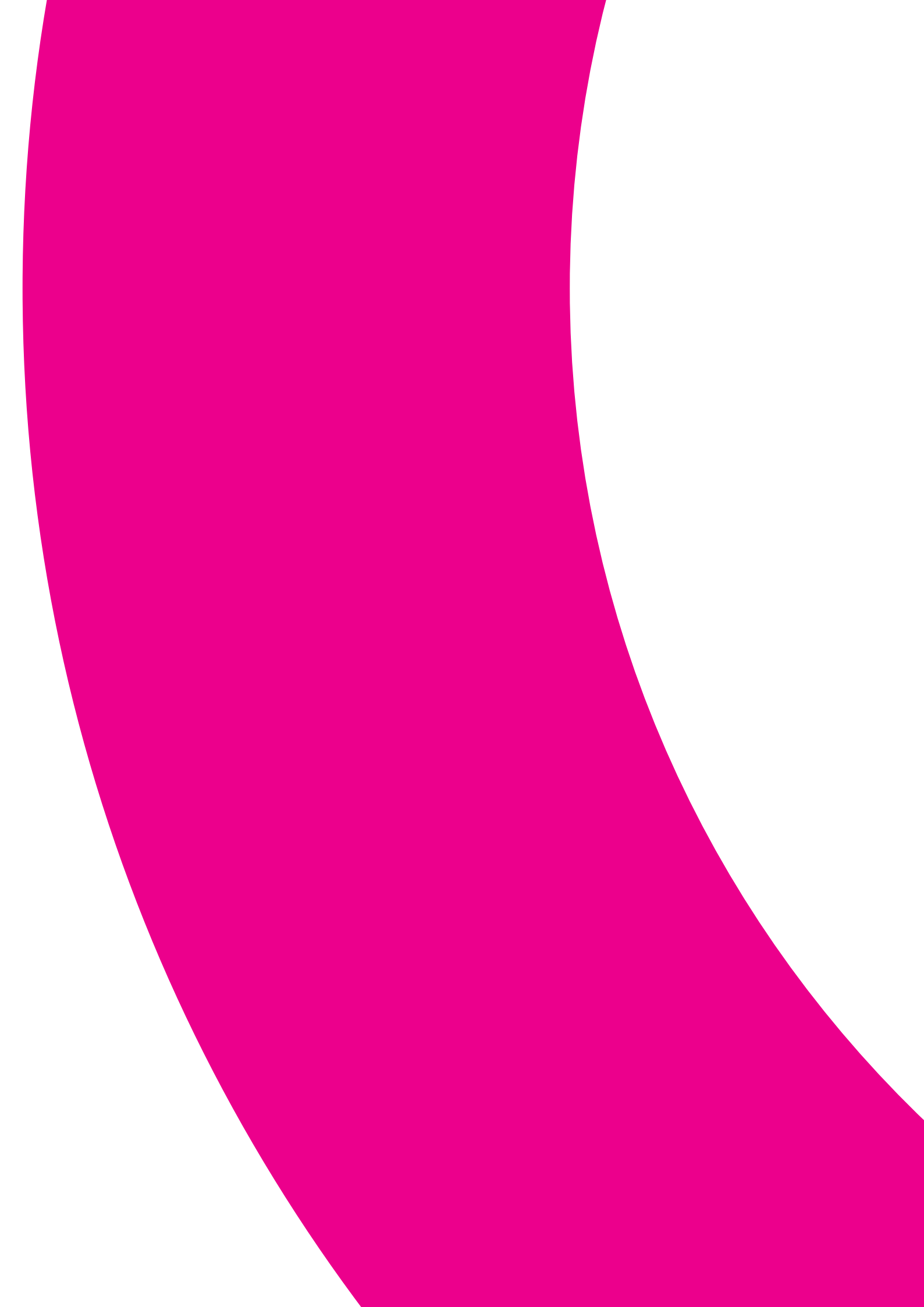
- the interviewer feels confident in approaching and engaging with people, using open body language and smiling;
- the respondent is clearly informed why it's important for them to take part in the research, how long it will take and what's in it for them;
- the respondent is assured of confidentiality, and is given answers to any questions they might have about the research;
- the survey flows well, so the interviewer can navigate it easily;

- questions are only asked if useful and relevant – the shorter the questionnaire the more likely people will agree to help, and the more interviews can be achieved.

### Self-completion tips

If you are using a self-completion methodology (such as handing out questionnaires or postcards) good questionnaire design is essential, as is encouraging respondents to complete and return their questionnaire.

- See page 20 for advice on designing your questionnaire.
- Incentives, such as being entered into a prize draw, encourage people to fill in and return questionnaires. However, you should make sure you offer neutral incentives which will be equally motivating to all those in your audience rather than anything related to your festival (which might not be a good incentive for those who didn't have a great time).
- Make sure it's easy for respondents to return questionnaires – either by freepost or by placing a clearly labelled box in a prominent position. Alternatively, you could do something a bit more creative, such as having a human post-box roaming your festival site!



Jamaica Live event in Birmingham city centre, July 2011:  
part of the Cultural Olympiad in the West Midlands.



