



INSTITUTE FOR  
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INNOVATION

***The Smithsonian Institution National Postal Museum***

***Ford Education Center***

***Summative Evaluation***

Prepared by:  
Jill K. Stein  
Tammy Messick

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, the Smithsonian Institution National Postal Museum received funding from the Ford Motor Company Fund in part to develop an interactive exhibit in the museum's atrium. The Ford Education Center (FEC) was initially completed in 2003, and went through an overhaul and redesign completed in 2008. The FEC was designed to provide on-site access to the digitized museum collection, create a space in the museum where postal and philatelic themes come together, connect the website and gallery experience together, and facilitate visitor interaction around the museum's content and themes. This report describes results from a summative evaluation of visitor's engagement with the FEC and what they get out of the experience. Multiple methods were used, including semi-structured interviews and observations.

Overall, data from this study suggest that the Ford Education Center provides a fun, engaging, and interactive experience for visitors, and helps connect them to the museum's collections and themes. Key findings include the following:

- Visitors to the FEC are younger than visitors to the Museum overall, suggesting that the space has been successful in engaging a younger audience; although adult visitors (over 18) make up two-thirds of the FEC visitation.
- More than one-third of visitors use the FEC on their own, indicating that visitors may view the experience more as a solo activity. In addition, those who do use the space with others in their group report minimal social interaction, suggesting that visitors need more support and encouragement to engage in social interaction around the experience.
- Two-thirds of visitors use the computer kiosks in the FEC, while others do not engage at all or use the benches to rest. Visitors who use the kiosks are drawn to the area because it looks fun and interesting, it features computer interactives, they want to learn something, or they want to take a break or pass the time while waiting for someone. Almost all of the activities are well-utilized by visitors, particularly the *Matching Game* and *Museum's Must-Sees*.
- Visitors are highly satisfied with their experience in the FEC. They find the technology intuitive and easy to use and they enjoy the interactive nature of the technology (particularly playing games), which some pointed out offers a different way of engaging than reading labels. Visitors were highly likely to say they would use the FEC again on a future visit, suggesting that the experience was satisfying and engaging enough to revisit.
- The study suggests that the FEC was less successful in increasing learning and interest around stamps and postal history, or in helping people make connections between the museum's themes and their own life. Many visitors felt they were too focused on "play," or simply did not spend enough time engaging in the site for these outcomes to occur.
- The FEC does support visitors in extending the experience to some extent, mostly by encouraging visitors to go look for objects on display, or providing more context or information with which to make meaning of the museum's themes and collections. However, visitors were less likely to say they would follow-up by visiting the Museum's website at home.

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## INTRODUCTION

### ***Project Overview***

The Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum received funding from the Ford Motor Company Fund in part to develop an interactive exhibit in the museum's atrium. The Ford Education Center (FEC) was initially completed in 2003, and went through an overhaul and redesign completed in 2008. The newly designed center consists of five (5) touchscreen kiosks that allow visitors to access museum content through varied media and experiences, and connect to the museum's digital collection through its website. The FEC has four main objectives:

- To provide on-site access to the digitized museum collection
- To create a space in the museum where postal and philatelic themes come together
- To connect the website and gallery experience together
- To facilitate visitor interaction around the themes/content of the museum

The Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI), a not-for-profit research and evaluation firm focused on visitor learning and experience in informal/free-choice environments, was contracted by the National Postal Museum to conduct summative evaluation of the Ford Education Center (FEC). The study took place from February 2009 to June 2009.

### ***Evaluation Framework***

The study uses a naturalistic design combining observation, computer usage data, and face-to-face interviews to document visitor use and learning outcomes. Specifically, the following three questions guide the summative evaluation of the Ford Education Center:

- Who uses the Ford Education Center and why?
- What is the nature and extent of visitors' engagement with the FEC?
- What do visitors take away from their experience of the FEC? Specifically, how does the interactive kiosk help connect visitors to the museum's collections and themes?

## METHODS

The summative evaluation used a naturalistic design with multiple methods. The primary method used for this study was face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with visitors, supplemented by observations, computer usage data, and an online survey. The study was designed to include the experience of family groups<sup>1</sup> and adult-only groups around motivations, use, and outcomes, in order to indicate possible differences between these two user groups. While the sample sizes are not large enough to be representative or generalizable to all NPM visitors, the study points to initial trends based on group type wherever possible.

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

A total of 67 visitors were interviewed for this study using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A). Visitors were categorized into adult-only groups (n=29) and family/youth groups (n=38), which were defined as adults visiting the FEC with children 17 and under, or children (17 and under) using the FEC alone. Visitors were approached as they exited the Ford Education Center, and were asked to participate in a brief interview about their experience in the FEC. Two sampling procedures were used for this study. Initially, data collectors used random sampling (approaching only those visitors who appeared 14 or older); then, in order to capture perspectives from family groups, only those visitors who had children (under 18) were approached for an interview. Data was collected in February and May/June 2009 in order to get a cross-section of visitor types. Due to relatively low visitation during the months of data collection, all interviews were conducted on Fridays (n=21), Saturdays (n=37), or Sundays (n=9). Due to visitation patterns (with the galleries being more crowded in the afternoons), the majority of interviews (73%; n=48) were conducted after 2pm; 14% (n=9) were conducted between 12 and 2; and another 14% (n=9) were conducted in the morning (before 12). Visitors were offered a small thank you gift (an FEC magnifier/ruler) once the interview was completed. Data were then entered, coded, and analyzed using SPSS 17.0 software.

The refusal rate for interviews was extremely low, or 8% (n=6). Reasons for refusing the interview included not having enough time, needing to attend to children in the group (provide food, rest, etc.), or feeling that they had already been at the museum a long time.

### ***Observations***

In order to get a broader understanding of who uses the FEC, a series of demographic observations were conducted. National Postal Museum staff observed visitors as they entered the FEC for twenty 1-hour sessions taking place from May 21, 2009 to May 31, 2009 at various times. The majority of sessions (19 out of 20) took place in the afternoon, due to scheduling issues with staff, so results are biased towards afternoon visitation numbers. Using an observation sheet, data collectors visually determined sex, approximate age, group type and size. Museum staff entered data into an Excel spreadsheet; ILI researchers transported the data into SPSS 17.0 and analyzed the data.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, families were defined as intergenerational groups visiting the FEC with at least one child 17 or under, or children 17 or under using the FEC alone.

### ***Computer usage data***

To round out the interview and observation data, ILI researchers used computer usage data provided by the National Postal Museum to get a better understanding of how visitors used the kiosks and which activities they used. The system captures the number of hits for each page of the site. For the purposes of this study, researchers used data that overlapped with the data collection time period (February-June 2009), and only focused on hit rates for pages or activities included in the study.

### ***Online survey***

The Ford Education Center kiosk includes an embedded, optional online survey for users. For the purposes of this study, survey data was collected and analyzed for the project data collection period (February 2009-June 2009). The survey collects feedback on what visitors thought about the experience, why they decided to use the kiosk, and some basic demographic data. Where appropriate, ILI researchers use this data only to round out and confirm the data from semi-structured interviews and observations. A total of 284 self-selected users completed the survey between February and June 2009.

### ***Study limitations***

Researchers initially piloted a museum exit interview that focused on who did and did not use the FEC and why/why not, and how using the FEC influenced the rest of the visitor's experience. However, low visitation and usage rates made it impractical to use this approach, and researchers, in consultation with National Postal Museum staff, decided to shift the study to focus only on visitors who used the FEC. Thus the current study does not address how the FEC fits into the context of the entire museum visit.

