

Dublin's Surprising Stories Toolkit

Using our stories to improve visitors' experiences at Dublin attractions



Surprising stories at
characterful attractions
will make Dublin stand out.

*This Toolkit will help you
to be part of that.*



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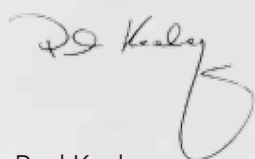
Our ambitious 5 year targets for Dublin are to grow tourist trips from 7.4m (2017) to 8.5m (2022). High quality and characterful visitor attractions will play a large part in driving that growth.

Tourism has seen strong growth in the last number of years, which is good news with increases in employment and in revenue for the economy. However if we want to maintain and grow, we need to innovate and reinvest.

Fáilte Ireland believes that Dublin has great small and medium sized attractions that deserve to be given the opportunity to develop in order to be competitive, maintain and increase visitor satisfaction levels, visitor numbers and grow revenue. With that in mind we have launched Dublin's Surprising Stories, a grants scheme for existing visitor attractions in Dublin, to unlock the great stories that we have to offer.

This guide has been developed to assist you with the application process and will pose some thought provoking questions throughout. Take your time as you walk yourself through the exercises and really put yourself in the shoes of the visitor. Think back to attractions you have enjoyed on your own travels, what made them stand out and why? We have included both local and international examples throughout this document for consideration and inspiration. Be sure to use this toolkit in conjunction with the more detailed guidelines when completing your application form.

We want you, our partners, to unlock Dublin's Surprising Stories with us, and this toolkit will help you to do that.



Paul Keeley
Director of Business
Development



Surprising stories make memorable Dublin experiences

Today's visitors to Dublin want to connect – with the place, its culture and, most of all, with its people. They do not want to be passive consumers. They want to experience it all, to immerse themselves and discover what makes the place tick, what Dubliners talk about and the tales they tell. They want to be surprised by unusual events and unexpected stories.

Attractions need to adapt to give these people the memorable experiences they seek.

The Experience Wheel shows how memorable tourism experiences are built from high quality **Product, Service, Story** and **Narration**. All of these are vital and must work together.



This Toolkit focuses on Story and Narration. It explains how the art and craft of storytelling can enrich the experience of a place and make it unforgettable.

It concentrates on what visitors will experience when they come through your door and how your story unfolds for them while they are on-site.

¹The Experience Wheel diagram is from Experiences Explained: A Guide to Understanding and Developing Memorable Tourism Experiences, Fáilte Ireland.

Understanding your audience – Social Energisers

Dublin's attractions need to develop new experiences that will attract and impress modern visitors. The target visitor segments for Dublin are Social Energisers and Culturally Curious.

Social Energisers – confident, experimental, energetic travellers

Attractions that are most likely to attract Social Energisers will be:

- fashionable, on-trend places, or a big name 'must see'
- social places where people can meet new people
- highly visible on social media
- recommended by fellow travellers on social media
- likely to be open in the evenings
- active and vibrant with a diverse programme of events
- unlikely to be called 'Museum' or 'heritage centre'

Is your attraction ready for Social Energisers?

Which of these are true for your attraction?

How many others could be true if you made some changes?

What would you need to change? Are these changes achievable?

Which achievable changes would have the greatest positive impact on your Social Energiser visitors?

For more information look at Fáilte Ireland's Guide to Social Energisers:

http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/5_International_Tourism_Trends/Social-Energisers-Trend-Report-2017.pdf

The Vilnius Museum of Illusions is designed for Social Energisers. Visitors participate in world famous illusions, creating irresistible photo-opportunities in a relaxed, social, entertaining and educational environment.

Understanding your audience – Culturally Curious

Social Energisers and Culturally Curious visitors may go to the same attractions, but they will behave differently and focus on different things during their visits.

Culturally Curious – experienced, discerning, independent explorers

Attractions that are most likely to attract Culturally Curious visitors will be:

- distinctly and recognisably 'Irish' or 'Dublin' in character
- full of interesting, unusual and local stories, well told
- personalised and interactive with well-informed and friendly staff
- an authentic and thought-provoking experience of local life, activities and heritage
- relaxed places that they can explore at their own pace and in their own way

Is your place right for Culturally Curious visitors?

Which of these are true for your attraction?

How many others could be true if you made some changes?

What would you need to change? Are these changes achievable?

Which achievable changes would have the greatest positive impact on your Culturally Curious visitors?

For more information look at Fáilte Ireland's Guide to Culturally Curious visitors:

<http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/eZine/Culturally-Curious.pdf>



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Culturally Curious visitors seek out local traditions and activities such as this spectacular flag-waving celebration of the great families of Pisa, Italy.