## Estimating audience size

This section covers why and when you might need to estimate audience size, looks at different methods of doing so, and highlights the importance of robust figures.

The size of the audience is a key piece of data – for planning your event, evaluating its success and reporting to funders and partners. Visitor estimates can be split into two types – predictions of how many people will attend and estimates of how many people actually attended – both of which are discussed here.

There is real value in being as accurate as possible in estimating audience size, and to do it well requires thought and planning. It is important to consider why you need to do it, what resources you need, and which approach will give your results a good level of clarity.

## Planning

Estimating the number of people you expect to attend your event or festival is a key part of the planning process. Not only will you usually be expected to give an indication of numbers of attendees when applying for licenses, funding, sponsorship and so on, but it's vital in planning facilities, staff requirements, transport needs etc.

Getting this estimate as accurate as possible is really important: If the number you estimate is lower than actually happens, facilities may be over-subscribed, your event may be too crowded or you may have to turn people away; if your estimate is too high you may have spent money on facilities you didn't need and it could be difficult to show the success of your event, from an audience-size point of view.

## Evaluating and reporting

Any estimate of audience size is a good start, but it's important to be able to show how you arrived at it and explain why you chose that method. If you can show that you have used a robust method for estimating the size of the audience, your evaluation and reporting as a whole will be much stronger, and so be much more useful for planning future events and demonstrating the success of your event.

Beyond estimating a number as an end in itself, one area of evaluation which depends on having an accurate audience size estimate is surveying your audience. It's important to a) make sure you are speaking to enough people to get a representative sample of the audience and b) be able to give margins of error in any of your findings. See the section on Sampling for more information.

## Estimating before the event

In the planning stages of your event, consider the following when estimating your likely audience size:

- **Previous events** – if you've put on the event in previous years, how might this one compare? Think about content (likely to be more popular? More specialist or niche?), timing (does it clash with any other events? Could it capitalise on warmer weather?), marketing spend, retention of audience from previous events etc.
- **Similar events** – think about other similar events. How many people did they attract? What elements do they share with your event? The organisers of other events may be able to help with your estimates. This is especially important if you have not put on this event before.
- **Capacity** – if you have determined the location of your event, what is its capacity? If you expect the audience churn to be low, your audience size is unlikely to be larger than your capacity.
- **Churn** – over the course of your event, will visitors be likely to stay for the whole event or just 20 minutes? If a high churn of audience members means more people can attend over the course of the day than the capacity of your venue holds at any one time, you could have a much larger audience than the capacity of your venue might suggest.

As well as being a key part of your planning, having a good idea of expected audience numbers will also help plan the best way to estimate/sample on the day. For instance, if you are expecting lots of people you might need to allocate more people to carry out headcounts.


## Estimating during the event

It can be difficult to get a good estimate of your audience size whilst your event is underway, so it's vital that you choose the most appropriate method, based on the nature of your event, the resources you have available, and how accurate your estimate needs to be.

Not only will this ensure you come away with the most accurate estimate possible, but you will also be able to explain how you came up with your estimate to funders or other bodies – which will make your results much more credible.

Use the following key to help select the best method for you:

**Staff resources** - do you have enough staff members or volunteers to carry this out?


 can be done by an individual

 small team

 labour-intensive

**Timing** – how much time will you need to commit?

 quick

 reasonable amount of time

 time-intensive


**Cost** – how much would you need to budget?


 affordable


 reasonable cost

 expensive


**Access issues** – is it compatible with an open and representative access policy?


 fully accessible


 some access challenges

 not well-suited

**Accuracy** – will it give you robust and useful data?

 very robust

 quite robust

 not very robust

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## Stickers



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Hand a sticker to each person entering your event. At the end of the day see how many stickers remain.

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### Pros

- Easy to administer
- Fun for your audience
- Can brand stickers to enhance event identity
- Small margin of error

### Cons

- Only suitable if your site has defined entrance points
- Can cause congestion if lots of people arriving at same time

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## Clickers



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Have counters on each entrance point counting people entering the site. These could either be manual clickers or automated counters.

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### Pros

- Fairly easy to administer
- May already have to do this for health and safety reasons
- Unambiguous, doesn't rely on other information sources such as surveys, crowd density or churn

### Cons

- Only suitable if your site has defined entrance points
- If you are using automated counters, be aware of over-counting
- Can be difficult to count if lots of people arriving at same time
- People leaving the site and re-entering may be counted as two audience members

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## Exit count



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Rather than counting the numbers of people entering your site, count the number of people leaving, using stickers or clickers.

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### Pros

- Useful if you expect lots of people to arrive at the same time, but to exit over a longer period of time
- Reduce double-counting by asking people if they plan on coming back in later

### Cons

- Only suitable if your site has defined entrance points
- If you are using automated counters, be aware of over-counting
- Can be difficult to count if lots of people leaving at same time

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## Headcounts



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At key points in the day, do a headcount of the site. Combine this with your average dwell time (either from a survey or from estimates based on observation).