While the study aims to compare family and adult groups' experience of the FEC, the trends reported here should be viewed as indications of possible differences or similarities, rather than generalizable data. The study samples are representative of NPM visitors on multiple variables (gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education level), thereby lessening the likelihood that findings are biased toward a particular group.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### ***Description of Samples***

#### **Interviews**

Sixty-seven visitors participated in the semi-structured interviews. The sample was similar to the overall visitor demographics for the National Postal Museum on gender and race/ethnicity (see Table 1). More than half of the respondents (54%; n=36) were female, and the majority (78%; n=52) self-identified as White. More than half (54%; n=34) were from out-of-state (not including Maryland and Virginia), and 45% (n=28) were either local or from the greater DC area. This sample includes a higher percentage of local/DC area visitors than is typical for the Museum in the Spring, possibly because data was not collected during peak spring break times, when the percentage of out-of-town visitors is higher.

One-third of visitors (33%; n=22) were between 41-55 years of age; and one quarter (24%; n=16) were between 12-17, due to the purposive sampling method to include more youth in the study. More than one third of the visitors (37%; n=25) had a high school education or less, but this is in part due to the youth participants. Another third (34%; n=23) reported having a graduate or professional degree. The majority (76%; n=51) were visiting the Postal Museum for the first time, which is slightly lower than for the museum overall (85%), suggesting that repeat visitors may be more likely to use the Ford Education Center. Most of the respondents (88%; n=59) had not visited the Postal Museum website prior to their visit.

#### **Observations**

249 visitors were observed for this study, and three demographic factors were noted. More than half of the visitors observed (52%; n=129) were female, similar to overall demographics for the Postal Museum. The mean and median age of visitors using the FEC was 30, compared to 42 for the Museum overall.

**Table 1:** Characteristics of samples

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Interviews (FEC only)</b>	<b>Observations (FEC only)</b>	<b>Smithsonian OP&amp;A<sup>2</sup> (National Postal Museum)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>n=67</b>	<b>n=249</b>	<b>n=298</b>
Male	46%	48%	47%
Female	54%	52%	53%
<b>Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply)</b>	<b>n=67</b>		<b>n=298</b>
Caucasian or White	78%		78%
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	9%		11%
African American or Black	9%		4%

<sup>2</sup> Data extracted from the publication, *Spring 2009 Visitors to the National Postal Museum (June 2009)*.  
Smithsonian Institution: Office of Policy and Analysis.

Latino(a)/Hispanic	5%		4%
Native American	3%		0%
No answer	1%		6%
<b>Age</b>	<b>n=67</b>	<b>n=251</b>	<b>n=298</b>
Under 12	5%	22%	--
12-19 years	28%	8%	11%
20-29 years	10%	18%	10%
30-39 years	12%	19%	17%
40-49 years	22%	16%	30%
50-59 years	13%	10%	17%
60-69 years	6%	5%	11%
70 and older	3%	2%	4%
<b>Residence</b>	<b>n=63</b>		<b>n=298</b>
Local (inside the beltway)	5%		7%
Greater DC area	40%		13%
Out of state (non-neighboring)	54%		77%
Another country	2%		8%
<b>Postal Museum visitation</b>	<b>n=67</b>		<b>n=298</b>
First visit	76%		85%
Repeat visit	24%		15%
<b>Education</b>	<b>n=67</b>		<b>N=228</b>
High school or less <sup>3</sup>	37%		11%
1-2 years of college or no degree	10%		19%
Associate's degree	3%		7%
Bachelor's degree	15%		28%
Graduate/professional degree	34%		35%
<b>Group type (using FEC)</b>	<b>n=67</b>	<b>k=118</b>	<b>n=228</b>
Alone (adults)	34%	35%	10%
Adults with children	28%	31%	47%
Adults only	15%	30%	43%
Children/youth only <sup>4</sup>	23%	4%	--
<b>Used Postal Museum website?</b>	<b>n=67</b>		<b>n=228</b>
No	88%		94%
Yes: to plan this visit	9%		4%
Yes: to learn about stamps and/or postal history	3%		2%
Yes: another reason	0%		1%

Note: Shaded areas reflect data not collected or not comparable.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the high percentage of respondents with an education of “high school or less” is partly due to the fact that youth age 17 and under (n=16) were included in the sample.

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of “youth only” using the FEC in the interview sample is higher than in the observation sample due to purposive sampling for interviews. This was done in order to capture enough family/youth perspectives.

## **Who uses the Ford Education Center and why?**

### **Who uses the Ford Education Center**

Data suggests that visitors to the FEC tend to be younger than for the Postal Museum overall. Based on visual determination, the mean and median age for the FEC users was 36<sup>5</sup>, compared to 42 for the Museum<sup>6</sup>, suggesting that the FEC does attract younger visitors.

Observation data showed that visitors are most likely to come into the FEC alone (35%; k=41). (See

Table 2). About one third of the visitor groups (31%; k=37) were intergenerational groups including at least one adult and one child (17 or under), and another 30% (k=35) were adult-only groups, which included at least two adults (18 and over). Only 4% (k=5) were child-only (either groups or individuals).

**Table 2:** Group type entering the FEC

	<b>Percentage (k=118)</b>
Alone (adults)	35%
Adults and children	31%
Adults only groups (2 or more)	30%
Children only (under 18)	4%

The average size of groups entering the FEC is 2.2. The vast majority of respondents (98%; n=46) were using the FEC for the first time.

### **Visitation level**

During the observation period (May 21-May 31, 2009), the Ford Education Center was not highly visited. Almost two-thirds of visitors (63%; n=159) were observed when the FEC was empty or sparsely visited, and one third (37%; n=92) were observed when the area was moderately visited. When comparing the observation data to the museum's overall visitation during this time period, data indicates that roughly 11.6% of National Postal Museum visitors make use of the FEC.<sup>7</sup> While data was not collected from visitors who do not visit the FEC, initial pilot testing suggested a couple of possible reasons why visitors may not use the FEC: 1) visitors may not be clear what the area is for or what they will be able to do there; and 2) particularly when the area is not being used, visitors may not be sure if they are "allowed" to use the kiosks, or if it is for staff use or special

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<sup>5</sup> Median age was calculated after removing visitors under age 12 from the sample, in order to be comparable to the Smithsonian OP&A data.

<sup>6</sup> Smithsonian OP&A, FY2006 report

<sup>7</sup> This figure was calculated by taking the total counts of visitors to the NPM on the 11 days of observation data collection (n=12,066), and reducing this total by 18% (n=9,894), the percentage of individuals who are not actually visiting the NPM, such as staff and post office customers (Smithsonian OP&A, FY2006 report). This number was then calculated into an hourly average based on an 8-hour day (112 visitors per hour), and compared to the hourly average across all observation data collection in the FEC over 20 one-hour periods (13 visitors per hour). Based on these calculations, the percentage of NPM visitors, on average, who visit the FEC is 11.6%.

programs.<sup>8</sup> There is some research to show that computers are less preferred by museum visitors than other interactive media (Adams, Luke, & Moussouri, 2004), which may contribute to lower use of the FEC.

### **Motivations for using the Ford Education Center**

When asked why they decided to use the computer kiosks in the FEC, visitors participating in the interview gave a variety of responses (1.39 on average). More than half (52%; n=30) said they used the kiosks because they looked fun or interesting, either in general or because of a specific element (such as the large magnifying glass) or they were simply curious about what it was (see Table 3). The following comments help illustrate this point.