Focus on one Big Idea

You need to know what the Big Idea of your attraction is. The Big Idea is what you want people to remember about you after they have left, what they will talk to each other about and tell their friends about when they return home. It is your identity, your DNA, your reason for people to visit you.

People will find it much easier to remember your Big Idea if you tell them very clearly what it is before the visit, repeat it at the start and during the visit and reinforce it as they leave. Make it simple enough for people to remember and drop into their conversation.

Use your Big Idea to choose the stories you tell and the information you give.

For instance, if 'Many of the world's fine racehorses, breeders and jockeys come from Ireland' is your Big Idea, you would choose stories that showcase exceptional Irish horses, successful Irish breeders and record-breaking Irish jockeys, past and present.

'The Butler family were for centuries, the most powerful dynasty in Ireland' would lead to dramatic stories about individuals that demonstrate the power of the family, its longevity and geographical spread.

What is your experience about?

What is the Big Idea you want to convey to your visitors?

Where and how do visitors encounter your Big Idea before, during and after their visit?

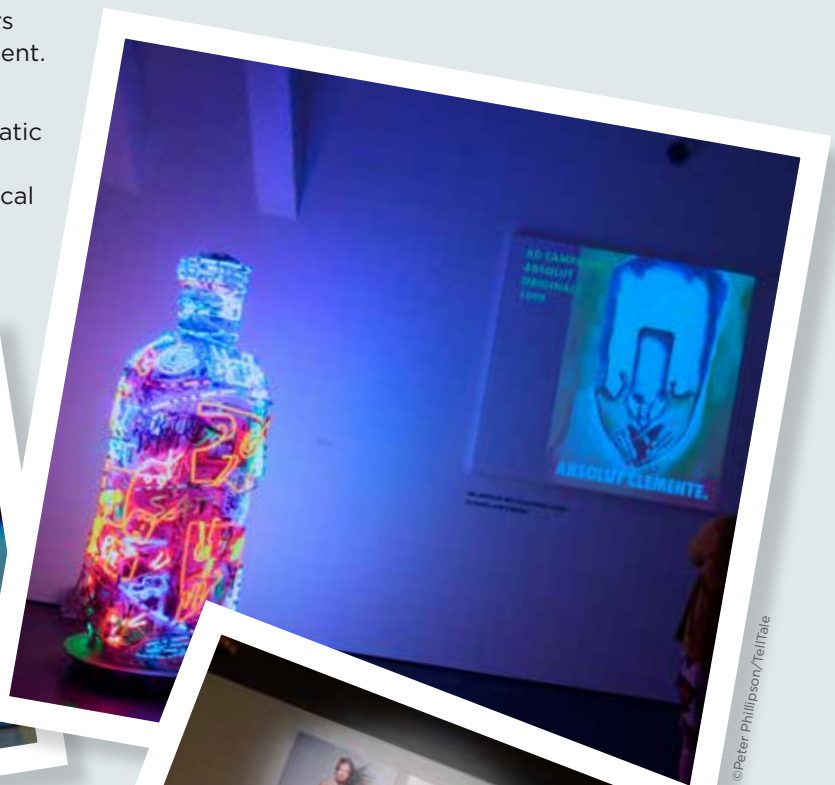
Could that be improved and made more powerful?

Remember that your fantastic café, your friendly guides and clean toilets are not your Big Idea. They are essential to a good visit (part of the Service element of the Experience Wheel on page 3) but they are not the things that will drive international visitors to your door.