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### Pros

- Useful where site doesn't have defined entrances and exits
- Relatively simple to brief staff or volunteers to do

### Cons

- Quite time-intensive
- Relatively large margin of error
- Need to know dwell time for best estimates

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## People per square meter



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Estimate the density of people at your event, and then multiply it by the size of your site. You will need to take into account density at different points and churn.

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### Pros

- Useful where site doesn't have defined entrances and exits
- Very simple if you have a good idea of crowd density and site size
- Crowd density estimates already exist for scenarios such as concerts and parades

### Cons

- Need to have an accurate estimate of density - any errors are magnified once multiplied across the site
- Density may vary throughout your site and throughout your event's duration
- Doesn't work well when density is low

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## Photographs



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Similar to doing a headcount, take photographs throughout the event from a good vantage point.

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### Pros

- Useful where site doesn't have defined entrances and exits
- May be better than a headcount if there are lots of people in a small space

### Cons

- Need to know dwell time for best estimates
- Photographs have to be of good quality

## Sales



Record the number of drinks (for example) sold and divide this by the average number of drinks each survey respondent had – which you could find out from an audience survey.

### Pros

- Useful where site doesn't have defined entrances and exits
- Requires little additional time or resources if a survey is already being done

### Cons

- Depends on a good number of responses to the survey (typically at least 250) and a representative sample

## Programmes



Keep a record of how many programmes are distributed and ask on your survey if people received a programme.

### Pros

- Good if you have multiple entrance points
- Little extra resource needed
- Programmes can be distributed at entrances or throughout the site
- Can still be used without a survey by assuming a certain % of visitors received a programme

### Cons

- Need to note when groups share a programme
- Helps to have an idea of the average number of 'users' a programme has throughout the day i.e. how many people shared or passed on programmes

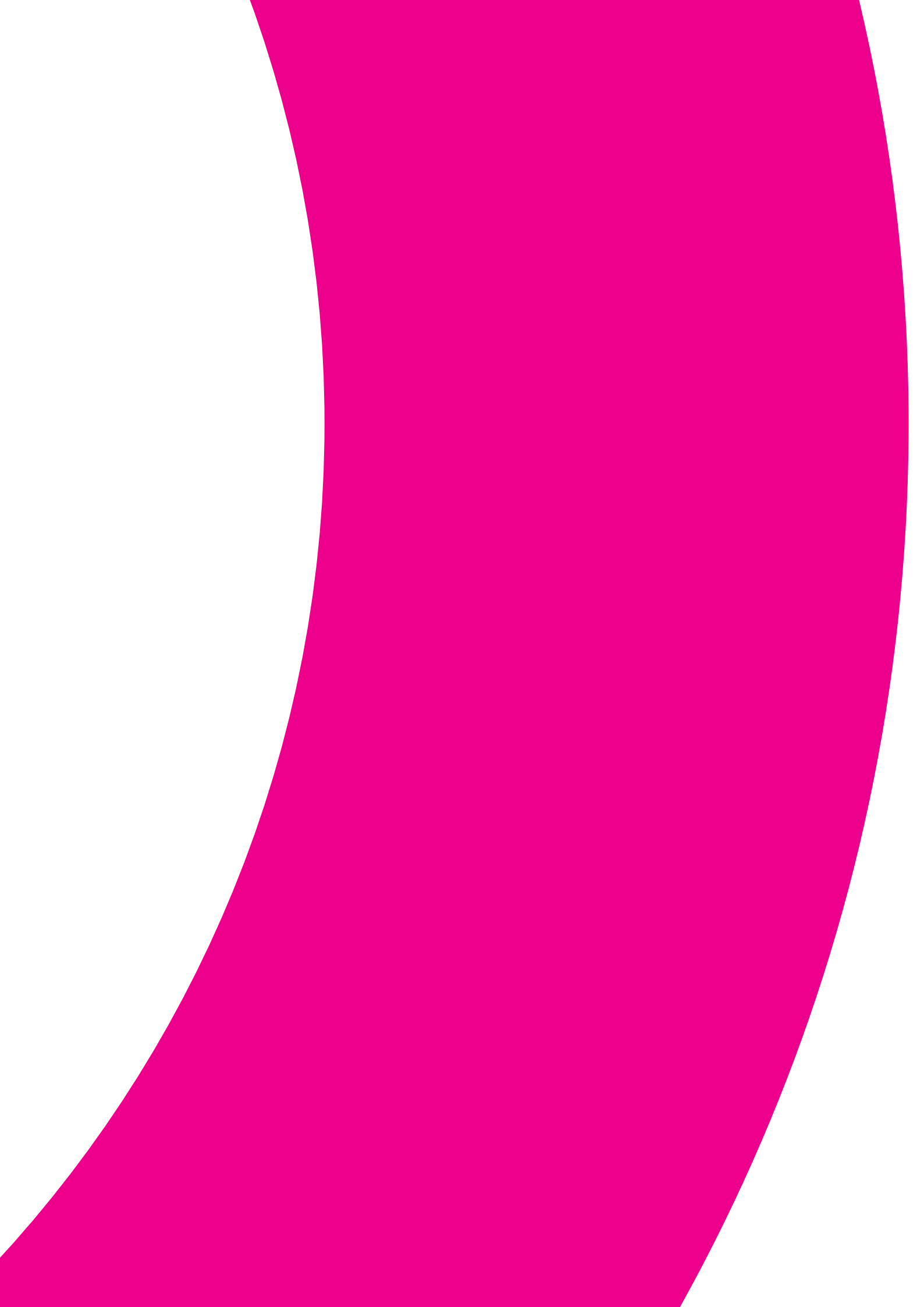
## So, how many people were there?