*“It looked like it would be fun; the terminal is attractive.” (male, family, age 41-55)*

*“The fun signs – big magnifying glass” (female, family, age 26-40)*

*“It looked like something interesting” (female, adult group, age 18-25)*

*“(I was) attracted by the picture of the dog on the welcome screen” (male, family, age 41-55)*

One quarter (24%; n=14) reported that they were hoping to learn something in general or were seeking specific information about the museum and its collections. Following are a few comments that support this trend:

*“It said ‘Education Center,’ so I thought I’d learn something” (male, adult group, age 26-40)*

*“The fact that it was ‘education’ – to find out more about stamps” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“To find a specific document – the Hindenburg letter.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

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<sup>8</sup> Note that in the OP&A study, 42% of visitors said they had “used the interactive database to search collections or play games,” which was intended to represent the Ford Education Center. However, this discrepancy with observed data (vs. self-report) indicates that the OP&A survey question may not have been clear to visitors; it is also possible that usage is slightly higher than what is calculated based on observation data.

**Table 3: Motivations for using the FEC**

Category	Adults (n=28)	Families (n=30)	TOTAL (n=58)	Online survey (n=227)
Looked fun, interesting; curiosity	29%	73%	52%	8%
Wanted to learn something, get more information (general or specific)	40%	10%	24%	21%
Wanted to rest, take a break; was passing time, waiting for someone else in group	36%	7%	21%	17%
Likes technology, playing with computers, games; something interactive to do	14%	23%	19%	40%
Someone recommended it, someone else in group was using it, or saw another visitor using it	4%	17%	10%	10%
Bored, nothing else to do	0%	10%	5%	4%
Other	4%	0%	2%	--
Unrelated, irrelevant	0%	13% <sup>9</sup>	7%	--

Total is more than 100% due to multiple responses (1.39 on average)

About one-fifth of the visitors (21%; n=12) reported that they used the kiosk because they wanted to rest, take a break from exhibits, or were waiting or “passing the time” while someone else in their group looked through the galleries. Following are a couple of examples:

*“Just looking to sit down and rest my feet, while my husband continues to look. He reads every label.” (female, adult group, age 55+)*

*“My friend had to make a phone call – I told her I would play on the computer.” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“Because we were waiting for the postcard to come out while the video was going – there were chairs.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

Another fifth (19%; n=11) were using the kiosks because they like computers or interactive experiences. These comments were generally broad, such as “I like using computers” or “It was something interactive.”

Data showed a couple of differences between adults and families in terms of their motivation to use the kiosks. Visitors from adult-only groups were more likely to say they wanted to take a break (36%, compared to 7% for families), or get more information (40%, compared to 10% for families). Families were more likely to say they used the kiosks because they looked fun or interesting (73%, compared to 29% for adult-only groups), or because they like technology and computer interactives (23%, compared to 14% for adult-only groups).

<sup>9</sup> Unrelated responses were those that did not address the question asked; these were often comments that were additional to the visitor answering the question, and were mostly related to something they had already experienced at the FEC, not connected to why they used the kiosk to begin with. For example, one visitor commented: “It was good there was a Spanish option. My daughter speaks Spanish.” Another noted, “The matching game was fun.”

The online survey also asked visitors to indicate why they used the FEC, having them select from four closed-ended choices, plus an “other” option with room to explain their answer. The survey data generally supported the interview data. However, far more visitors in the interview suggested that they were motivated out of curiosity and interest (52%, compared to 8% for the online survey), likely because this was not one of the forced-choice responses on the online survey and only came from the “other” category. Visitors on the online survey were more likely to say they used the FEC because they like technology and interactives (40%, compared to 19% for the interviews). This may be because the question was asked in an open-ended way in the interview, so visitors were not as likely to generate this response on their own. However, it may be that some of those who described being motivated by the FEC looking “fun” or “interesting,” were actually drawn to the interactive aspect of it.

### ***What is the nature and extent of visitors’ engagement?***

In order to understand the nature and extent of visitors’ engagement in the Ford Education Center, researchers gathered data on: 1) when visitors come to the FEC in their visit to the Postal Museum, and how long they stay; and 2) what visitors do while in the FEC, and which activities they use.

### **When do visitors stop at the FEC and for how long?**

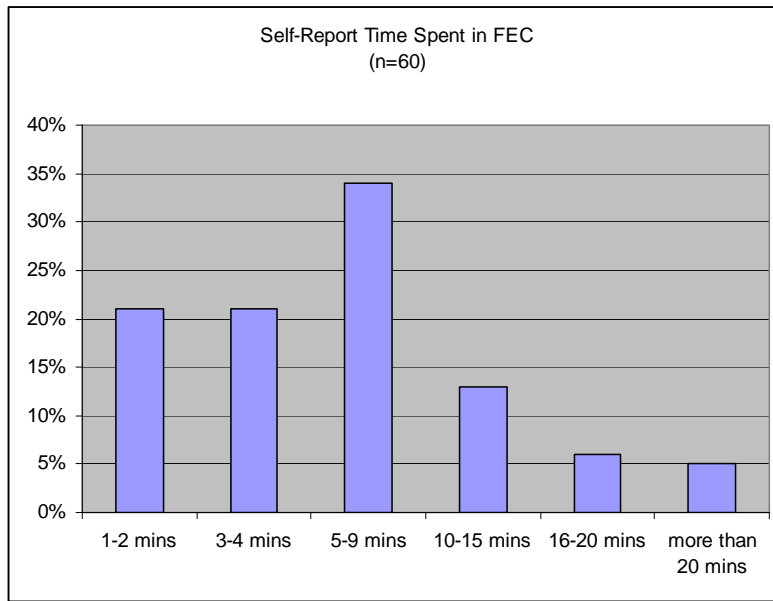
Thirty percent (n=20) visited the Ford Education Center at the beginning of their visit to the National Postal Museum; another 31% (n=21) visit in the middle; and more than a third (39%; n=26) were visiting at the end. This data suggests that there is a slight tendency for visitors to come to the FEC at the end of their visit, and thus these visitors would not have the chance to apply their experience in the rest of the museum galleries, but otherwise there is no strong pattern.

The majority of visitors reported spending less than 10 minutes in the FEC (see Figure 1)<sup>10</sup>. Specifically, one third (34%; n=23) felt they had spent 5-9 minutes; 21% (n=14) reported spending 1-2 minutes; and another 21% (n=14) reported spending 3-4 minutes. Thirteen percent (n=9) said they had spent 10-15 minutes in the FEC, four people reported spending 16-20 minutes, and three people felt they had spent more than 20 minutes in the FEC. (For the purposes of this study, interviewers did not approach visitors who entered the FEC and immediately left.) There were no apparent differences in time spent based on group type (adults only or family/youth groups).

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<sup>10</sup> Self-report of time spent is not as accurate as observation/timing, but is rather a rough gauge of how long visitors were engaged at the FEC. For a more precise measurement, a further observation-based study should be conducted.

**Figure 1**

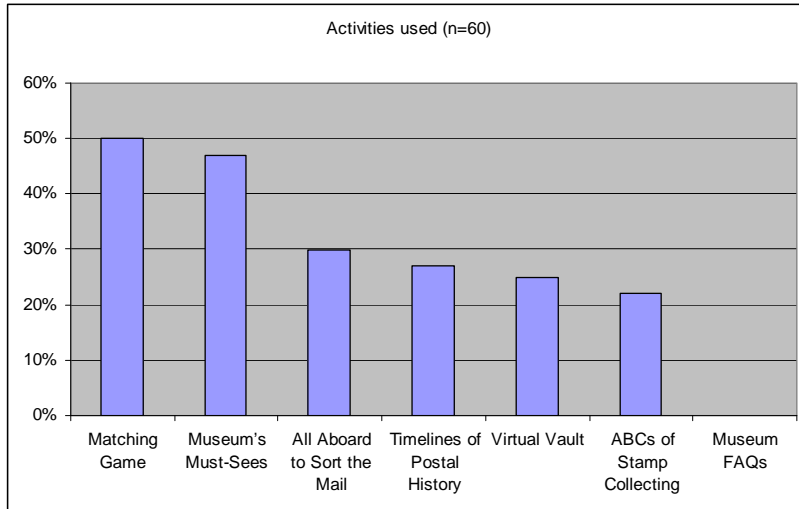


**What visitors do in the FEC**

Observation data showed that more than a third of the groups (36%; k=41) did not use the kiosks while in the FEC. While observation data was not gathered on what those visitors did, interview data suggests that visitors use the area to rest on the bench, make a phone call, or other activities such as writing a postcard. Data from interviews, however, indicated that only 10% of visitors (n=7) did not use the kiosks. This is possibly due to the fact that the interview station, just outside the FEC, offered chairs that visitors used to rest on instead of doing so on the FEC benches; and may also be due to a sampling bias, in which visitors who had not used the kiosks “passed” the interview to someone in their group, such as a child, who had used the kiosk.