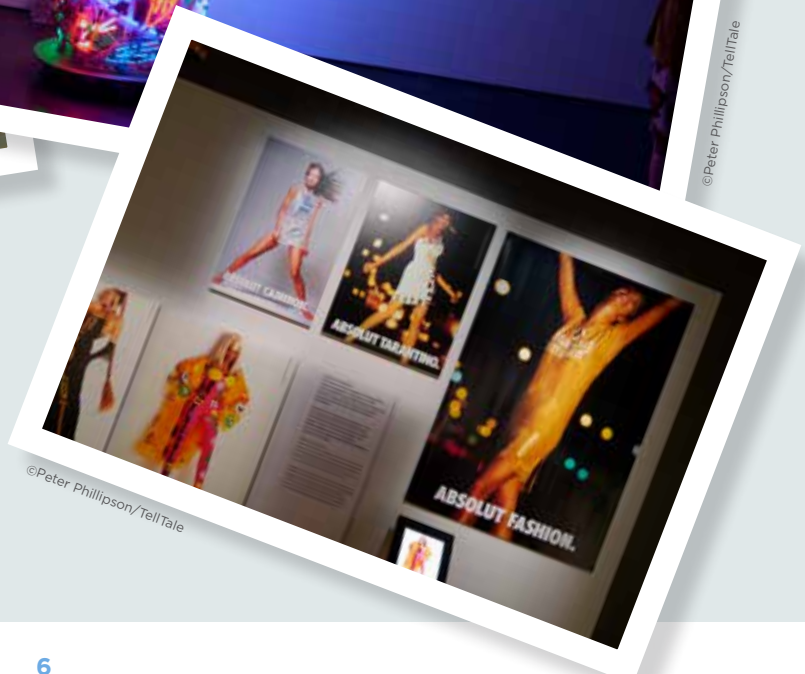


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The Spritmuseum in Stockholm offers Culturally Curious visitors a multi-faceted display on 'how Sweden, a small spirits-belt country with the world's most restrictive alcohol policy, created the world's most in-demand vodka.'



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Identify your best story

'Stories of People' and 'Stories of Place' are the most powerful for creating a great visitor experience at an attraction.

- 'Stories of People' give you characters, the core of all stories. They help you create empathy and human interest.
- 'Stories of Place' capitalise on the relevance and authenticity to your site. They help you develop a unique sense of place.

Finding your story involves extracting the most important things that you want people to remember. It identifies the elements that will surprise and connect with people from across the world. This takes time and effort - but is repaid in how people remember and talk about your attraction after their visit.

Great stories begin with characters and dramas that will capture the listener's attention and imagination. Story-based experiences at attractions are just the same.

The story of a business is not statistics about products and their features, it is about the people who make the business happen, about the visionary entrepreneurs who started it all or who saved it, and about the impact on customers. It is about ups and



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

The Kilkenny Design Centre adds a dimension to its food by telling the story of the people who bring it to the plate.

downs, challenges, successes and failures - things that people around the world can relate to.

Telling the story of a heritage attraction is not reciting the history or showing a timeline. It is about why this place matters, about amazing individuals and their contribution to Dublin or further afield. It will be about drama and dilemmas, love, loyalty and loss, friends, families and foes.

The First World War trench at Cavan County Museum is a compelling new experience that focuses on recreating the atmosphere of the trenches. It evokes the living conditions of the trenches and tells the story of some of the Cavan men who were at the battle-front. Within three years of its opening, the museum's visitors had increased by 250% and its income by 200%.

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Identify the key characters for your story

People stories help your visitors to build an emotional and imaginative relationship with your site. To tell the best stories of your site you need a cast of characters.

Your strongest characters will lead you to your best stories and how to tell them.

How to find the characters to tell your story

- Think about what makes your place distinctive.
- Find the key events or features that are unique to your story.
- Identify the person or people who were most closely associated with them.
- Develop the story from their perspective.

The characters you identify should feature prominently in your interpretation, whatever medium you use.

Costumed interpreters at Hampton Court, London involve visitors in key moments from the life of King Henry VIII, using different parts of the building and gardens for sequential scenes, throughout the day.



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Make your stories as authentic as possible

Your story might be a well-researched historical narrative, a popular local story, folklore, fairy tale, rumour or gossip. Your visitors should always know what sort of story you are telling.

Whatever your story, you must understand and believe in it to tell it well. You will need a good knowledge of your characters, how they lived, what they wore, what they ate, and any other details you can find. The authority of your storytelling and your attraction depends on this.

At Uppsala University, Sweden, meeting Carl Linnaeus engages visitors with the story of why all plants and animals have Latin names.



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Carefully researched, detailed and dramatic full-size images of Anglo-Saxons make the archaeology of the Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon burials into a human and accessible story. Some of the images are closely based on archaeological remains from the site.

Identify the key characters for your story – exercise

What makes your place distinctive or unique? Who is most associated with that?	
Distinctive feature or event	Associated character (write a short profile)
1.	
2.	
3.	

What other stories could each of these characters tell about your site?	
Character	Stories
1.	
2.	
3.	

Your characters need to be attractive and interesting to visitors. What could make these characters interesting?	
Character	Interesting traits or features
1.	
2.	
3.	

Your characters should be as diverse as possible so that more of your visitors relate to them. Do they include rich and poor? Men and women? Black and white? Young and old? Irish and non-Irish?
 Do you know these characters well enough to use them to tell your story? If you need more information do you know where to find it? How difficult would that be?
 Do you know what these characters looked like? If not, how could you find out?

Identify the key opportunities and challenges in using these characters in the interpretation

These characters could be used at my site to ...	Difficulties with using these characters include ...