The best way to arrive at this all-important number will depend on the nature of the event. If you have defined entrances and or exits then counting with either clickers or stickers should help you arrive at a fairly accurate figure.

If your event is more free-flowing then we would recommend employing a combination of methods and comparing the results, in order to generate an informed estimate based on the average. If you estimate the number of people per square meter, taking into account different densities etc, you can calculate a likely number of people on site at any given moment. A survey with a good sample can give you an average visit length and you can use these figures to reach an overall estimate for the day.

The survey can also help you work out what percentage of people bought programmes or an average number of drinks purchased, which you can cross-check with your sales records and calculate another overall estimate. If these two numbers are within a reasonable margin of error of one another then you can quote their average with confidence as an estimate of your total audience.







Smashed at Greenwich & Docklands International Festival 2011.  
Photo: Doug Southall



## Working with volunteers

Often the people you will need to be collecting information at your outdoor event will be volunteers. This section gives guidance on recruiting, working with and supporting your volunteer team.

### The first things to consider are:

- You will have limited opportunities to collect all the information you need about your audience at an outdoor event.
- You need to make sure that you ask for information in the right way; people are at your event to enjoy themselves and the way that you approach them will reflect upon your event.

### Who is right for this role?

It is essential that you recruit the right people as volunteers to help you achieve both a great event and useful information about your audience.

Your volunteers might work with or be known to your organisation in some other way or they might be people that you have recruited especially for this event.

## Your volunteers need to be:

**Good communicators** – be happy approaching and talking to people they don't know and be aware of the rest of the event (where toilets are etc) - your audience will associate them with your event so they need to know what is going on and be able to represent you

**Organised** – show up on time, take the methodology seriously, be aware of what equipment is required and be well prepared

**Reliable and accurate** – able to follow directions meticulously, store data sensibly and appropriately and take pride in doing a job well

**Sensitive** – be aware of data protection and access issues and understanding of the audience's perspective

**Personable** – people will be much more likely to talk to someone who is friendly and smiling and they should be able to relate to your target audience

If volunteers are not confident enough in the role you have assigned them, they are more likely to only talk to people they know or identify with, which will not give you the breadth of information you will need.

## Planning

The main thing volunteers will need to be happy and effective in their role is clear and consistent direction. This will need to be provided by someone so make sure enough time and resources are allocated to someone in your team to manage this.

Be clear within your organisation what their role will be and who will be their main point of contact before you recruit them. Try to think through whether you have the capacity to manage a large team of volunteers or if this might be a volunteer role in itself, in which case you should plan to recruit for this role and train them first so that they can be confidently installed as first point of contact to the rest of the volunteer team.

## Recruitment

There are lots of people looking for volunteering opportunities in the arts, as a means of gaining work experience, as an opportunity to connect with others in the arts and to have new experiences. To be sure you get the right volunteers for this specific role, put some time and thought into the recruitment process.

### Describe the role in a clear and appealing way

- Use a descriptive, eye-catching title for the opportunity. Try to avoid generic opportunity titles such as 'Volunteer' or 'Admin assistant'.
- Keep the opportunity description short, snappy and straight to the point. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Things to include:
  - » What does the role involve?
  - » Who will the volunteer be working with?
  - » What skills will they develop?
  - » What benefit will their volunteering bring to the organisation, and to them personally?
  - » Are there any skills or experience which are necessary?
  - » What will the time commitment be?
  - » What can they expect in terms of expenses?
  - » Who should they contact?

### For example:

*"Volunteers are needed to help people fill out questionnaires at our event in Hackney"*

### ...might be better expressed as:

**Research Assistant** – Meet artists, producers and local residents and learn audience research skills in an arts organisation. The fifth annual Hackney Festival needs friendly, approachable volunteers to help us discover what the public think of the festival.

Commitment: Half-day training on 12 July 2012 and 8 hour shift on any day 18-21 July 2012. Travel expenses and lunch provided.

Contact: Emma at [info@hackney.com](mailto:info@hackney.com) to register your interest.



### Where to advertise

If you have a particular target demographic for your event, apply the same principles to recruiting volunteers as you would to marketing to this audience and think about which networks are most logical for you. Focus on these first, as advertising more widely may generate more interest than you can manage.

