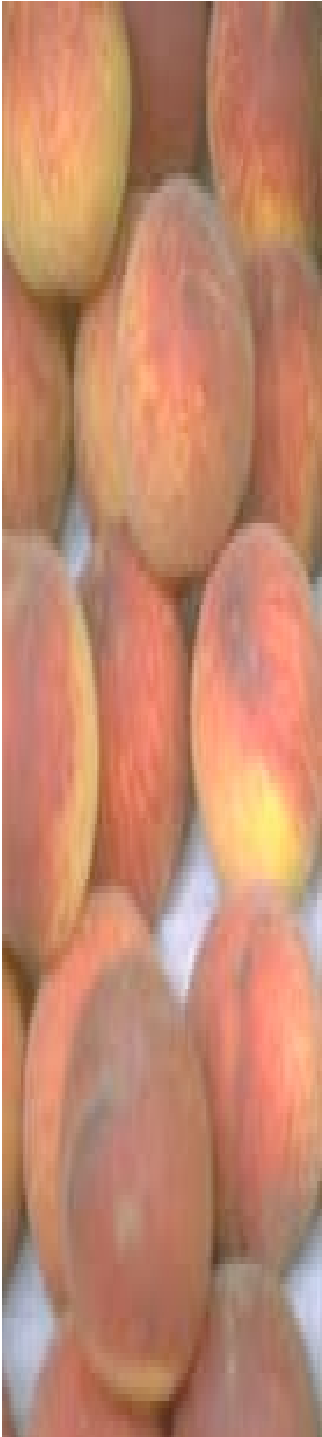




# **Evaluation Why, When and How? Susie Fisher**

**Wellcome Trust Evaluation Workshop  
The Dana Centre  
165 Queen's Gate  
London SW7 5HE**

**30th January, 2004**

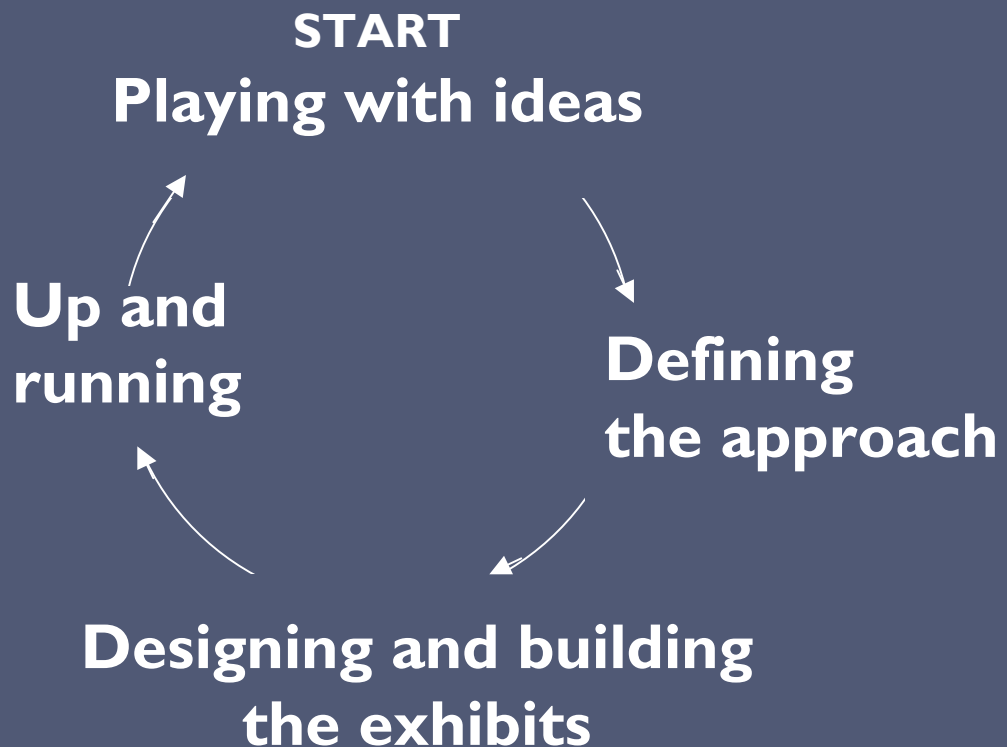


**Think feedback, not evaluation**

**Think feeding, not judging**



# Match Evaluation to the Planning Cycle



# The Question for Evaluation

How do people  
relate to our subject?

START

DEFINE

Do our ideas  
connect with  
people?

UP AND  
RUNNING

How close did  
we get to our  
goals?

DESIGN/BUILD

Do our ideas  
work in practice?