For interview respondents who said they did use the kiosks (90%; n=60), researchers asked them to identify which of the 7 main activities they used (see Figure 2). On average, respondents used 1.82 activities, with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5, and all of the activities (except for the Museum FAQs) were used by at least 20% of respondents. The most popular areas were the Matching Game, with half the visitors (50%; n=30) reporting they had used this activity; and the Museum’s Must-Sees, with almost half the visitors (46%; n=28) reporting they had visited this area of the interactive. These findings are supported by results from the computer usage data, in which the Matching Game and Museum’s Must-Sees received the highest hit rates (aside from the home page). While no one in the interview sample reported visiting the Museum FAQs, the computer usage data ranked this page fourth out of the seven areas. It is possible that the interview participants did not happen to use the Museum FAQs, or perhaps they did not recognize the name, even though an image was shown to them.

**Figure 2**



Data suggested only slight differences in usage of activities based on group type (adults vs. family). Specifically, adults were more likely to use the Museum's Must-Sees (62%, compared to 32% for families); and families were more likely to use the Matching Game (58%, compared to 41% for adults).

### ***What do visitors take away from their experience?***

Visitors were asked to rate a number of statements on a 10-point scale (with 1 being “not at all” and 10 being “very much”), in order to assess the extent to which intended outcomes are actually occurring. The statements addressed the following categories of outcomes: 1) Enjoyment/satisfaction; 2) Knowledge and interest in stamps and postal history; 3) Social and personal relevance; and 4) Extending the experience (in the museum galleries and at home).

Overall, findings suggest that visitors have a highly enjoyable and satisfying experience at the FEC, and that it inspired them to visit objects on display in the museum galleries, but are less likely to feel that they learned something new or became more interested in stamps or postal history as a result. There were no significant differences between how adult groups and families rated the outcome statements.

**Table 4:** Learning outcomes

Statement (rate 1 to 10, with 1 = “not at all” and 10 = “very much”)	n	min	max	mean	Std. dev.
I/we found the FEC easy to use	59	1	10	8.64	1.864
I/we had fun using the FEC	59	1	10	8.12	1.983
I/we would use the FEC again.	59	2	10	8.08	2.269
The FEC made me/us want to visit objects on display in the museum.	58	1	10	6.83	2.854
I / we learned something new about stamps or postal history	59	1	10	6.07	3.321
I/we became more interested in stamps or postal history	59	1	10	5.34	2.986
I /we realized how stamps or postal history connect to my/our own life	58	1	10	4.81	3.487
I/we plan to use the Postal Museum website after our visit.	58	1	10	4.38	3.122
I talked with others in my group about stamps or postal history	30	1	10	4.27	3.028

### Enjoyment and satisfaction

**Easy to use** - Visitors found the FEC easy to use, rating this statement 8.64 on average (see Table 4), on a 10-point scale. The vast majority of visitors (83%; n=49) rated this statement an 8 or above. When prompted to describe why they found the interactive easy to use, the majority (71%; n=42) said it was because of the design/technology of the interactive, such as the intuitive nature of the touch screen and graphics, and the fact that it was easy to navigate and “self-explanatory.” Following are a few comments to illustrate this trend:

*“All I had to do was to touch the screen” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“The buttons were easy – it was explained really well.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

*“The touch screen – (it was) easy to jump where you wanted to go.” (male, adult group, age 41-55)*

For those who had difficulty with using the site, the majority (15%; n=9) suggested this was because they had difficulty with usability or functionality, such as not being able to adjust the screen, difficulty reading the screen because of glare, or because they felt the site was unresponsive, lagged in responding, or would not take them where they intended to go. The following comments help illustrate this point:

*“A little confusing because it has the keyboard and the touch screen.” (male, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“Because sometimes when doing the mail sort...it would go to a different place. It wouldn’t go where you wanted it to go.” (male, family, age 12-17)*

Another 3 respondents suggested that they had difficulty with comprehensibility or content of the site. This included finding game instructions to be unclear or not intuitive. For example, one visitor commented that on the mail sort game it was “hard to understand that you had to click and drag to the mail sort box.”

**Enjoyment/fun** - Visitors highly enjoyed the FEC, rating the statement, “I/we had fun using the FEC” 8.12 on average, on a 10-point scale. Almost two-thirds (64%; n=38) rated this statement an 8 or above. In interviews, more than one-third of the visitors (37%; n=22) said they enjoyed the FEC because they liked

playing games. This included both general references to games and specific references to the Matching Game or Sorting the Mail, as the following comments illustrate:

*“My daughter liked the matching game.” (female, family, age 26-40)*

*“(I liked the) games, educational games, still involved with stamps.” (female, adult group, age 26-40)*

*“Because it had games and things – the computers weren’t boring.” (male, family, under 12)*

Another quarter (24%; n=14) said they enjoyed the FEC because it was interactive in general and offered a variety of ways to engage. These visitors enjoyed using the touch screen and “pressing buttons,” or appreciated the interactive experience. Comments included:

*“Pretty cool – (you’re) able to do a lot of stuff like emailing yourself.” (male, family, age 12-17)*

*“I thought it was fun pressing buttons.” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“(The FEC was) a new way of interacting.” (female, family, age 18-25)*

Another fifth of the visitors (19%; n=11) said they had fun at the FEC because they learned something new or felt it was informative/educational overall. For example, one visitor noted, “I love to read and learn new things. (The FEC) caught my attention--the different topics on the screen. It was fun.”

For those visitors who rated their enjoyment of the FEC lower, most (14%; n=10) described that they thought the FEC was interesting but would not describe it as “fun,” or they simply felt it could be more fun or engaging. These comments included: “Mildly interesting, but not ‘fun’”; and “It was fun, but it wasn’t anything new.”

***Interest in using the FEC again*** - Visitors reported that, if possible, they would likely use the FEC again on a future visit, rating this statement 8.08 on average. Two-thirds of the visitors (65%; n=38) rated this statement an 8 or above. When prompted to explain their rating, about a third of the visitors (32%; n=19) said they would want to go to different areas of the site or explore more deeply on a future visit. Following are a couple of representative comments to illustrate this trend:

*“To spend more time – go into more screens.” (female, adult group, age 26-40)*

*“Just because there is probably more on there than I have time for today.” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“To see more stuff, do more, explore more.” (female, family, age 55+)*

Another third (31%; n=18) said they would use the FEC again because they had a positive, enjoyable experience. For example, one visitor noted, “It’s educational, interesting, and fun – it makes me feel like a kid again.” Others said they would use the FEC again because it provides a good overview of the museum, to show someone else, or to look for specific information. Most of those who felt they would not likely visit the FEC again (8%; n=5) said it was because they had done it all already, or would only come back if there was something new featured.