Convert your stories into experiences

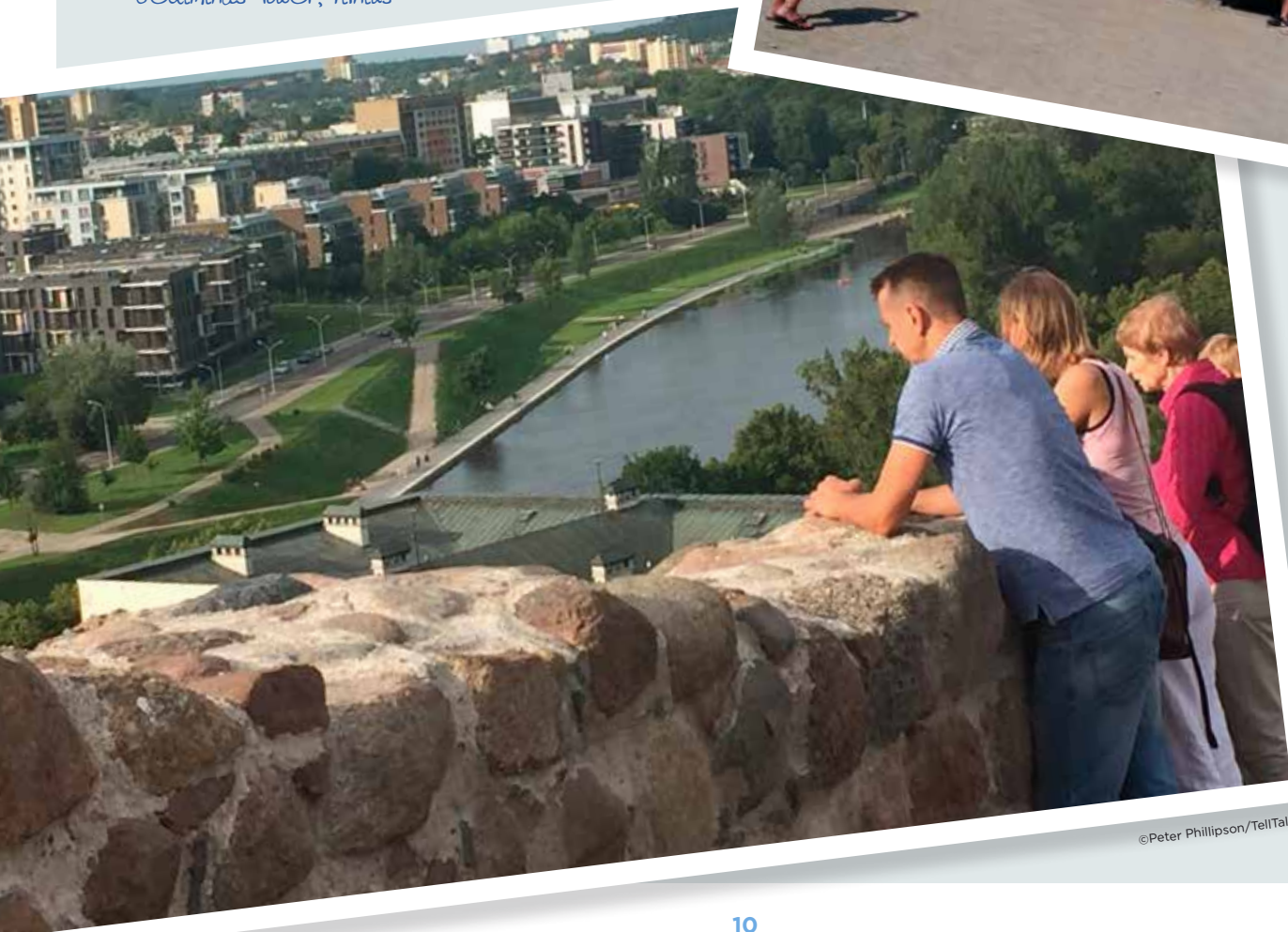
Visitors want to experience your stories. Think about how you can make your stories into experiences that involve your visitors.

You can do this by:

1. Making the most of your place

- Break your story down into incidents and match each to a place-based activity. These 'activities' may be quite minor things, such as looking at a view, unlocking a door or climbing some stairs. They help visitors empathise with your characters.
- Consider the mood of your story, then choose places that you can use to heighten it. For instance, tell scary stories in dark, tight spaces.
- Look for specific places that relate to people in your story. Use your characters in places that they would have used.
- Create a variety of different atmospheres and experiences of place during the visit.

Gediminas Tower, Vilnius



2. Make it multi-sensory

- Aim to expose visitors to evocative sights, smells, sounds and tactile experiences as much as possible.
- Taste experiences may be harder to create but can be very powerful and add the warmth of hospitality.
- Enrich the experience by enhancing or focusing the dominant sense:
 - add background sounds to an audio tour
 - give people specific things to look for e.g. finding patterns or objects, looking for places in a view.



