Personality Portrait

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November 2005

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

Mind – Formative Evaluation
Personality Portrait

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PURPOSE

Personality Portrait is an exhibit prototype that is intended to help visitor reflect on who they are by asking them to 'show' how much of a characteristic (e.g. introversion) they believe they have.

We wanted to experiment with videotaping visitors, particularly visitor conversations, to see if we can determine if self-reflection happens and what that might look like at this prototype. However, we needed to first:

- Gauge how visitors would respond to being videotaped at the exhibit. The sound abatement area was recently moved, and we wanted to make sure that with the new arrangement visitors would still be made aware that they were being videotaped at the exhibit. We were also concerned that visitors might be sensitive to being recorded at an exhibit that asks them to describe themselves as opposed to experiment with a physical phenomenon.
- Collect preliminary interview data on how visitors respond to the prototype. More specifically,
  - Was there anything about the experience that was surprising?
  - Was there anything that was difficult?
  - Did visitors feel that this exhibit belongs at the Exploratorium?
  - What suggestions did visitors have for the prototype?

  These data would help us identify interesting episodes of self-reflection as well as inform exhibit development.

METHOD

- We roped off an area around Personality Portrait that included two other exhibits, 3 Kinds of Light and Dynamic Patterns. There was only one entry into this area. We placed two signs by that entry that informed visitors that they would be videotaped in the delineated area. See Figure 1. In addition, we placed small signs on each of the 3 exhibits in the area letting visitors know that they were being videotaped at that exhibit now.
- We videotaped visitors' interactions at the Personality Portrait exhibit. These data were captured directly to hard-drive and later compressed to MPEG-4 for viewing.

- An evaluator approached visitors who exited the area for an interview (Appendix A). People were approached regardless of whether or not they used the Personality Portrait. This way we interviewed people who may have intentionally avoided that exhibit yet were comfortable with the other exhibits.

Figure 1. Exhibit setup



DATA

- We collected data on Sunday, November 6, 2005, from 11am to 4pm.
- N=17

Age	Count (out of 17)
adult	16
teen	0
child	1

Gender	Count (out of 17)
male	6
female	11

Group Type	Count (out of 17)
Adult peer group	5
Multigenerational group	5
Individual adults	7

RESULTS

How visitors responded to being videotaped

About half of the visitors who entered the videotaping area did not use Personality Portrait.

Did visitors use the exhibit?	Count (out of 17)
Used the exhibit	8
Did NOT use the exhibit	9

- Of the 9 visitors who did NOT use the exhibit,
  - 8 saw the exhibit. When we asked why they decided not to use the exhibit, they explained:
    - Another member of the group did not want to or could not participate (4 visitors)

      Visitor2: Because he (boy) started to mess up my answers. If my husband were here I might have.

      Visitor5: And I kinda get what you're doing with it. Probably because she's pulling on my arm... the kind of exhibits she likes are like those ones (points to low tables).

      Visitor10: V1: Because my sister wanted to go see something else.

      Visitor11: V1: I was trying to take her but then she went over to that one [blowing bubbles].
    - There was too much to read, or the exhibit otherwise looked too complicated (3 visitors)

      Visitor1: There are a lot of things to read on it.

      Visitor6: It looked complicated and not much fun. (Q: "What would be an example of "fun?") Fun is something mechanical. Action and reaction.

      Visitor7: V1: It was too many questions.
    - There was someone already using it (1 visitor)

      Visitor16: I did check it out but there was someone else using it.
    - They were just starting to look around the museum (1 visitor)

Visitor8: We haven't been here (at Exploratorium) for more than a few minute, so we haven't seen anything yet. We just want to look around, get an idea of what there is to see here before we try anything.

- 3 of those 9 did NOT know they would be videotaped.
- We asked the 6 people who knew they would be videotaped specifically if they avoided the exhibit because they did not want to be recorded. **No one** said that being videotaped dissuaded him or her from using the exhibit.