### **Knowledge and interest**

***Knowledge of stamps or postal history*** - Data suggested that visitors were divided on whether they had

learned something new about stamps or postal history as a result of using the FEC, rating this statement 6.07, on average, on a 10-point scale. While 42% (n=25) rated this statement an 8 or higher; about a third (29%; n=17) rated the same statement a 3 or lower, suggesting that some viewed the FEC as a learning experience while others did not. This difference was not based on whether it was a family group or adult only group, and the sample size was too small to determine if there are any other factors contributing to this difference in experience. Qualitative data suggested that visitors who did not feel they learned felt they did not spend enough time or felt they were “just playing.”

For those who felt they had learned something new about stamps or postal history, more than half (59%; n=34) were able to provide specific examples of what they learned, including information about specific objects in the museum’s collection, learning about postal history, or learning about the Museum itself. Following are a few representative comments from visitors to illustrate this point:

*“(I learned about) different styles of stamps and mailboxes.” (male, family, age 41-55)*

*“How they delivered mail in the old days with a train and book” (male, adult group, age 55+)*

*“I learned about the dog (Owney), and what the mail people were expected to put in the slots – how fast they were expected to do that.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

For visitors who rated their learning lower, most (17%; n=10) did not see the FEC as a learning experience. They explained that they were “just playing,” “didn’t pay attention long enough,” or didn’t spend enough time to learn anything new.

***Interest in stamps or postal history***– Data indicated that visitors were divided on the extent to which the FEC helped them to become more interested in stamps or postal history, rating this statement 5.34 on average, on a 10-point scale. About one third of visitors (29%; n=17) rated this statement an 8 or higher, and another third (29%; n=17) rated it a 3 or lower. Similar to knowledge, this difference was not based on whether it was a family group or adult-only group, and the sample size is too small to determine other factors. However, the qualitative data below provides some further detail for why visitors rated this statement the way they did.

When asked to explain their rating, visitors who felt the FEC increased their interest attributed the gain to seeing or learning about objects or postal history on the site (24%; n=14), as the following comments reflect:

*“I’m not really interested in stamps, but now I sort of am because I learned stamps are valuable.” (male, family, age 12-17).*

*“Because it was interesting and historical and cultural. It gave me more information about postal history.” (female, family, age 12-17).*

*“Looking at all different stamps is interesting.” (female, adult group, age 26-40)*

Visitors who felt their interest was not increased by the FEC attributed that to being already interested in stamps or postal history (16%; n=9) or not having an interest in stamps or postal history (14%; n=8). For example, one visitor noted, “Stamps aren’t my thing”, and another said, “I am just not interested in stamps”.

## **Social and Personal relevance**

***Personal connections to stamps/postal history*** - Data indicated that visitors to the FEC had a hard time connecting stamps or postal history to their own lives, rating this statement 4.81 on average, on a 10-point scale. Nearly half the visitors (43%; n=25) rated this statement a 3 or lower.

Visitors who did not make a personal connection using the FEC mostly attributed this to the fact that they were just playing games or did not feel the experience lent itself to making a personal connection (15%; n=8). For example, one visitor noted, “We really weren’t that involved with it” and another noted that they “only looked at stamps, airplanes” on the site. Others mentioned that they simply do not feel a connection to stamps or postal history (7%; n=4).

A smaller group (26%; n=15) did feel the FEC helped them recognize connections between their own life and stamps or postal history. For visitors who did make a connection, most explained that they made a personal connection to objects or content on the site related to stamps or postal history. For example, one visitor said it was “nostalgic” reading about Mr. Zip, “when zip codes first came out in the 1970s”; and another noted, “The matching game showed mailboxes over the years—some of which I used.”

***Social interaction*** - Visitors were least likely to report that they had talked with others about stamps or postal history during their experience in the FEC, rating this statement 4.27 on average. (Note that visitors who were using the FEC alone did not rate this statement, so are not included.) For those who did have conversations around the activity, most (26%; n=8) were able to give specific examples of what they talked about. The following quotes help support this trend:

*“(We) talked about the upside down Jenny, talked about door knockers.” (male, family, age 12-17)*

*“(Me and my daughter) talked about different ways they brought the mail.” (male, family, age 41-55)*

*“We talked about the Museum must-sees.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

About 10% (n=3) said they talked about the site or activity – such as the matching game – but not about stamps or postal history specifically.

For those who did not talk with others in their group, they felt they had not had the chance yet (for example, their group was not with them), or they saw it as a solo or independent activity, rather than one that was meant for social interaction. Research supports that computers can support less social interaction than other interactives (Adams, et. al, 2004; Falk, et. al. 2004), as they are often perceived by visitors as a single-use activity, rather than a collaborative one. Interactives that require collaboration or cooperation are more likely to support social interaction. Also, the study did not measure social interaction that may have occurred after the visitor left the FEC.

## **Extending the experience**

***Visiting objects on display in the museum*** – Data suggested that the FEC was effective in inspiring visitors to want to visit objects on display in the museum galleries, with visitors rating this statement 6.83 on average, on a 10-point scale. More than half (53%; n=31) rated this statement an 8 or higher.

When asked to describe why the FEC prompted them to want to see real objects in the galleries, more

than a third (39%; n=22) provided specific examples of objects they intended to look at afterwards, including revisiting objects they had already seen. The following comments from visitors help support this trend:

*“The dog, a few others I’ll be look for (like the) USS Oklahoma.” (male, adult, age 41-55)*

*“Owney the dog.” (male, family, age 12-17)*

*“Different stamps – Franklin stamps and Washington stamps.” (male, adult, age 18-25)*

*“Going to the upside down stamp right now!” (male, family, age 12-17)*

Another fifth (21%; n=12) made general references to wanting to see objects in the galleries as a result of using the FEC. For example, one visitor noted, “I saw a couple things on the kiosk that I haven’t seen in the museum.” Another commented, “When you see it on the game, you think it might be cool in real life.”

For those who were not inspired to visit objects in the museum, the main reason given was that they had already seen the exhibits or were done with their visit (25%; n=14). The following comments help illustrate this point:

*“If I had done (the FEC) first, yes, but I did it at the end of my visit.” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“We already visited everything. This is our last stop.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

*“Sort of at the end of our trip – no interest in going back based on this. Maybe if we’d noticed it when we came in.” (male, family, age 41-55)*

**Using the Postal Museum website** - Visitors were only moderately likely to say they planned to use the Postal Museum website after their visit, rating this statement 4.38 on average, on a 10-point scale. More than half of the visitors (52%; n=30) rated this statement a 3 or lower. There did not appear to be any difference based on whether the visitor had used the Virtual Vault or not. Visitors had a hard time explaining why they would not visit the website, with 19% (n=10) simply saying they probably would not; and 17% (n=9) said they were not aware they could access the collections from home. For those who did feel they would use the website at home, one quarter (25%; n=13) said they would use the site to learn more, or get more information about the museum’s collections. Following are a few representative quotes:

*“I probably would...if I needed to know something about this [stamps] then I would go to it.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

*“I want to learn more about the postal museum--facts I had missed.” (female, family, age 55+)*

*“There are some things I want to look up....only if I have the free time” (female, family, age 12-17)*

### **Relationship of the FEC to overall museum visit**

**What visitors would do differently in museum** - While interviews were conducted in the middle of the visitor experience (rather than as exit interviews), visitors were asked a couple of questions focused on how the FEC may have caused them to do anything differently during the rest of their museum visit or in what ways it may have added to their overall museum experience. Data showed that more than half the visitors (51%; n=27) felt they would not do anything differently in the museum based on their experience in the FEC. Of those, one third (n=9) offered a specific reason, such as they had already seen everything they wanted to

see in the museum or their visit was complete.

