

Assessing Visitation at the Charles Dickens Museum in 2022

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by

Jorge Castro
Sydney Hobson
Aria Yan
Cara Yorina

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Cindy Sughrue and Jordan Evans

Charles Dickens Museum

Professors John-Michael Davis and Joel J. Brattin

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Abstract

The Charles Dickens Museum in London struggled with low attendance after COVID-19 induced lockdowns. We conducted museum interviews and street-intercept interviews to develop strategies for encouraging local visitation to the museum. The visitor experience at the museum was overwhelmingly positive as visitors enjoyed personal ephemera from Charles Dickens and the authentic Victorian house. We recommend small-scale changes for better accessibility, inclusivity, and convenience at the museum. We also recommend additional marketing tactics to promote awareness of the museum to targeted audiences.

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Authorship

Section	Primary Writer(s)	Primary Editor(s)
Abstract	All	All
Acknowledgements	Cara Yorina, Jorge Castro, Sydney Hobson	Aria Yan
List of Figures	Aria Yan	Cara Yorina, Jorge Castro, Sydney Hobson
Executive Summary	All	Cara Yorina, Jorge Castro, Sydney Hobson
Introduction	Aria Yan, Cara Yorina	All
Background	Sydney Hobson, Aria Yan	Cara Yorina, Jorge Castro, Sydney Hobson
Methods	Jorge Castro, Cara Yorina	Jorge Castro, Sydney Hobson, Aria Yan
Results and Analysis	Aria Yan, Sydney Hobson	Cara Yorina, Jorge Castro, Sydney Hobson
Conclusion and Recommendations	Aria Yan	Cara Yorina, Jorge Castro, Sydney Hobson
Appendices	Jordan Evans, Sydney Hobson, Jorge Castro	Aria Yan, Cara Yorina

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Executive Summary

The arts and culture sector has struggled with declining attendance numbers due to the COVID-19 pandemic as international tourism and large gatherings were central to many businesses in this field (for example, musical performances, museums, and art galleries). The Charles Dickens Museum has had low attendance since the onset of the pandemic in 2020 and has been dealing with the repercussions of minimal international travel. The museum is interested in exploring different ways to engage with the local community to make up for the decreased number of international tourists.

Our project identified factors that affect the visitorship of the Charles Dickens Museum post-lockdown and recommended strategies for how the museum could increase visitor attendance. We established two main objectives. First, we identified who the Charles Dickens Museum's visitors were in 2022, why they were visiting, and how they perceived the visitor experience. Second, we identified awareness of the Charles Dickens Museum and any perceived barriers to entry for locals within the one-mile radius.

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis of long and short museum interviews, community interviews, and visitor book comments contributed to our results. Specifically, through both the short and long museum interviews we collected information about the visitor experience at the museum, as well as visitor demographics. We gathered information on peoples' perception of Charles Dickens and the museum from our street-intercept interviews.

We collected 130 responses from the short museum interviews, 42 responses from the long interviews, and 151 responses from the offsite interviews. To add to the qualitative analysis, the team also transcribed 2500+ comments from three complete visitor books with data spanning the past three years (2019-2021). We utilized NVivo software to conduct sentiment analysis of our qualitative responses and created graphs to analyze quantitative data and determine any trends. Using our short interview demographic data, we compared age, ethnicity, and gender to the Camden Borough 2011 Census data to explore differences between the group.

Results, Analysis, and Recommendations

Visitor Experience

The overall sentiment towards the museum was overwhelmingly positive. Every visitor we interviewed found their visit to be either good or excellent. Over 99% of the visitor book comments were positive. The middle-class Victorian lifestyle portrayed at the museum engaged visitors. They felt immersed in Dickens' house, especially in terms of the sound design in the socializing rooms and the attention to detail in the furniture. They were interested in seeing how Dickens drew inspiration from his real life when he wrote his books. Most of all, they loved imagining Dickens sitting at his writing desk, creating his wondrous stories.

The visitors who used the audio guide liked the information it provided, but had differing opinions on the pacing of the audio guide. The museum might benefit from creating two different options for audio guides: one shorter guide and one longer guide. Many visitors, particularly the older ones, had trouble using the audio guide due to technical issues and would rather have an actual guide instead. The museum could offer free tours at the museum that visitors could sign up for. We also recommend lending out audio equipment for free with a refundable deposit so that the museum could provide tech support.

Many visitors had trouble reading signage at the museum due to their antique look. We recommend increasing the font sizes and brightening up the lighting of signs. We recommend changing the font to Helvetica, Courier, Arial, Verdana, or Computer Modern Unicode on the museum signs and the museum website. Some visitors had trouble reading Dickens' handwriting without a transcription to compare words to. We recommend adding a few transcriptions to important letters and manuscripts for visitors' reference.

We noticed that most people with mobility issues were afraid of being bothersome by asking museum staff for permission to use the lift. We recommend increasing the comfort level of visitors by having more available staff close to the lift or making sure the staff member at the front desk mentions the lift is available. Older people mentioned they would have liked somewhere to sit, so we also suggest including resting places on each floor. We also recommend making a clear label for available seating so visitors will not have to worry about sitting on fragile, antique furniture.