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Pompeii

©Peter Phillipson/TellTale



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Visitors dress up as soldiers and handle weapons at Passchendaele, Belgium

3. Create action and interaction

- Give people things to do. Even very simple things like the opportunity to touch an object can transform the experience.
- Have costumes or props for people to carry, use or wear.
- If you are demonstrating an activity, find ways that people can join in.

4. Create a conversation

- Build surprises, or even mild shocks, into the visit
- Ask people speculative questions that get them thinking about the people in your story.
- Be friendly. Your staff should be remembered as warm, enthusiastic people who loved telling us about the place.



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Costumed interpreters at Hampton Court, England, involve visitors in the drama

Your story and the visitor journey

The best visitor experiences surprise visitors with amazing stories told in fascinating ways in extraordinary places. How will you do that at your attraction?

A storytelling experience harnesses the traditional skills of a storyteller (such as creating interesting characters, heightening drama, evoking emotion, using unexpected twists and building suspense) within the physical and operational realities of a site. This requires good understanding of how people use the site and careful planning.

To work out how people will encounter your stories during their visit journey, consider:

Introduction - Where will you grab people's attention and raise their expectation?

Characters - Where and how will visitors encounter your characters?

Dramatic moments - How will you make the most of your high-points, the incidents that make your story and your attraction unforgettable?

Dilemmas and decisions - Where will you get people talking and participating in your story?

Reveals - Where can you build in surprises that will enliven the visit and make people laugh, or cry or jump?

Ending - Where and how will your story and the visit end?

Introduction to the walkthrough exercise.

A walkthrough exercise helps you to identify what should ideally happen at each stage in the visitor journey. It can help you and your team to develop a clear vision of what you want visitors to experience while they are with you.

Do this exercise for either Social Energisers or Culturally Curious visitors. If you are targeting both segments, do it twice. Be aspirational, you can address the gaps between your ideal and the reality later.

NOTE: This exercise focuses on the on-site experience. Remember that the visitor journey begins before the visit. Your promotional materials and on-line activity need to be in harmony with the visitor experience. They are important in building expectation and anticipation of the visit.



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Nearly There - Chester Zoo

Walkthrough exercise:

1

The start of the on-site journey: Welcome and Orientation



You only have one chance to make a first impression. It is vital that your attraction creates a good initial impact.

The start of a visit is vital – and a busy time for the visitor. Within the first five minutes, the visitor should:

- feel welcome
 - be relaxed and confident that they will have a good time
 - know what is special about your attraction
 - be keen to know more of your story
 - be organised and know where they will go and what they will do
 - be excited at the prospect of what's ahead
- and, of course, they should have paid.



Consider which of the following will be before/after the pay perimeter at your attraction.

1. The first mention of your story? This could be a teaser, like the strapline for a film. (Where will you repeat it, maybe in a different way? Visitors will need the key information reinforced during the visit)?
2. The start of your story?
3. The introduction to your characters? (Will you introduce one character first and promise more or will you introduce several at the same time?)
4. Explanation of how visitors can find more of your story?

Think about:

Is there information that international visitors need to know before they can understand your story? (Remember that they may not know much Irish or even European history) If so, how and where will you deliver it?

Who are the first members of staff visitors meet? How can they enhance the start of the visit?

Walkthrough exercise:

2

The heart of the journey: Experience and Interpretation

This is where you deliver on the promises made at the approach and arrival. Memorable experiences and surprising stories should be well distributed through the visit.

The visit probably begins at the entrance and ends at the exit. Where visitors go and what they do between those two points can be very variable. Unless you have a strict route, you cannot predict the order in which people will see different parts of your site. The middle of the visit therefore will often be stand-alone locations that people can visit in any order.

Divide your story into parts and link each part to different locations. Think about what visitors will do at each location to turn the story into a memorable experience (look at pages 10 and 11 for ideas)



Think about:

What are the three most dramatic or intriguing parts of your story? Which are the best places to tell them in a memorable way?

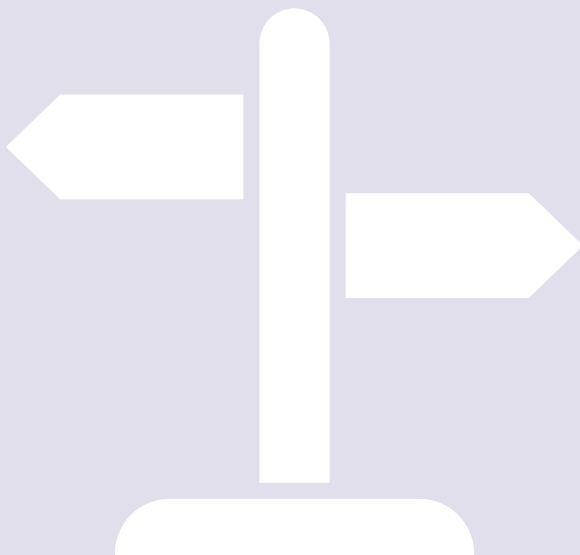
Which are the most popular, interesting or evocative places at your attraction? How can they be used to tell your story?