**Table 5:** What visitors would do differently in museum based on FEC experience

Category	Percentage (n=53)
Would do nothing differently	51%
Go see or revisit an object on display in the museum	32%
Will pay more attention to objects, spend more time	11%
Would come to FEC first next time	8%
Not sure	2%

Total is more than 100% due to multiple responses (1.04 on average)

About one third of the visitors (32%; n=17) indicated that they might go visit an object or exhibit in the museum based on what they did or saw on the computer kiosk. This included both general and specific references, as the following quotes suggest:

*“Go see Owney” (male, family, age 12-17)*

*“It made me want to find more stamps, look at more things” (male, family, under 12)*

*“I know one critical thing I want to go find is (objects related to) sorting the mail.” (male, adult group, age 26-40)*

Eleven percent (n=6) of respondents suggested that they would pay more attention to objects or content in the galleries, and perhaps spend more time focusing on certain objects or theme as a result of encountering them on the kiosk. For example, one visitor said they would “spend more time looking at the pony express exhibit more closely.”

***What the FEC added to the visitor experience*** – When asked what they got out of the FEC experience that they would not have gotten otherwise, visitors offered a variety of responses (1.36 on average). More than a third of visitors (39%; n=23) felt that the FEC provided more information about postal history and context for objects that they had seen (or would see) in the galleries, or that it pointed out objects that they may not have noticed otherwise. The following quotes help support this trend:

*“(The FEC is a) source of information. As I go around (the museum) I might have a better idea of what I’m looking at. I had forgotten about the Pony Express.” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“(It) highlighted a couple of things I hadn’t seen yet.” (male, family, age 41-55)*

*“I found out more information about certain items or stamps – more information than you would normally think of, more detail, and different types of stamps.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

More than a quarter (27%; n=16) felt the FEC added a fun and entertaining experience that they may not have gotten otherwise. These responses were generally broad and included comments such as,

“Entertainment,” and “It made me have more fun.”

**Table 6:** What the FEC added to visitors’ museum experience

Category	Percentage (n=59)
Provided more information, context for objects, postal history	39%
It was a fun, entertaining experience	27%
Technology, interactives	25%
Good overview or “snapshot” of museum objects and themes	12%
Good experience for kids	9%
Provided a rest, break from exhibits	5%
Added nothing to experience	7%
Other	7%
Unrelated	5%

Total is more than 100% due to multiple responses (1.36 on average)

Another quarter (25%; n=15) noted that the FEC provided an interactive or technology-based experience. Some of those visitors suggested that this form of engaging was better or different from looking at displays or reading labels. Following are a couple of comments to help illustrate this point:

*“(The FEC is) more interactive than looking at a board or a display.” (female, adult group, age 41-55)*

*“(The FEC is) more interactive – a different sort of learning, looking for something versus actually interacting on the computer.” (male, family, age 12-17)*

*“More interesting than just reading a plaque.” (female, family, age 12-17)*

Research shows that visitors value interactive experiences and actively seek them out, though they are less “expected” in museums than in science center (Falk, et. al., 2004). Overall, visitors to the FEC were presently surprised and greatly appreciated a technology-based, digital interactive.

## CONCLUSIONS

Results from this study show that the FEC provides visitors with a fun, interactive way to engage with stamps and postal history, and offers additional context and information around the museum's objects and themes. Visitors are particularly drawn to the FEC's interactive games (*Matching Game* and *All Aboard to Sort the Mail!*), and to exploring highlights from the museum's collection (*Museum's Must-Sees*). They find value in being able to have an interactive, self-driven experience, and the FEC inspires them to want to visit objects on display in the museum.

However, results from this study also show that while visitors have a highly enjoyable experience overall, some are less likely to feel they learned something new or increased their interest in stamps and postal history as a result. Visitors are also more likely to use the FEC as a solo activity rather than for group interaction, as was initially intended. Finally, the study shows that while the FEC engages a broad range of visitors, including adult-only and intergenerational groups, the space only engages a small percentage of visitors compared to overall museum visitation.

### ***Who uses the Ford Education Center and why?***

Results from this study show that the Ford Education Center (FEC) successfully engages a wide range of visitors, including both adults and intergenerational groups. The FEC users are younger than the overall museum visitorship, suggesting that the experience is in fact appealing to a younger audience. However, about two-thirds of those using the FEC are adults (either alone or in groups), which indicates the FEC is also appealing to adult audiences.

Visitors are drawn to the FEC because it looks fun and interesting, it is interactive and technology based, they want to find out more information about stamps or postal history, or they simply want to "take a break" from the gallery experience. There are some differences between adults and family groups in terms of their motivation to use the FEC. Adults are more likely to be looking for information or wanting to learn something, while families are more likely to use the kiosk because it looked fun/interesting or because they like using technology.

About a third of the visitors use the FEC alone, even if they are visiting the Museum with a group, which indicates that many see the computer kiosk as a solo rather than a group activity. Finally, the study shows that a relatively small group of visitors (11.6%) utilize the FEC on average. If the Museum wishes to increase usage of the space, they will need to think about ways to draw visitors in more, such as by making it more clear what the visitor will be able to do in the space or ensuring that visitors know the space is intended for visitor use.

### ***What is the nature and extent of visitors' engagement with the FEC?***

Results from the study show that visitors to the FEC stay for a moderate amount of time and that the majority (about two-thirds) of visitors utilize the computer kiosks while they are in the space. For those who use the kiosks, the various activities are well-utilized, with all areas of the site (except for *Museum FAQs*) being

visited by at least 20% of FEC users. Visitors are particularly drawn to the games (*Matching Game* and *All Aboard to Sort the Mail!*) and highlights from the museum (*Museum's Must-Sees*), suggesting that the opportunity to play and to explore the museum's collection are both important offerings for visitors. Visitors tend to use the kiosks on their own, with only low to moderate social interaction with other visitors taking place.

### ***What do visitors take away from their experience at the FEC?***

Results from the study tell a two-part story in terms of visitor outcomes from using the FEC. On the one hand, the FEC clearly provides a fun, accessible, and satisfying experience for visitors, and increases their interest in seeing objects on display in the museum. Visitors find value in having an interactive experience and engaging with the museum in a different way, and some feel that the experience provides more context and information about the museum's collections than they would have gotten otherwise. On the other hand, some visitors are less likely to feel they are learning something new, increasing their interest, or making personal connections in relation to stamps and postal history. While about a third of the visitors articulate moderate to high ratings on these outcomes, another third feel these do not happen much as a result of using the FEC. These visitors are more focused on the "fun" or "novelty" factor of the games than on the content embedded in games or on the more content-heavy areas of the interactive.

## REFERENCES

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## **APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENTS AND PROTOCOLS**

# INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## National Postal Museum – Ford Education Center Summative Evaluation

January 2009

The purpose of interviewing National Postal Museum visitors as they exit the museum is twofold: 1) to document the extent to which visitors utilize the Ford Education Center; and 2) to understand more about the nature of their learning experience with the interactives in the FEC. The purpose of these interviews is NOT to understand visitors' experiences in the National Postal Museum as a whole.

The following interview protocol provides detailed descriptions of how and where to approach visitors, how to initiate and conduct the interview, and interviewing techniques that will facilitate an open conversation with visitors for a mutually rich, meaningful and enjoyable experience.

### **Sampling procedures**

Random sampling: Data collectors will initially use a randomized sampling procedure to include a representative sample of both adult and family visitors. This procedure is described below:

As visitors exit the Ford Education Center (either by leaving one of the stools on the outside of the area, or by crossing the “imaginary line” that separates the FEC from the atrium), randomly select and approach visitors to ask them to participate in a brief interview. Specifically, as soon as you have prepared the next interview form, approach the **1<sup>st</sup>** visitor to cross the imaginary line after you look up. Approach only people who are approximately 14 years or older (determine visually) unless these teens are part of an organized group (i.e., a school group or some other kind of group), in which case do not include them in your sample and recruit another visitor. Although, we will target **individuals** to interview, keep in mind that the individual will likely be visiting in a **group** (family, friends, etc.) and you will need to suggest how the others might spend their time during the interview (looking around the galleries, gift shop, etc.). If there are children in the group, you can offer them a sketch pad and markers if available. If other members of the group do participate in the interview, you will want to make them feel comfortable and engaged, but pay primary attention to recording information from the target individual. For example, the first visitor across the imaginary line may be a father, but he may only talk to you with his whole family present. In that case, you will want to make eye contact with everyone in the family, and give everyone the opportunity to respond to your questions, while ensuring that the father has provided information about each question you have asked.