Demographic Data

While Camden has a large population of young individuals, the museum's visitors were slightly biased towards an older generation. According to the 2011 census, nearly 50% of the population was between 20 and 39 years old. We suggest the museum take advantage of the opportunity to attract more young individuals by increasing its social media usage and partnering with creators of London-themed Instagram accounts (for example, @timeoutlondon or @secret.london). This collaboration can reach a wider audience than just the Charles Dickens Museum Instagram itself, @dickensmuseum.

The Camden census included a higher representation of ethnic groups than the Charles Dickens Museum visitor demographics, particularly Asian groups. We suggest that the museum explore ways to be more inclusive of different ethnicities. For example, having a Lunar New Year themed event could entice members from Asian communities to the museum. Additionally, we recommend the museum advertise more on sites that are frequently used by other ethnicities, such as the Little Red Book (the social media platform). By making these changes, the museum will attract and be more inclusive to a wider community.

Community Deterrents

People attending other museums knew less about the location of the Charles Dickens Museum than audiences in other community spaces but were more interested in visiting the Charles Dickens Museum. The museum can benefit from a targeted marketing strategy, and partner with smaller, more niche museums. This partnership can be in the form of a discounted package price similar to the National Art Pass (a pass that lets you enjoy free entry to many museums and 50% off of exhibits in the UK). This cross-promotion not only increases awareness of the museums, but it could also be of interest to locals who have already seen the bigger, more popular museums and give them an opportunity to explore the lesser-known museums. We suggest that the Charles Dickens Museum collaborate with Sir John Soane's Museum, Carlyle's House, Handel and Hendrix in London, and Keats House.

Introduction

The arts and culture sector has struggled significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic as large gatherings are central to many businesses in this field (for example, musical performances, museums and art galleries). Since museums rely on international tourism, attendance numbers have dramatically declined since the onset of the pandemic. 90% of museums around the world have faced either full, partial, or eventual closure (UNESCO, 2020). 70% of these museums have lost more than half of their annual visitors and 20% of them have lost more than 90% (International Council of Museums [ICOM], 2021). For example, the annual visitors to the British Museum dropped from 6 million in 2019 to just 160,000 in 2020 (Statista Research Department, 2021). The Network of European Museum Organizations estimated funding losses in tourist regions such as London at 75-80%. Even now, two years after the initial outbreaks of COVID-19, travel is still projected to be 20% below pre-pandemic levels (European Travel Commission, 2022).

Smaller museums, such as the Charles Dickens Museum, have also seen decreased attendance since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. They endured periods of forced closure between March 2020 to July 2020, and November 2020 to May 2021. As the museum approached reopening in July 2020, its leadership decided to adapt to the pandemic by relying more on local visitors, like many other small businesses and museums across the UK.

Previously, the Charles Dickens Museum collected data on its visitors in 2015 and 2020. In 2015, the “Charles Dickens Museum Report” collected data from visitors' experiences at the museum, and opinions from non-visitors. This data showed the most significant barrier to visitation was a lack of awareness about the museum (Scotford et al., 2015). Additionally, the museum conducted a study in 2020 as it began to open. The results of “Charles Dickens Museum Re-opening Research” found that many visitors were in the older age groups and that they were the least comfortable engaging in leisure activity during the pandemic (BVA BDRC & Alligator, 2020). It also noted that the Charles Dickens Museum should place its focus on encouraging locals to become more engaged with the museum, as it lost many of its international visitors (Scotford et al., 2015).

Although the Charles Dickens Museum has extensive data on its visitors in 2015 and

2020, they were unsure how their visitors changed over the past two years. The museum wished to increase its engagement with the local community and to identify any barriers there were to attendance. This project sought to understand who the Charles Dickens Museum's audience was in 2022 and the reasons why people visited in order to increase local visitation rates after the pandemic. Our project also explored the awareness and interest that locals had in the Charles Dickens Museum to develop new marketing strategies that would possibly reach a wider community. We made recommendations on how to increase local engagement and promote inclusivity and diversity.

In order to achieve the goal of our project, we conducted interviews with visitors to the Charles Dickens Museum. The visitors participated in either a short or long interview that asked them to provide information about their experience and their demographics. These interviews helped the museum staff discover interesting feedback that informs them on what they need to improve on or continue to do.

The team additionally conducted street-intercept interviews at a local shopping center, outdoor garden areas, and other museums within one mile from the Charles Dickens Museum. These interviews allowed us to identify the level of awareness and interest locals have in the museum. The team then made recommendations to the museum to lessen the effects of what people see as barriers to entry.