- Of the 8 visitors who did use the exhibit,
  - 7 visitors knew they were being videotaped. Only one reported feeling, a little uncomfortable, "until I know what it's for." (Visitor15)
  - The one visitor, who did not know they were being videotaped, claimed that she would not have avoided the exhibit if she had known.

In summary, 4/17 (24%) visitors did NOT know that they were being videotaped in the area. But, no one had any objections to being videotaped.

Some preliminary impressions of visitors' reactions to the exhibit

<u>The exhibit as an individual or a group experience</u>

6/8 visitors who used the exhibit reported using the exhibit on their own.

- Two of these 6 said that they preferred using it alone since:

  Visitor4: Yes it's true that it's more easy when it's alone, because you have to think about yourself.

  Visitor17: It's quite personal. Because it's YOU, talking about yourself.

- The others (4/6) would have preferred to use the exhibit with someone they knew. This was mainly because it would have afforded comparison, conversation and feedback.

  Visitor9: Yes, it'd just be interesting to see how the 2 thoughts would be compared.

  Visitor14: Yes, so you can compare; someone else might be more insightful, or just totally off.

  Visitor12: V2: we were watching the other people and they were talking about each other's choices.
  V1: It would be good for a couple; we're friends.

  Visitor15: Yes, just to see how they rate me differently.

<u>What visitors found surprising about the experience</u>

Some visitors found the experience of putting together their personality portrait surprising. More specifically, they were surprised by

- Someone else's choice (2 visitors)

Visitor3: V2: I was surprised by HER choices.
V1: His too.
V2: We know who WE are.

Visitor12: V1: No, I laughed at my choices, 'cause I could [imagine] other people [I know] going, "YES, you are!"

- The observation that a person can have extremes of personality (2 people)

Visitor15: On some I was both. I guess there is no "average..." If it told you where you were at the end, like the [Meyers-briggs] quadrants, that would be cool.

Visitor17: the fact that you have the 2 extremes. You want to be both at the same time.

- How often the answer 'depends' (1 visitor)

Visitor14: I suppose you end up saying "it depends" a lot.

What visitors found challenging about the task

We asked visitors if they found certain traits more difficult than others to display. Visitors thought certain traits were more challenging because

- It can be hard to decide between 2 'opposing' traits (3 visitors)

Visitor3: V1: The "risk-averse."
V2: The last one, "seeks approval." (Q: "why?") Comparing two that are opposite -- you can't be both.

Visitor15: "Seeks control vs. accepts chaos." They're not really opposites. If you can have both, then that's OK. Are you supposed to have both?

Visitor17: The "approval" one and "Introvert/Extrovert." It's sort of a chicken-egg situation; it's quite hypothetical, I mean, are introverts just another kind of extrovert, really?

- They didn't know the 'right' answer (2 visitors)

Visitor4: Introvert/Extrovert, it's only that I don't really know how much of "Introvert" or "Extrovert," it was just one second to evaluate.

Visitor9: Probably "seeks approval." Just 'cause I'm not really sure what the right answer is.

- It's challenging to think honestly about ourselves (1 visitor)

Visitor12: V1: I would say the "good enough is OK," because you really have to think about yourself instead of what you want to be. "Impulsive" and "calculated" were so easy for me!

- It depends on the situation (1 visitor)

Visitor14: The "Introvert/Extrovert" one, because I think in some situations I can be quite extroverted, whereas other times, the other. Also, "seeks approval," because I never do.

- The vocabulary is difficult (1 visitor)

Visitor13: V2: The hard words: "calculated," [Note: we went over to the exhibit. and they pointed out the hard ones:] This one, this one... most of the words.

Did visitors feel that this exhibit belonged at the Exploratorium

Seven out of the 8 visitors who used Personality Portrait thought that the exhibit belonged at the Exploratorium. Only one person thought that it did not because it focuses on ourselves:

> Visitor9: Not necessarily. I thought it was odd that it was here. It's the only exhibit where you learn about yourself.