Purposive sampling: Once the quota of adult only visitors has been reached, we will switch to a purposive sampling procedure to ensure that we get enough perspectives from family groups. At this point, we will shift to targeting families with children specifically. This is defined as at least one adult with at least one child (17 or under), or a child (17 or under) who is visiting with a family but using the FEC interactive on their own. For this purposive sampling, you will use the same random sampling technique described above, only you will approach the first **family** group to cross the line, and skip visitors that are adult-only or visiting alone. If a child (age 12-17) was using the computer interactive alone (e.g. while the parent sat and rested or waited nearby), then

you must get consent from the parent to conduct the interview. You can ask, “Would you mind if I asked your child a few questions about what they thought of this computer interactive?”

### **Initiating the interview**

Once you have selected a visitor, approach them, introduce yourself, explain what you are doing, and ask them if they would mind answering a few questions. Try to be casual, friendly, and genuine in your tone, so that visitors feel comfortable. You can say something like this:

*Hi! My name is \_\_\_ and I'm working with the Postal Museum today to find out more about your experience in the galleries today. Would you be willing to help us? It will take about 5-10 minutes, and your feedback will help the museum to improve the visitor experience for others. I have a table and chairs over here where you can sit down and relax.*

If the visitor says no, do not take it personally. Thank them, and record their refusal on a list titled “Refusal Log,” as well as your impression of why the visitor refused. For example, maybe they were really in a hurry or they had a screaming child to attend to.

If the visitor appears uncertain or reluctant to agree to talk with you, try to gauge their hesitation. There are myriad reasons why visitors would initially not want to stop to talk. Some of those reasons we can anticipate and proactively acknowledge and try to make the visitor feel more comfortable. We want to try to give the visitor every reason to participate. For example, if the person says they are in a hurry, tell them that’s fine and they are free to leave whenever they need to. Offer to walk around with the person especially if children in the group are reluctant or unable to stay with the group. You want to accommodate the visitor, and you have some flexibility to tailor the interview to suit their needs and limitations. You want to do anything you can to **include** them in the sample, rather than **exclude** them (e.g. force them to refuse, give them opportunities to refuse) because you can’t accommodate them. Most likely, once they get started and are having an enjoyable experience talking with you and giving their opinion, they will lose track of time.

If the visitor you targeted defers the interview to someone else in the group, that’s fine too. For instance, the first person across your imaginary line may be a father, and when asked if he will participate, he defers to his wife, who agrees to talk while the others continue on their visit.

### **Conducting the interview**

If the person agrees to participate in an entry interview, bring them to the data collection station (a set of table and chairs near the Benjamin Franklin statue) and get them settled. Then turn to the Interview Guide and use the language/script provided to guide you through the interview process. Note that for family groups, you will interview the whole group, and include the children’s perspectives as much as possible in your notes. For adult only groups, you will interview the adult you initially selected.

Following are some specific points to keep in mind for this interview, as well as some general interviewing tips:

- It is often best to begin the interview with some casual, conversational questions, such as “Is this your first time to the Postal Museum?” and “Are you from the DC area?”
- In addition to the probes provided on the Interview Guide, you should ask follow-up questions that will provide deeper, meaningful, and relevant information. Some useful probes to use are:
  - Tell me more about that
  - What do you mean by that?
  - Can you explain that a little more?
- Always phrase your question as a question (NOT “I’d like to know why you decided to use the FEC” BUT “Why did you decide to use the FEC?”)
- Give visitors time to answer. Let there be silence for at least 5-10 seconds before prompting them again, asking if they need the question repeated, etc. It is easy to get nervous if visitors don’t answer immediately, and to compensate by asking another question right away or giving them possible answers before they have time to think it through.
- Always be friendly and accommodating to visitors, try to be aware of their needs, expectations, and agendas. Try to minimize any reasons for them to change their minds and leave the interview.
- Make the interview as relaxed and comfortable as possible. It’s okay to be conversational, even though you are asking them very specific questions. You don’t want to sound like you’re reading off a script.
- Try to enhance your auditory memory for visitor responses so you so you don’t need to write everything down at that very second. If you succeed in initiating and building a rapport and comfortable conversation, visitors will naturally be more likely to spend time with you and answer your questions.

It is likely that much of the visitors’ general background information will be disclosed during the interview. However, by the end of the interview, you will need to ask visitors to fill out the Demographics Sheet provided.

### **Recording the data from the interview**

Use the attached Interview Guide to take notes on the individuals’ responses. You do not have to capture every word they say, but be careful to note down key words, phrases, and ideas as the visitor speaks. Try to maintain eye contact and a conversational tone while you take notes. This can be tricky! Depending on your style and skill level, you may want to make a comment at the outset that you need to write down what they are saying, so it may take a second before you can respond, or you may ask them to repeat something - they are usually very understanding.

After the interview, make sure to take a few minutes to go back over the interview and fill in the gaps. No matter how good your memory is, you will likely lose the detailed information if you wait too long. Check for legibility and completeness and flow of thoughts. Try to fill in as much detailed richness as possible, capturing their actual words, phraseology, and expressions whenever possible. Also, note in parentheses any prompts/questions that you asked as a follow-up to their initial responses. Try to note with quotation marks what are **actual statements** made and exact language used by people.

Remember to record the necessary demographic information, as well as the date and time of day you conducted the interview. Record where the interview took place. Also, there is a small space on the bottom of the interview guide to record any relevant notes about the visitor. For instance, was it difficult to get the visitor to talk? Was the visitor distracted by his/her children, and not paying full attention to the interview questions? Did the visitor have to leave partway through the interview? These notes will provide important contextual information for understanding the visitors' responses to the interview questions.

### **Ending the interview**

Once you have finished with the interview guide and demographic sheet, thank the visitor for participating and give them a small thank-you gift (provided by the National Postal Museum).

## EXIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] Weekday [ ] Weekend Time: [ ] Before 12:00 [ ] 12:00-2:00 [ ] After 2:00

### I. Introduction

After the visitor agrees to participate in the interview, thank them and give a very brief overview of the study. You can use the script below, or just paraphrase:

*Thanks again for agreeing to help us. The National Postal Museum is interested in learning more about what visitors do in the Ford Education Center and what they think about it. They are really interested in getting people's honest feedback—good or bad—so you cannot possibly offend me by anything you say. Do you have any questions so far? Great, let's begin...*

### II. Use of Ford Education Center

1. First, how far along are you in your museum visit today?

- I am near the beginning of my visit.
- I am in the middle of my visit.
- I am near the end of my visit.

2. About how long did you spend in the FEC today?

- 1-2 minutes
- 3-4 minutes
- 5-9 minutes
- 10-15 minutes
- 16-20 minutes
- More than 20 minutes

3. Did you use the computer kiosks in the FEC today?

- NO
  - What did you do in the FEC?
  - Just looked around and left
  - Sat on a bench or chair and rested
  - Looked at the computer screen, but did not touch it
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

→ Why didn't you use the kiosk today? (What could the Postal Museum do to make using the kiosk more appealing to you?)

(Interview finished. Go to Demographic Sheet.)