What is unique to your site and how can you turn that into an unforgettable experience?

Where will you get visitors talking?

How and where will visitors encounter your characters?

What part of the visit do you want visitors to remember forever?



Walkthrough exercise:

3

The end of the journey: Conclusion and Departure



You want your visitors to leave your attraction buzzing. Make sure your visit doesn't peter out before the end. Create a strong ending that will leave people thinking and talking and wanting to share their experience with others.

Prepare for the Post Visit

You want the people to remember you and your attraction. Think about how you can use the end of the visit to set up a post visit relationship.

Think about:

What do you want people to be saying and feeling as they leave? You may want to reiterate your Big Idea at the end as a strong take home message.

Can you deliver a twist in the tale at the end? This is a good point to create a surprise that animates visitors. Maybe another perspective on the story? Or what happened decades later?

Make sure your story ends in a satisfying way.

Can you refer back to the start to round off the visit? If you asked questions during the visit, answer them here. If you set visitors a challenge or a quiz, acknowledge their efforts.

Who is the last member of staff visitors meet? How can they enhance the end of the visit?

Think about:

Is there a call to action? Do you want your visitors to do anything after their visit?

How could you persuade them to leave an e-mail address, follow you on social media, come on a repeat visit or take an events programme?



Choosing how to tell your story

Paddington Station London



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

London Zoo



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Talking statue, Vilnius



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

River Thames, London



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Tate Modern, London



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Museum of Liverpool



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh

The media you use to tell your story will have a huge impact on the visitor experience, the look and feel of your attraction, and the visitors who will most enjoy it.

Focus on which media your visitors will be most comfortable with. Social Energisers will want an experience that feels pacy, modern and interactive. They are unlikely to enjoy traditional panels or leaflets, or an audio tour with headphones that isolates the listener from their group. They are more likely to respond to an entertaining person, a multi-media presentation or some form of challenge or gamification.

Culturally Curious visitors will want more information and a stronger sense of authenticity. Although they will read, they are more interested in looking closely at real things and talking with people who know the place well. They may look at panels and use leaflets or audio trails to find out more.

Remember that people warm to people, so use your staff well to create personal experiences. However, if you achieve good visitor numbers, it is unlikely that all your interpretation can be face to face. Providing a range of media allows visitors to choose how they want to explore and experience your attraction.

Trial your ideas for new media with your target audience and pay attention to their feedback.

Your budget will limit your choices. Do not compromise on quality. Where possible, choose a medium that you can comfortably afford so you have more options for higher quality, more innovative, work.

Planning and producing good media for your attraction will require time, thought and a skilled team. Good results will rely on your understanding of your audiences and of your story.

Media options: pros and cons

Attractions can use many media to tell their story. There is no perfect medium, one size will not fit all. All media need to be well-planned and produced to a high standard.

Face-to-face interpretation / guides

The most obvious way to tell a story is with a storyteller – and that can be a great experience for your visitor. Research tells us that contact with people is the biggest driver of satisfaction at attractions.

A skilled person can be versatile, responsive, and entertaining. They can change their delivery to suit the audience and so can work well for both Social Energisers and Culturally Curious visitors.

Pros

- structured
- story can be delivered in sequence
- can use a range of storytelling techniques flexible and responsive to audience
- can be interactive
- easily updated and improved

Cons

- constraining for visitors who want to explore on their own
- Difficult to provide in multiple languages
- Limited capacity
- Difficult to maintain consistent quality

Make the most of your people. But you can't use them all the time, so you will need to have some other communication media.

Exhibitions

If you have authentic material to show, an exhibition is likely to be your best choice. That will work really well for Culturally Curious visitors. An exhibition can also give a good introduction or overview.

Be careful – exhibits are often passive, impersonal and rather serious. They frequently contain too many words. Even the 'interactives' often do not have enough of a fun factor for the Social Energisers. If they do, Culturally Curious people may see it as tacky. Make sure your exhibition has a Wow factor for (at least) your most important target audience.

Encourage visitors to take, and hopefully share, images by creating photo and video opportunities.