- Through your existing networks and previous volunteers – these people are likely to take less time to train and manage.
- If your event is attached to a venue, do they have a list of volunteers you could invite?
- If the festival involves partners or is engaging with any community groups, see if you can invite people through their networks.
- Your local Volunteer Centre helps link up organisations who require volunteers and those who want to give their time - see [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

- You can post volunteer opportunities on [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) - a national database of volunteers - via your local Volunteer Centre.
- Artsjobs – this mailing list goes to a wide range of those interested in working in the arts, as well as current practitioners - <http://www.artsjobs.org.uk>
- College and university students and recent graduates are keener than ever to gain new experiences to add to their CVs. Try contacting the Student Services department of a college/ university near where your festival will be based. See [www.scit.wlv.ac.uk/ukinfo](http://www.scit.wlv.ac.uk/ukinfo) for a useful map-based list of colleges and universities.
- Consider approaching back-to-work or employment initiatives in your area. They may be able to offer support if you make this opportunity accessible to people using their services.

If you would like to be targeted in recruiting volunteers from any specific demographics, a good guide can be found at <http://www.volunteergenie.org.uk/who-do-you-want-to-recruit>

### Selecting the right volunteers

Make sure you implement a clear recruitment process. Acknowledge receipt of all expressions of interest and explain the next stage – whether this is an application form to find out more, an interview or an invitation to a briefing or selection event. Remember you may want to over-recruit initially, or have a reserve list, in case some people drop out. If you find that the opportunity attracts lot of interest, don't forget to thank everyone who has taken the time to contact you and let them know whether they have been successful.

Above left: *Inside Out* by The Dance Movement in Peacocks Shopping Centre. Part of Dance in unusual places - a Woking Dance Festival commission.  
Photo: Justin Dix

## Training and support

Regardless of the level of experience a volunteer might already have, some training will always be necessary - it's important that volunteers feel confident and knowledgeable enough about the interview process to be able to collect good data in an un-intrusive way. A training session would typically cover:

- Background on your organisation
- Explanation on different methods of data collection, and why you've chosen the method you have
- Sampling – the importance of getting representative views and profile of your audience, and who should and should not be interviewed
- How to encourage people to take part in the research
- Interview techniques
- How to record responses to different question types
- Dealing with sensitive questions
- Data protection and Market Research Society best practice

After their initial training, your volunteers should have access to ongoing support during their time with you, and made to feel comfortable asking questions or expressing concerns. Take the opportunity during training to make it clear how they can access this. They should have a named supervisor who they can approach with any questions about their role.



## Reward and recognition

Make sure you thank volunteers, and express how vital their role is. Although volunteers should not receive payment for their services, you could give them opportunities to become more engaged with your organisation, offer certificates relating to their training and service or have a social event for them after your event.

Be aware of people's motivations for volunteering and offer feedback about their performance in a way that will be most useful to them. For example, if they view this opportunity as work experience then written feedback or offering to be a referee for them might be the most valuable reward. Make sure that your volunteers also have an opportunity to feedback about their experience working with you too.

Above: *Meet Me Far from Gravity* – a pop-up dance performance by Bottlefed, commissioned by London's Central Arts Partnership in 2011.  
Photo: Richard Thomson

## Legal considerations and expenses

As an employer, you have certain responsibilities towards your volunteers. Some key considerations are:

- You must ensure that volunteers have everything they need to conduct the research safely, and not be put in a situation where they feel unsafe. This might mean getting volunteers to work in pairs, especially if the research is taking place after dark.
- Expenses should be given to volunteers for any out-of-pocket expenses – typically travel and food. You should get receipts for these, and provide your volunteers with copies, as they may be required to keep a record of any payments for tax or benefits reasons.
- It's the responsibility of volunteers on state benefits to inform their benefits advisor that they are carrying out volunteering work. This will not affect their benefit eligibility.
- There is considerable political sensitivity around unpaid work, and particularly long-term internships and you must make sure that you are complying with national minimum wage legislation.
- Be aware that any agreements you form with volunteers describing what they intend to commit to your organisation cannot be considered binding contracts; otherwise they should be treated as paid employees.

Please note that these are suggestions of things you should be aware of and are not substitutes for appropriate legal guidance.

## Calculating economic value

Don't forget that your volunteers are also bringing economic value to your organisation, and can be included in your reporting of in-kind financial support. A guide to measuring the economic value of their contribution can be found in the Good Practice Bank at [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk), along with many other helpful resources.

## Further resources

This section features tips from:

[www.volunteergenie.org.uk](http://www.volunteergenie.org.uk)

