

Wave

Joshua Gutwill

June 2002

THIS IS **NOT** A DEFINITIVE FINAL REPORT

FORMATIVE evaluation studies like this one often:

- **are conducted quickly**, which may mean
 - small sample sizes
 - expedited analyses
 - brief reports
- **look at an earlier version** of the exhibit/program, which may mean
 - a focus on problems and solutions, rather than successes
 - a change in form or title of the final exhibit/program

Wave

Formative Evaluation report

Joshua Gutwill

6/18/02

Goals

We were interested in the average holding time per group, as well as any other overt behaviors the visitors engaged in.

Methods

- We videotaped visitors at the exhibit for two hours on 4/14/02.
- 98 visitor groups were observed.

Results

- On average, visitors spend little time at the exhibit (median time = 37 seconds; mean time = 55 seconds). See Figure 1.
- About one third of the visitor groups return to the exhibit after leaving it. About 10% of the visitor groups return two times or more. See Table 1.
- 20% of the visitors spoke directly into the recording microphones, with the explicit intention of making a sound wave on the Wave exhibit. This may have been due to the fact that there was no label, but suggests that visitors were unsure what to do at the exhibit.

Table 1. Groups returning to exhibit after using it once.

Number of times returning	Visitor groups	
	Number	Percent
0	63	64%
1	23	23%
2	6	6%
3	3	3%
4	1	1%
5	1	1%
6	1	1%

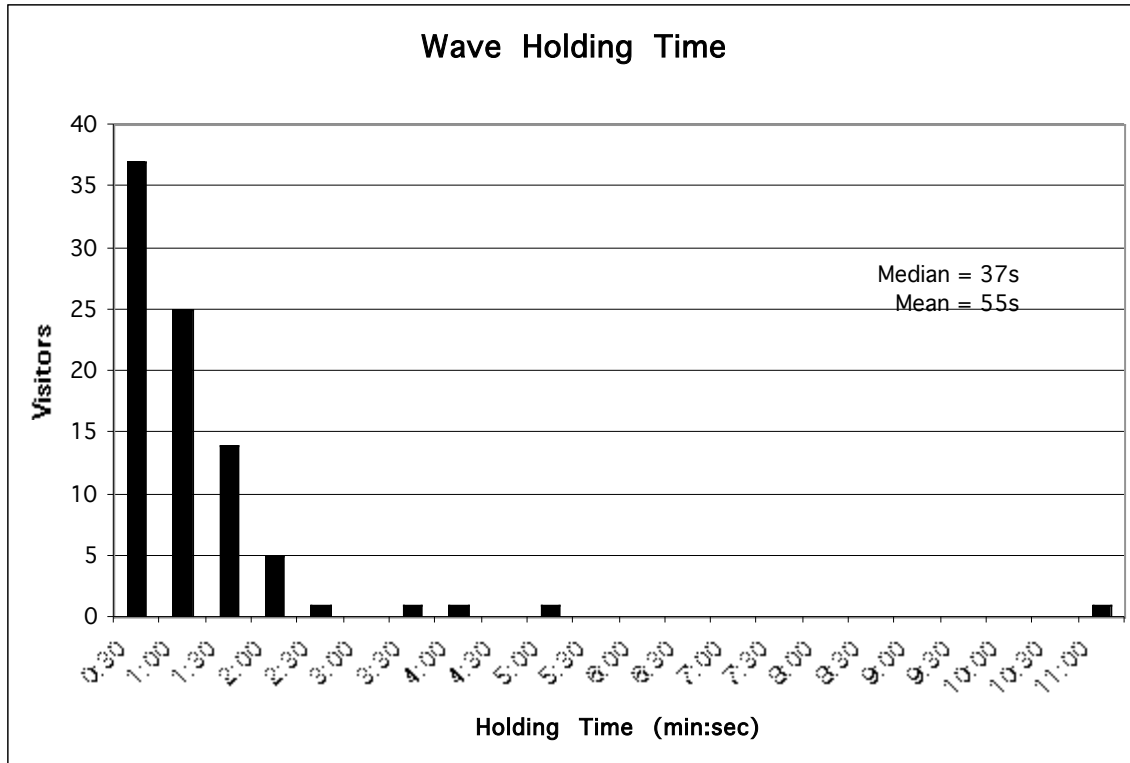


Figure 1. Holding time for the Wave exhibit.

Conclusions

The exhibit seems to be quite attractive, pulling a third of the visitor groups back to it for at least one return visit. However, the short holding time suggests that visitors do not know what to do at the exhibit. This is also supported by the 20% of visitors who try to use the microphone as if it were part of the exhibit.

We suggest adding a label encouraging visitors to try a variety of phenomena.

Acknowledgments

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant number 0087844. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.



