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Public Engagement Evaluation Tools

NARRATIVE

- Informal, often personal reflections of the event and the visitor experience.
- Good for capturing 'softer' aspects of events, such enjoyment and enthusiasm.

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	GOOD POINTS	CHALLENGES
Observation framework	Personal record of situations that arise during an event, including moods/feelings of visitors.	Useful for capturing 'softer' aspects of the visitor experience eg levels of enthusiasm or interest, level of interaction with scientist.	Each framework offers only one person's perspective. Collating two or more could be challenging.
Project notebook	Diary of thoughts, queries and questions by someone involved in the project. Similar to observation framework (above) but less directed and in chronological order.	Captures information as/when it happens; useful for reviewing process (what happened when) and changes to plan.	Each notebook offers only one person's perspective. Collating two or more could be challenging.
Focus group	Facilitated small group discussion with (usually 6-12) people involved in the activity, with discussion captured as a report.	Well recognised and widely used; usually identifies key factors which are barriers/enablers to success; useful base on which to base a questionnaire.	Resource intensive (people, time and money); requires contact with visitors post-event; requires skilled, experienced facilitator.
Debrief session	Informal meeting for those involved in running the event where they can share thoughts, impressions and any impacts they noted during the event.	Can add value or depth to other evaluation data (eg discussion of visitor feedback forms).	Only as good as the input from attendees; risk that the focus strays to logistics rather than softer measures.
CRM tools	Software tools that allow for capturing Customer Relationship Management and engagement.	Useful to assess longer term impact since it records nature of interaction and outcomes over the long term.	Requires time and investment to set up; discipline of team to tag, categorise, use the system. Data protection security issues.

For templates and resources, visit the public engagement pages of the MRC website.
(https://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/public-engagement/)