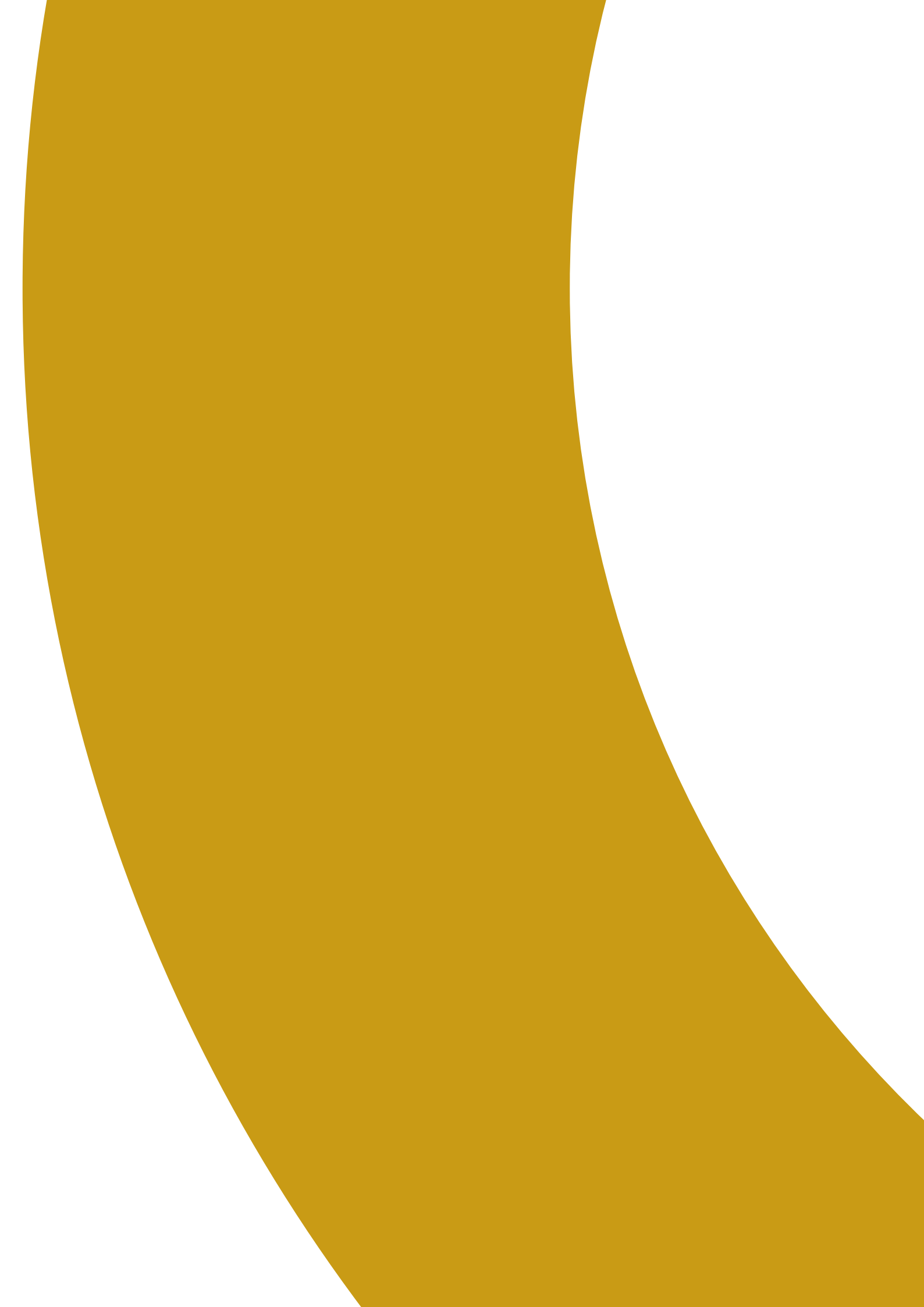
[www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)

[www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

These websites all have more resources which might be of use to you, especially if large numbers of volunteers are needed.



Above: © Capital Age Festival 2012





Birmingham Jazz Festival, July 2011.

The organisers - Big Bear Music - used the West Midlands Economic Impact Toolkit to measure the event's impact on the local economy.

# Assessing economic impact

**This section outlines how economic impact is assessed, discusses some of the advantages and challenges and suggests how it might be achieved.**

An economic impact assessment should look at how much money was brought into an economy, which would not have been spent there otherwise, as a result of a specific event or project. This can be a complex process, and will only ever give estimations of the economic impact of an event, rather than a definite figure. It will be focused on economic rather than social impacts and will not take in to account experiential ratings.



## What is economic impact?

**"The gross financial contribution made by an organisation or facility to the overall economy of its base area (for example, its town, region or nation)."**

(Audiences UK definition: [www.aduk.org/jargonbuster](http://www.aduk.org/jargonbuster))

## How is it calculated?

There are a number of ways (or methodologies) of calculating economic impact, and each has its strengths and weaknesses; some will be more suitable for large scale, multi-venue festivals and others for smaller, more contained events. We will be focusing on the UK Sport methodology, which is one of the more commonly used, and proven, methodologies. UK Sport uses the following definition of economic impact:

**“The net economic change in a host community that results from spending attributed to a sports event or facility.”**

(Turco & Kelsey, 1992)

The UK Sport methodology was devised for its Measuring Success project, which aimed to accurately measure the impact of sporting events in economic terms. Sixteen events were assessed using the methodology between 1997 and 2003, and a further six during 2005 and 2006. For each of these events since 1998, consultants made a number of pre-event forecasts of the likely economic impact attributable to an event based on desk research and interviews with the event organizers. These predictions were then compared with the results gained using the methodology.