Visitors' suggestions for improving the exhibit

Visitors thought the exhibit could be improved by

- Providing a 'So what?' (3 visitors)

  > Visitor4: It's a bit… It just …stops there, you know? With nothing to compare to. It's fun to do the process, but… I think it would be nice to put it with something else, more of an explanation.
  >
  > Visitor12: V2: I'd like to see the personality types, so at the end you could get a result.
  >
  > Visitor14: I suppose if people knew what the outcome of your research was, it might be interesting.

- Supporting comparison (2 visitor)

  > Visitor3: V2: There should be an easy way to compare.
  > V1: You forget what the first one (the first person's profile) was; and he should have a clean slate without any influence from mine.
  >
  > Visitor15: If you had 2 sides, so someone else could do it with you without looking at yours.

- Changing the mechanism (2 visitors)

  > Visitor6: Make it more with electronics, so it's more interactive with electronics, not mechanical-interactive.
  >
  > Visitor10: [Make the sliding panels] Magnetic, so it would be harder to move. It would be funner.

- Improving the representation (2 visitors)

  > Visitor9: To me, the two sides should relate, like 60% to 40%, for example [so that both sides equal 100%] so you can't be more or less than that.
  >
  > Visitor12: V1: I'd like to know if the colors have significance. I'm a psych major, so I'm curious about color tests, that kind of thing.

- Making the vocabulary more easy to understand (1 visitor)

  > Visitor13: V2: Not using hard words.
  > V1: Maybe some pictures [illustrating the concepts], of someone being "competitive" for example.

SUMMARY

How visitors responded to being videotaped at the exhibit

- 4/17 or 24% of the visitors who entered into the videotaping area did NOT know that they would be videotaped there.[1] Some people jumped over the ropes and therefore never saw

[1] This is despite the fact that we followed a protocol that a previous study showed successfully informed 99% of the visitors that they were being videotaped in a cordoned area.

the signs at the designated entryway. Also, the signs were less well lighted than the exhibit themselves, which may have led others to walk through the entryway without reading our signs. We will need to do additional work in the new sound abatement space to better inform people that they would be videotaped in the area.

- Though preliminary, this study found that people did not shy away from the exhibit because they would be videotaped, even though this was an exhibit where they would be potentially talking about themselves. However, we have only interviewed 17 visitors. Because of the personal focus of this and other Mind exhibits, we will continue to collect data about videotaping exhibits that can be self-revelatory.

Visitors' reactions to the exhibit

- Some visitors found the exhibit experience surprising in what it revealed about themselves and others. Some also found it challenging to decide 'how much' of a personality trait they possessed. These findings suggest that the exhibit activity is prompting some of the people who stop and use the prototype to think about 'who they are' . We will look more closely at visitors' conversations in our videotapes to see if we can begin to define what affords and hinders reflection at this exhibit.
- Visitors also had suggestions for improving the current prototype. They include: supporting comparison, providing a punchline, making the representation more understandable, and 'not using hard words.'

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APPENDIX A

Questions

1. Did you get a chance to use this exhibit [point at exhibit]?
   YES ***NO***

[If **NO**]

2. I know there are other exhibits in this area. Did you see this exhibit at all?
   YES *NO*

- [If YES]
  a. Is there any reason why you decided to not use this exhibit?

  b. Did you know people at the exhibit are being videotaped?
     YES *NO*

     i. Did that dissuade you from using the exhibit? Did you decided to NOT use the exhibit because you knew you would then be videotaped?

[If **YES**]

3. Did you know you were being videotaped at the exhibit?
   YES *NO*

- [If YES]
  a. Did that make you uncomfortable in any way? [If yes] How so?

- [If NO]
  b. Would you have avoided the exhibit if you knew you were being videotaped? [If yes] Why's that?

Exhibit Interview

1. Were you using the exhibit with someone you know? YES NO

   a. [If NO] Would you want to try this exhibit with someone you know? Why that person?

2. Was there anything about your experience that was surprising to you? [Probe:] Were you surprised by any of your choices? Which ones?

3. Which personality choices were the hardest to make? Can you say a little about why _____ was hard?

4. Do you feel that this exhibit belongs at the Exploratorium? How so/ Why not?

5. Do you have any suggestions for improving the exhibit?