# The Benefit for Us

**We can show the exhibition is effective and learn from anything unexpected**

**UP AND RUNNING**

**START**

**DEFINE**

**We can be confident of our direction**

**DESIGN/BUILD**

**We know our exhibitions work**





# Case Studies

## PLAYING AND DEFINING

V&A Medieval Galleries  
Peoples' History Museum

## DESIGN AND BUILD

Tate Modern pda  
St George's Hall, Liverpool

## UP AND RUNNING

Antenna, Science Museum  
Grossology, Science Museum

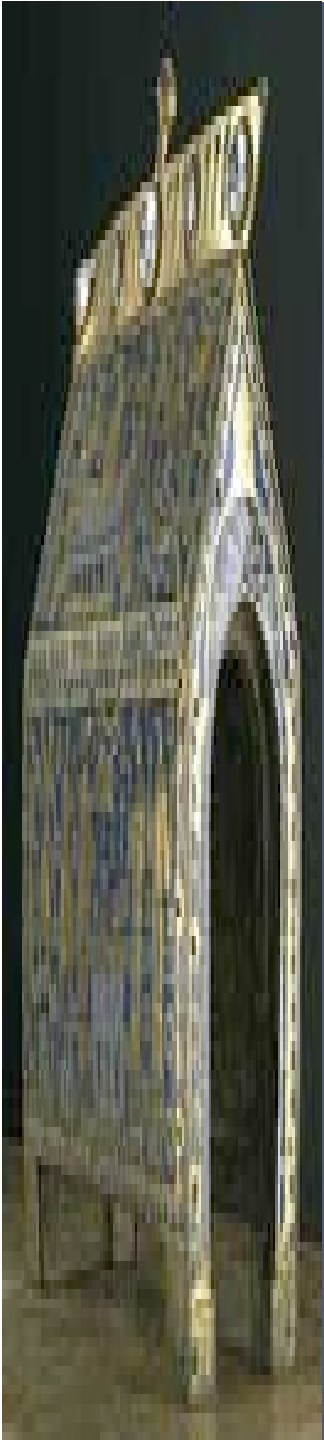


# Playing and Defining

**V&A • Medieval and Renaissance**

**Reliquaries, Statuary, Raphael, Altarpieces**

**Question • How do people perceive the  
Medieval and Renaissance periods?**



# How do People Perceive Medieval and Renaissance?

**Medieval Equals**

**Dark**

**Bound**

**Brute**

**Crude**

**Renaissance equals**

**Light**

**Civilised**

**Free**

**Sophisticated**

**Would have risked**

**Not being believed**

**Losing out on the powerful shock value**

**Not explaining the Church**



# Playing and Defining

## Peoples' History Museum, Manchester

Suffragettes, strikes, co-operative movement

Question • Is our interpretation strategy  
right?



# Is Our Interpretation Strategy Right?

Yes but

Labour History is perceived as grim, specialist, academic.

Tell us about normal work and play before telling us about strikes.

**Would have risked**

Turning off the visitor at the outset.

Too grim, irrelevant.



# Design and Build

Tate Modern • pda

Pda as a hand held interpretation tool.  
Braque, Duchamp, Saint Phalle.

Question • How effective is the content programming?



# How Effective is the Content Programming?

## LEARNING

Visually decoding the painting on screen, plus audio connections. Very effective.

Text on screen is a waste of time.

People push a button many times to make it work.

## WOULD HAVE RISKED

Wasting the pda capacity by putting in written material which wouldn't be read.

Overloading the technology and causing frustration.



## Design and Build

### St. George's Hall Liverpool

1840s classical building, Visitor Centre,  
Refurbishment. Dragon in the basement.

**Question** • Will our interpretive scheme  
attract the weekend family visitor  
to the Hall?



# **Will our Interpretive Scheme Attract the Visitor?**

## **LEARNING**

**The Dragon is an offensive commercial add on,  
cobbled together by someone from London.  
It promises excitement, but turns out only to  
be the heating system.**

**The Hall is very precious to people.**

## **WOULD HAVE RISKED**

**Installing an empty idea, without mileage for  
the family audience, losing faith with Liverpool  
residents.**



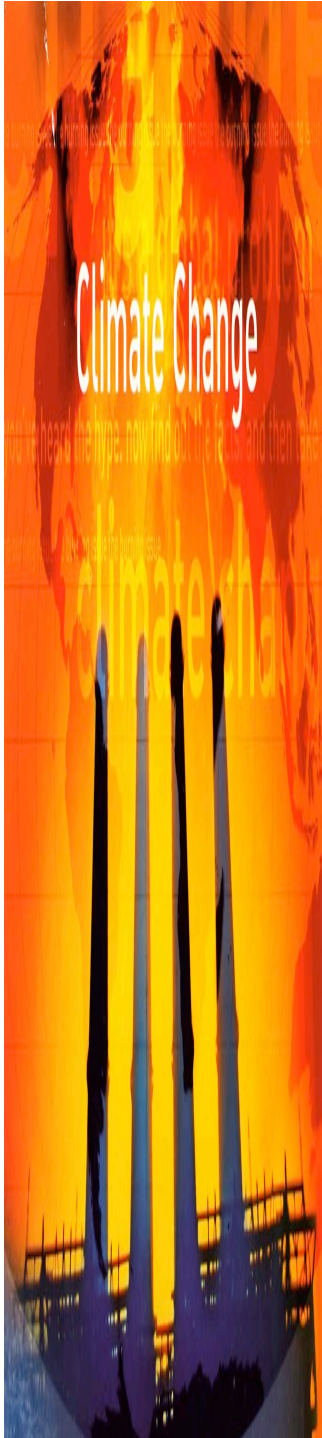
# Up and Running

## Antenna • Climate Change

News responsive exhibitions, ultra modern décor/lighting.