A common confusion in considering economic impact is the concept of average spend per head, which is:

**“The mean income generated per person attending an event, series or year’s programme”**

(Audiences UK definition: [www.aduk.org/jargonbuster](http://www.aduk.org/jargonbuster))

Note that this is not the same as economic impact, as it does not take into account the impact your event has had on the wider area. However, this may be a useful measure in situations where a full economic impact assessment is not possible.

## The UK Sport Methodology

The methodology can be broken down into 10 stages:

1. Quantify the proportion of respondents who live in the host city and those who are from elsewhere
2. Group respondents by their role in the event, e.g. spectators, competitors, media, officials etc
3. Establish basic characteristics of visitors e.g. where they live and composition of the party
4. Determine the catchment area according to local, regional, national or international respondents
5. Quantify the number of visitors staying overnight in the host city and the proportion of these making use of commercial accommodation
6. Quantify how many nights those using commercial accommodation will stay in the host city and what this accommodation is costing per night
7. Quantify for those staying overnight (commercially or otherwise) and day visitors, the daily spend in the host city on six standard expenditure categories
8. Quantify what people have budgeted to spend in the host city and for how many people such expenditure is for
9. Establish the proportion of people whose main reason for being in the host city is the event
10. Determine if any spectators are combining their visit to an event with a holiday in order to estimate any wider economic impacts

All of these steps are needed in order to make an initial assessment. A questionnaire will usually be the best way of gathering this information.

## Should you assess economic impact?

If conducted properly, an economic impact assessment can give compelling evidence about the benefits of your festival on a given area, but it cannot be undertaken lightly. While you could ask questions around the 10 areas in the UK Sport Methodology in your audience surveys, long and complex questionnaires and experienced fieldworkers are necessary to gather the large amount of information required for a full economic impact assessment, and the analysis of this data is a complex task.

We therefore advise that this should only be undertaken by a specialist. If you are interested in commissioning an economic impact assessment, ask us or your local audience development agency to advise you on specialists in your area.

However, most festivals will not have the resources to commission a full economic impact study. For a more affordable estimate, we recommend the **Economic Impact Toolkit** that has been developed for 2012 as part of the Cultural Olympiad in the West Midlands.



Birmingham Jazz Festival, July 2011.

## West Midlands Economic Impact Toolkit

This Toolkit can be found here:

[www.eitoolkit.org.uk](http://www.eitoolkit.org.uk)

The Toolkit, which is free to use, is designed to help people from across the UK to measure the impact of their cultural events and activities, without requiring specialist research skills. In addition to economic impact, the Toolkit enables users to work out the equivalent monetary value (£) of volunteer contribution and the social effects generated by projects.

All sections require you to enter information about your event. The calculators then generate a unique report, containing estimates about the impact your event has had on a particular geographical area. Simply register as a new user and follow the step-by-step instructions to get your impact estimate.

If you are part of a group / network of people that would like to use the Toolkit they may be able to provide a short training session on how to use it. For more information contact Lauren Amery at [lauren.amery@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:lauren.amery@artscouncil.org.uk).



The Toolkit was written by the West Midlands Cultural Observatory with support from the West Midlands Cultural Research & Intelligence Group and was tested by the Sport Industry Research Centre before being developed as a web tool.

*Please note: To get an impact estimate for your festival from the Toolkit, certain questions need to be included in your audience questionnaire. Simply visit the 'Questionnaire Builder' section of the Toolkit for more information and to download the recommended questionnaires.*



Crossroads at Greenwich & Docklands International Festival 2011.  
Photo: AVK Photography



## Research guidelines and data protection

Whenever collecting data about individuals you need to be aware of legislation around data protection. This is a quick summary of legislation and industry guidelines which may be relevant to you; it is not legal advice and should not be relied upon as such.

### What is data protection?

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the processing of personal data. It protects the rights of individuals to ensure that all personal data is stored securely and processed fairly and lawfully.

For more in-depth information on these issues, please consult the websites of the Information Commissioner's Office ([www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)) and the Market Research Society ([www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)).

## The Market Research Society Code of Conduct

The MRS Code of Conduct is a voluntary code of practice which all MRS members are obliged to follow (Audiences London is MRS-affiliated and obliged to ensure any research programmes we are involved with also follow the code). Even if you are not an MRS member, it's a really useful guide to ensure that professional standards are maintained at all stages within the research process, giving you better research and putting respondents at ease.

The code can be found at [www.mrs.org.uk/standards/codeconduct.htm](http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/codeconduct.htm)

The general principles of the MRS code of conduct:

- Research is founded on willing cooperation. It depends upon confidence that it is conducted honestly, objectively and without unwelcome intrusion or harm to respondents. Its purpose is to collect and analyse information, and not directly to create sales nor to influence the opinions of anyone participating in it.
- The general public and other interested parties shall be entitled to complete assurance that no information collected in a research survey which could be used to identify them will be disclosed to anyone else without their agreement; that the information they supply will not be used for purposes other than research and that they will in no way be adversely affected as a result of participation.
- Wherever possible, respondents must be informed as to the purpose of the research and the likely length of time necessary for the collection of the information.
- Research findings must always be reported accurately and never used to mislead anyone, in any way.