Pros

- can be well-structured
- can include wide range of media
- can portray characters and drama well
- can be designed for diverse visitors

Cons

- expensive
- need skilled design
- hard to change
- can date quickly

Guides at the Alcázar of Seville, Spain, adapt what they say at this complex and many-layered attraction to suit the knowledge and interests of visitors from around the world.



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

The exhibition at Stonehenge, England, combines media to create zones, some of which are largely visual and atmospheric while others focus on information. The introductory banners introduce the Big Ideas for the exhibition and the visit.

Media options: pros and cons

Audio visual

Audio, projections, film and sound can create atmosphere and drama in a wide variety of ways in all kinds of spaces. Multiple screens or a 360° presentation can create powerfully immersive presentations. Virtual reality offers new possibilities to recreate scenes from different times and places.

Audio-visual theatre presentations are well-suited to giving complex background information and can be a highly evocative introduction to a story or a visit. If a presentation is more than three minutes long, visitors should be seated.

Pros

- undemanding medium, often popular
- strongly structured, good for storytelling
- good for conveying complex information
- can use headsets for multi-lingual
- versatile

Cons

- expensive to install
- expensive to update
- requires an appropriate space
- usually a passive experience
- can lead to 'clumping' visitors at a busy site
- requires maintenance

Trails with mobile phones (or other devices)

Audio trails can provide multilingual interpretation where and when you cannot provide guided tours. They are now common at attractions so many visitors will be familiar with the technology although some will need support.

Visitors prefer to have an audio trail on a device that is provided by the attraction rather than use their own phone. Be careful with bespoke site-based apps – they are less popular with visitors at attractions than many people (including app developers) expect.

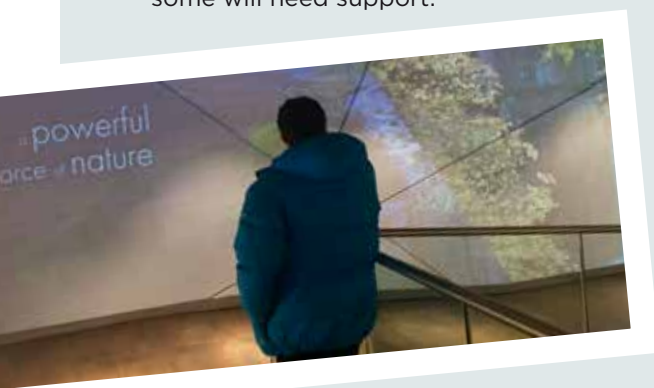
Increasingly the trails offer more than a simple spoken narrative. They use speech and sound creatively and involve images and video. Augmented reality can super-impose an image into the view visitors see, possibly to create 'ghosts' of the past, or to see past and present simultaneously.

Pros

- can be provided in different languages
- can be closely linked to site experience
- can use different voices/sounds to add variety and create atmosphere
- can convey characters and drama well
- can include visual content
- visually unobtrusive
- can give visitor choice of what to listen to

Cons

- translations of different voices can be difficult and expensive
- usually a passive experience
- headphones cut people off from the rest of their group
- can be a hassle for visitors
- can reduce the social content of the visit
- Can mean another expense for the visitor
- Visitors can be reluctant to use their own phones



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Modern audio-visual presentations are creative and often involve many screens to create powerful and evocative storytelling.

QR codes offer supplementary information for smart phone owners. The first versions of this technology were clunky and proved unpopular with visitors, but the field is changing fast and new opportunities are emerging.



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Media options: pros and cons



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Panels are particularly useful at unstaffed sites (or parts of a site) such as the City Walls in Chester, England.

Panels

Panels are good for making a simple point ideally about something visitors can see. They can be very useful for giving a different view, such as what this place looked like in the past or how this machine worked.

Panels should be designed for people who are standing up, which means that strong images and well-structured text are vital. The text should be short, no more than 250 words. Not all panels have to be large and rectangular, modern processes make it easy to produce small panels in different shapes.

Pros

- can show images as well as words
- are closely associated with the place
- are always available
- relatively inexpensive

Cons

- very limited in how much information they can carry
- passive (and often dull)
- are difficult to do well
- not good for multiple languages
- only read by motivated visitors
- can clutter a site

Leaflets and other small publications can be important in the pre-visit, visit and post-visit experiences



©Peter Phillipson/TellTale

Leaflets

Leaflets are a tried, tested and popular portable medium, mainly for Culturally Curious visitors. A well-designed leaflet can have souvenir value. Images are vital to the success of a leaflet so be prepared to invest in high quality illustrations of photography.

People do not remember maps so if people will need one to navigate your site provide it as a leaflet.