Climate change, range of views plus computer info.

Question • What messages do people take out of the Exhibition?



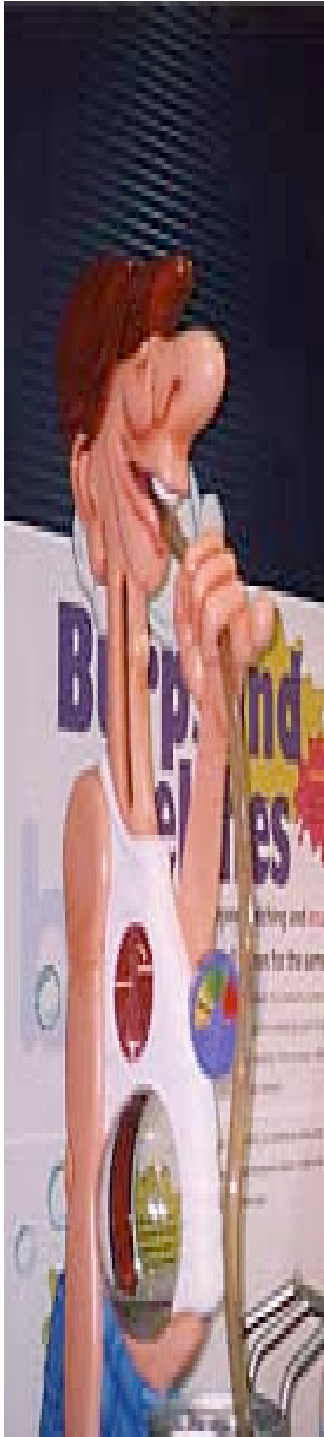
# **What Messages do People take out of the Exhibition?**

## **LEARNING**

**The concept of Antenna was not saliently signalled upfront. Antenna is often not identified as an arm of the Science Museum. Voice of the exhibition was perceived to be corporate/political therefore biased.**

## **THE MUSEUM RISKED**

**Losing its authority as an objective communicator.**



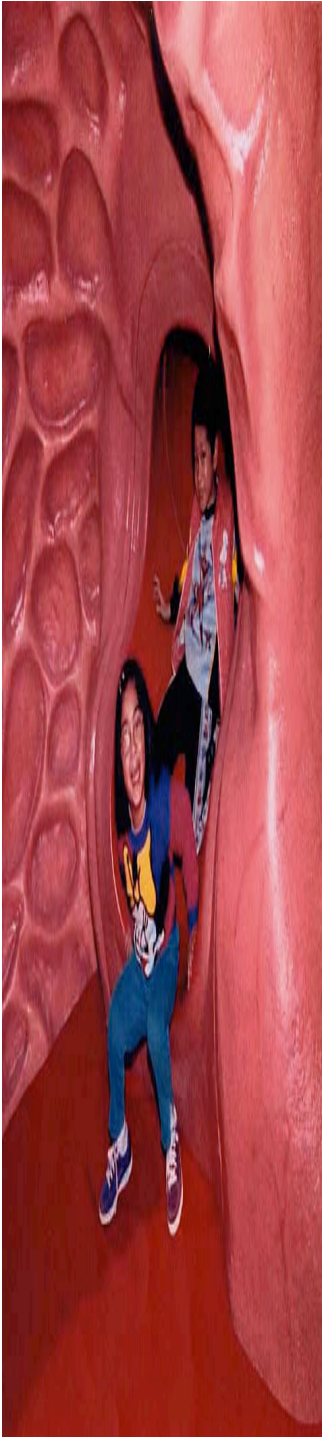
# Up and Running

## Science Museum • Grossology

Visiting US exhibition, loud, bright, rude, colourful. Body functions, highly interactive, fun for children

Question • Is the exhibition effective in achieving new learning about body functions?

Traditionalists claim it's too trashy



# Is the Exhibition Effective in Achieving New Learning?

## **LEARNING**

**Appealing to adults and children alike.**

**Delivers relevant, useful facts about personal experiences, colds, reverse peristalsis etc.**

**A release from a social taboo.**

## **THE MUSEUM RISKED**

**Nothing**

**And was able to answer its critics**



# How to Evaluate

**Consult, listen, ask questions, discuss.**

**Observe, try out, count up**

**Define your relevant target audience and recruit them accurately.**



# Methods Available

## QUALITATIVE

Focus groups, individual interviews,  
accompanied visits, equipment trials

Answers the question why?

## QUANTITATIVE

Surveys, statistical analysis ratings  
Behaviour counts, performance indicators

Answers the question how many?



# Being Canny with Information

**Evaluate while you still have time to change things  
(or it will just frustrate you)**

**Think in advance about how you're going to communicate what you've learnt internally**

**Build up a body of knowledge and expertise and bring it to bear on future strategy and planning**