## When carrying out audience surveys:

- Respondents must not be misled when being asked for cooperation to participate in a research project.
- A Respondent's right to withdraw from a research project at any stage must be respected.
- Respondents must be able to check without difficulty the identity and bona fides (credentials) of any individual and/or their employer conducting a research project.
- Interviewers must ensure that all of the following are clearly communicated to the Respondent:
  - » the name of the interviewer;
  - » the general subject of the interview;
  - » the purpose of the interview;
  - » if asked, the likely length of the interview.
- Respondents must not be unduly pressured to participate.
- Interviewers must delete any responses given by Respondents, if requested, and if reasonable and practicable.
- Interviewers must not reveal to any other Respondents the detailed answers provided by any Respondent or the identity of any other Respondent interviewed.
- Where incentives are offered, Interviewers must clearly inform Respondent who will administer the incentive.
- Respondent right to anonymity and confidentiality: the anonymity of Respondents must be preserved unless they have given their informed consent for their details to be revealed.
- Strict regulations apply for interviewing children – parent/guardian consent is required for interviewing under 16s.

## The Data Protection Act

Data protection legislation must be adhered to, and not doing so can have serious consequences. It operates on the principle that individuals must give informed consent to the ways in which their personal data is used.

Informed consent consists of two main elements:

- **Transparency:** ensuring that individuals have a very clear & unambiguous understanding of the purpose/s of collecting the data and how it will be used.
- **Consent:** at the time that the data is collected, individuals agree to their data being collected, and have the opportunity to withhold their agreement to any subsequent use of data.

This is especially important to remember at the point of collecting the data – the respondent needs to be told why the research is taking place, what it will be used for, and explicitly agree to their data being collected.

### The eight principles of data protection – personal data should be:

- fairly and lawfully processed;
- processed for limited purposes;
- adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- accurate and up to date;
- not kept longer than necessary;
- processed in accordance with the individual's rights;
- secure;
- not transferred to countries outside the European Economic Area unless the country has adequate protection for the individual.

## What is personal data?

The Data Protection Act 1998 applies to personal data about a living, identifiable individual. Although there are some exceptions, it is best to assume that all information about a living, identifiable individual is personal data, and therefore should be treated in accordance with the Act.

## What is sensitive personal data?

Some personal data is classed as sensitive personal data. This type of data is subject to further regulations under the Data Protection Act and can only be processed under certain circumstances. Personal data becomes sensitive if it includes any of the following types of information about an identifiable, living individual:

- racial or ethnic origin
- political opinions
- religious beliefs
- trade union membership
- physical or mental health
- sexual life
- commission of offences or alleged offences.

Some of these areas, in particular ethnic origin, may be ones which you wish to include in your research in order to monitor diversity. You should only ask for personal sensitive data if you need to – this isn't to say you should shy away from doing so if it is necessary, just that you will be required to treat it with more care than other sorts of data. On the whole, by sticking with the MRS Code of Conduct you will also be adhering to data protection law. More information is available at the Information Commissioner's Office, ([www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)).







*Woking Dance Festival* commission by Second Hand Dance at The Lightbox Museum & Gallery & pedestrian bridge.  
Photo: Justin Dix

## What comes next?

- Sharing standards and adopting similar methodologies is the first step to being able to have a dialogue about public engagement and impact, and putting audiences at the heart of what we do.
- It's a good first step, but going forward, we aspire to share and compare information, to develop sectoral benchmarks, promote shared learning and open up debate across the cultural sector.
- We are developing an online toolkit to make that next step easier. You'll find a range of standardised resources – from a standard questionnaire and data-inputting framework to analytics and graphs online at [www.audienceslondon.org](http://www.audienceslondon.org).
- We have also launched a data comparison service, enabling you to compare survey results with those of others who have also used the toolkit. Contact us for more information.

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Anna Doyle and the team at CREATE

Valentina Wong at City of Westminster

# How Audiences London can help you research audiences at outdoor events and festivals



We provide a range of tools and services that will help you achieve a clear and robust evaluation of your festival or outdoor event:

- Expert surgery to create the perfect questionnaire
- Fieldworker training for your staff and volunteers
- Set-up and management of e-surveys
- Data analysis including geo-demographic profiling, segmentation and mapping
- Research consultancy – developing your audience research plan from start to finish
- Evaluation consultancy – helping you to devise and implement a full evaluation plan

*The Infinity Bridge Opening by Walk The Plank in Stockton, 2009.*

Audiences London also provides research and consultancy services for marketing, audience development and community engagement.

We are now working across London, the South East, South West and East of England and support organisations of all shapes and sizes. If you would like to discuss your audience research, development or evaluation needs with us, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Audiences London  
Unit 7G1, The Leathermarket  
Weston St, London  
SE1 3ER

Tel: 020 7407 4625  
Fax: 020 7407 4714  
Web: [www.audienceslondon.org](http://www.audienceslondon.org)  
Twitter: @audienceslondon  
Email: [info@audienceslondon.org](mailto:info@audienceslondon.org)

Company No. 3972634  
Charity No. 1099256  
VAT No. 805203669  
Data Protection No. Z7260838



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