Pros

- can be provided in different languages
- can contain words and images
- can be read before or after a visit
- has a good structure
- easily portable
- can link well to site features and encourage exploration
- can include quizzes and activities
- relatively inexpensive

Cons

- needs high quality design and illustration
- requires storage space
- can lead to littering problem

Priority developments at your attraction

Look back at 'the best possible visit to your attraction' exercise (see pages 10 to 13) and at the reality of visitor experience at your site. They almost certainly won't be the same. Identify what you need to change to bring them closer together.

Identify three priority developments that will make the biggest impact on visitor satisfaction at your site, what the benefits will be and how you could quantify the impact of the change.

Development	Benefit	Measuring impact

Measure the impact of investment

Updating Dublin's attractions so that they attract and delight Social Energisers and Culturally Curious visitors will require investing time, effort and money. You need to measure the return on that investment.

Footfall and revenue are obvious measures. Increased satisfaction ratings, and particularly increased positive sharing of the experience post visit, are also important.

Learn from your visitors

They are the best judges of your attraction and the experience it offers.

'Walking the floor' regularly, so you can talk to your visitors informally and watch what they do, helps you understand how well your on-site experiences are working. Encourage your team to do this routinely as part of ensuring high quality customer service.

When you are making changes, you should formalise both the talking to visitors and the observation. 'Before' data will help you identify what you want to change, the 'after' data will tell you how far you have succeeded.



Good questions to ask in a visitor survey

What to ask	How to use the answers
What do you plan to do here today? (at start of visit)	This tells you about how people perceive your attraction and why they really come.
What have you done here today? (at end of visit)	People will identify the highlights of the experience.
How long do you plan to spend here today? (before visit) / have you spent here today? (after visit)	This tells you whether people are finding enough to do on your site - and whether it is exceeding their expectations.
Do you think this visit was good value?	A negative response here means you have to change something.
What do you especially like about this site?	Build on the strengths that visitors mention. If they do not mention the things that you expected, find out what's wrong.
Did you do any...? look at any...?	A reality check on whether the activities and materials provided are fit for purpose. If visitors are missing key things you need to know why.
Do you know...?	Add a few questions to test what visitors have grasped your story. This might include... who owns this site? ... the name of a famous person who lived here? ... anything that happened here?
Would you be interested in...?	This question allows you to test ideas and possibilities for future developments.
Suggestions for what we could do to improve your visit?	An important question. People often reply thoughtfully, with imagination and insight.

Watch your visitors

Social Energisers and Culturally Curious visitors are both rather independently-minded. They will want as much choice as possible in how they spend their time at your attraction. Observing them will help you understand how they interact with your site.

Tracking - where visitors go

- Where do visitors go first?
- Which locations are most visited?
- Are any locations ignored? (Consider whether this is because people miss them or because they don't want to go there.)
- Are there congested areas and bottlenecks? (Can you remove these?)

Timing - how visitors spend their time

- Where do visitors spend most time?
- Where do visitors spend less time than you would expect?
- What do some people love and some really do not?

Interaction - what works?

The specific questions will depend on what you have but might include:

- How long do most visitors stay with the guided tour (if they have a choice)?
- How many visitors engage with this activity and for how long?
- Do visitors stay for the whole AV?
- Which panels are visitors most likely to stop at, to read or to talk to each other about?
- What provokes visitors to talk to each other?
- When and why do visitors talk to staff?
- What questions do visitors ask?





How to use this Toolkit to improve the Story and Narration at your attraction

STEP 1: Analyse your attraction's performance (page 3)

Before you start, check your issue is with Story and Narration (not Product or Service). See Experiences Explained: A Guide to Understanding and Developing Memorable Tourism Experiences.

STEP 2: Know your audience (pages 4 and 5).

Identify whether you are targeting Social Energisers, Culturally Curious visitors, or both.

STEP 3: Find your best stories (pages 6 to 9)

Clarify your Big Idea and the stories that will showcase it. Work on these stories, in particular the characters that will draw your visitors into them.

STEP 4: Turn your stories into active experiences (pages 10 and 11)

Create active experiences of your stories for visitors at each point of the visitor journey.

STEP 5: Embed the story in your site (pages 12 to 15)

Identify the best possible visitor journey around your site and work out how to weave your storytelling into it.

STEP 6: Choose your media (pages 16 to 19)

Choose (based on steps 1 to 5) the communication methods and interpretation media that will create the best and most varied experience of your attraction and its story.

STEP 7: Identify your priority projects (page 20)

Identify the priority project(s) that will make the greatest impact on visitor experience at your attraction.

STEP 8: Evaluation of impact (pages 21 and 22)

Specify the benefits investment in the priority project will bring. Identify how you will recognise and measure success and the return on your investment.

Good luck!





We hope you find this Toolkit useful

If you have any questions, please do get in
touch with the Dublin Team
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