YES, I used the computer kiosk at the FEC today  
(Go to Q4)

4. Is this your first time using the FEC computer kiosks?

- YES
- NO

5. Who did you use the kiosk with today?

- I used it alone
- I used it with others in my group
  - How many? \_\_\_\_\_ adults over 18
  - \_\_\_\_\_ youth 12-17
  - \_\_\_\_\_ youth under 12

6. Why did you decide to use the computer kiosks today?

### III. Use of specific activities

Now I'd like to find out a little more about what you did while using the computer kiosk today...

7. First, can you tell me how you used the FEC? What did you do?  
 → Based on the specific responses of the visitor, probe for as much detail as possible about how they used the FEC; for example, if they looked at objects, how many? Which ones? Did they open video or audio clips?

8. Specifically, which of the following activities did you use today? (some of this may be clear from the previous question). One at a time, show the visitor each of the seven images/examples that represent the seven areas of the FEC interactive. For each one, give them a brief verbal description of what it is and ask them whether or not they used that specific activity during their visit today, and check off the ones the DID use below:

- |   |   |                                      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum's Must-Sees       | <input type="checkbox"/> All aboard to Sort the mail! | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum FAQs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matching Game            | <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Vault                |                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ABCs of Stamp Collecting | <input type="checkbox"/> Timelines of Postal History  |                                      |

### IV. Outcomes

*So we've talked a bit about how you used this activity, now I'd like to know what you thought about the FEC and what you got out of it. In order to do that, I have a list of statements which I'd like you to rate on a scale from 1-10 (with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "a lot"), and then I'll ask you to explain each answer. There is no right or wrong answer here – the staff would really like to know whether this activity is accomplishing what they hoped it would. Let's start with the first one...*

Then take out each statement one at a time, read it out loud to the visitor, and remind visitors of the scale, at least for the first few cards. After reading each card, you might want to say something like: *Please rate this statement according to what extent you feel this happened for you or your group.*

9. Record the visitor's answers below:

Statement	Rating (1-10)	Why did you give it that rating? Can you give an example?
I / we found the FEC easy to use.		
I / we had fun using the FEC.		
I / we learned something new about stamps or postal history.		

I / we became more interested in stamps or postal history.		
I talked with others in my group about stamps or postal history.		
I / we realized how stamps or postal history connect to my / our own life.		
The FEC made me / us want to visit objects on display in the museum.		
I / we plan to use the Postal Museum website after our visit.		
I / we would use the FEC again.		

10. Do you think you might do anything differently in the museum because of your time in the FEC? Why/why not?

11. What do you think the FEC added to your experience, if anything, that you wouldn't have gotten otherwise?

*Great – thanks for your thoughts. Now I would just like to get a little bit of information about who you are.*

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*Interviewer's Notes:*

## Demographic Sheet

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*The information below will help us know if the museum is serving diverse communities*

1. Where do you live?
  - United States
  - Zip code \_\_\_\_\_
  - Another country
  - Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (mark one)
  - High school or less
  - 1-2 years of college or no degree
  - Associate's degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Graduate/professional degree
3. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself?
  - African American/Black
  - American Indian/Native Alaskan
  - Asian / Asian American
  - Latino(a) or Hispanic
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Prefer not to answer
4. Are you male or female?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Prefer not to answer
5. What year were you born? (ex. 1975)  
\_\_\_\_
6. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?
  - Yes
  - No
7. Are you visiting alone or with other people?
  - I am alone
  - I am visiting with other people
8. Other than yourself, how many people are with you?
  - # of adults (18 and over) \_\_\_\_\_
  - # of youth age 12-17 \_\_\_\_\_
  - # of youth under 12 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Have you ever used the National Postal Museum website?
  - No
  - Yes: to plan this visit
  - Yes: to learn about stamps and/or Postal History
  - Yes: Another reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU!**



## NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM FORD EDUCATION CENTER SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS

### Purpose

The observation portion of the Ford Education Center (FEC) summative evaluation is designed to help answer the first evaluation question of the study, Who uses the Ford Education Center (and why)? Specifically, the observation will provide data on age, gender, group size, and group type (e.g. intergenerational, adult only, child only). The observation will also provide data on whether or not the group uses the kiosks and, if so, whether they utilize them alone or as a group. The observation will not address the question of why visitors are using the FEC, which will be answered through post-interviews.

### Methods

National Postal Museum staff will use the Observation Sheet below to record demographic information about visiting groups who enter the Ford Education Center. Observation data will be collected for a total of approximately 20 hours in 60- to 90-minute intervals spread across weekends and weekdays, as well as morning and afternoon times, in order to provide data that is representative of FEC's visitorship overall. ILI will enter and analyze the data, and include the analysis as part of the final summative report. Below are detailed instructions on how to use the observation sheet:

#### Recording contextual information

- Before beginning your observation session, complete the information at the top of the first sheet, which includes sheet number, observer name (first and last), today's date, start and stop times (hour, minutes), and the approximate visitation level during the time you are observing.
- For each observing session, you should start with a first sheet and label it #1, and then use the bottom sheets and continue to number consecutively throughout the session (for example, sheet 1 – sheet 20).
- Record your name and date on the top of every sheet for the session. The start and stop times and visitation level will only be noted on the first sheet.
- Mark the appropriate visitation level (empty, moderate, crowded, very crowded), based on the overall level of visitation during the 60 or 90 minutes in which you are observing.

Recording demographic information – You will record information on every individual that comes into the Ford Education Center (including the bench on the wall side and stools on the atrium side of the FEC). Include individuals of all ages (including infants), and regardless of whether or not they use the computer kiosks in the FEC. It does not matter how long the individual stays in the FEC, so please include everyone in your records, even if they only enter for a moment.

- Each row of the observation sheet represents one individual visitor, even if they are part of a group. The first column (Group #) will be used to determine which individuals were visiting as a group.
- Assign a group number to each “group” (including those visiting alone), beginning at 1 for each session and continuing consecutively until the end of the session. You should write the same group number for each

individual in the group. For example, if a family enters with two adults and one child, you will complete a row for each individual (three total), but assign each one the same group number. This would look like:

Group #	Sex		Age estimate	Group size # in group	Group Type				Kiosks used # of kiosks per group
	Male	Female			Adults & children	Adults only	Children only	Alone	
1	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	35	3	<u>All ages</u>	Adults	Children	1	0 <u>1</u> 2 3 4 5
1	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	32	3	All ages	Adults	Children	1	0 1 2 3 4 5
1	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	3	3	All ages	Adults	Children	1	0 1 2 3 4 5

Visually determine the demographic information for each individual, and record by circling the appropriate category or filling in information as directed on the observation sheet.

- Estimate each person’s age by using actual numbers, even if you are not certain of the person’s age. For example, if you think the person is in their mid-40s, you can write 45; or if they appear to be in their late 50s, you could write 58.
- Group type includes four categories: **All ages** is for groups with both adults (18 and over) and children (under 18); **adults only** is for groups with two or more adults (18 and over); **children only** is for two or more children (under 18); and **alone** is for individual users, whether they are adults or children. Their estimated age will be noted in the age column, so we will know if this was a child or an adult using the FEC alone. You can record the group type the first person in the group, rather than repeating it for each individual in the group.
- In the “Kiosks used” column, note the number of kiosks the group as a whole uses. For example, if a father and son use one kiosk together, circle “1.” If a family of four each uses their own kiosk, circle “4.” If the individual or group does not use a kiosk (e.g. sit on the bench and rest), then circle “0” on the observation sheet. You can record this number for the first person in the group, rather than repeating it for each individual in the group.
- When you have completed your 60 or 90-minute session, double check to make sure each sheet has your name, date, and a sheet number, and then fasten together and submit to Aurelie Henry.
- If you have questions about the observation sheet, please feel free to contact Jill Stein at ILLI ([stein@ilinet.org](mailto:stein@ilinet.org)), 410-956-5144, ext. 103.