This report outlines current challenges that museums are facing and how these institutions are working to increase engagement and diversity within their communities. We then focus on the four methods our team utilized to identify factors that affect visitorship of the Charles Dickens Museum: short and long interviews at the museum, street-intercept interviews in the community, a demographic data comparison, and the visitor book transcription. The interviews revealed common themes such as the authenticity and accessibility of the museum. Our recommendations will improve accessibility, inclusivity, and convenience at the museum. A wider outreach will also allow the local community to be more aware of the museum and learn about Charles Dickens.

Background

Current Challenges affecting Museums

Visitation rates and public interest are important for museums to secure public funding. Many independent museums are solely dependent on admission fees. Since the beginning of 2020, museums have been overwhelmingly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequent government-mandated lockdowns. After the development and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, along with other methods of health protection that helped decrease the number of cases, museums were able to slowly open their doors again. Still, visitation rates have significantly declined. In some London museums, the admission rate declined by almost 87% (Gareth, 2021).

Museums had to come up with ideas to remain active with their communities, taking this unfortunate global catastrophe as an opportunity to adapt to a more digital audience. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and the Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO) documented the action that museums were taking to overcome recent low visitation rates. They reported the five most common activities that museums have utilized during the pandemic: use of previously digitized resources, digitization of planned activities during the months of lockdown, increased activity on social media, special activities created for lockdown, and professional and scientific activities organized in the context of lockdown (King et al., 2021). The Charles Dickens Museum tried implementing a few of these strategies. To keep their visitors informed, the museum has become active on social media where they share Charles Dickens' work and special exhibitions, as well as post about special events.

During the peak of the pandemic, international tourism in the United Kingdom decreased by 90% (UNWTO). The Charles Dickens Museum is one of many museums that saw a substantial decline in visitors, especially because 50% of their visitors were international (personal communication, 2022). As the museum began to reopen, the museum staff realized they would need to prioritize local visitors.

Increasing Museum Visitorship

The public considers museums as a cultural common that should be accessible to everyone, not just wealthy educated elites (Gall-Ely et al., 2007). Additionally, museums have to continually innovate to remain relevant. This approach functions to increase their visitation rates and get the community involved in the history that the museum offers. The following section focuses on the findings of different studies conducted on visitor behavior and what museums have done to implement tactics to attract new visitors, as well as encourage current visitors to return.

Engaging with the Local Community

Community engagement is a common practice in museums where staff and curators of the museum attempt to involve groups of people who do not usually utilize their services in hopes of gaining and sustaining new audiences (Morse & Munro, 2018). A good visitor service can be essential for any museum. Staff should be outgoing, hospitable, and willing to work with vulnerable individuals to foster an environment where people feel safe, included, and not judged. This behavior can create a strong emotional response within the visitor that will encourage them to revisit (Tosun et al., 2015).

Museums can engage with the community by hosting private, internal community engagement sessions (Morse & Munro, 2018). These sessions are exclusive events only hosted for a small group of people. An advantage of this approach is that it allows the museum to create a unique and welcoming environment to target a specific audience of people. For example, the Municipal Museum in Scotland brought together individuals who recently migrated to the country with young local students for a session. By the end of the session, the staff noted that these people who had not known each other before and came from different walks of life felt comfortable enough to share in small groups and be vulnerable (Morse & Munro, 2018). This form of community engagement causes people to feel more welcome and in turn prompts the visitor to associate the museum with a positive experience, and makes it more likely for them to revisit and experience the exhibits themselves. Unlike the previous approach of general hospitality, this solution focuses on attracting a small, focused group of people within the community and requires a lot of pre-planning.

Museums are uniquely situated agents of social change and tend to form partnerships with community service organizations. If museums know what their community is passionate about, it is easier to make a direct impact on helping community members broaden support networks and expand their resources while simultaneously gaining a wider audience awareness. For example, Catalyst Science Discovery Center in Widnes, United Kingdom has responded to the current mental health crisis by partnering with MindLab, an organization that focuses on providing mental health support to those in the area. Both organizations have collaborated to create this dual framework where people get to learn scientifically and therapeutically about the effects of mental health (French et al., 2020). These types of partnerships are long-term as it takes time and effort to foster and maintain good connections.

Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity

Museums are working to promote equality and see their role in society represented in a new light. Presently, museums have a unique opportunity to be a medium of social justice in their communities. Creating a space where everyone feels welcome will automatically increase the chances of more people engaging with museums (Ng et al., 2017). In the UK, along with a few other countries, the national government has mandated that museums become more inclusive (Olivares & Piatak, 2021). The following focuses on three main target audiences that are historically underrepresented in museum visitors: young people, those from non-white cultures, and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Consumerism and what constitutes “entertainment” have evolved, especially for the younger generation. Leisure activities and cultural institutions (i.e., museums) are growing further apart. Although the new generations are more interested in online content consumption, this does not diminish the value museums have for young adults. Anderson (2007) completed an observational study focused on people 18-25 years old (the Millennial Generation) regarding their interest in museums. He found that new generations are willing to pay for experiences that fill their free time needs and museums should innovate to meet the demands of the newest generations if they want to keep them engaged in museums. Anderson offers advice involving marketing for museums that are looking to accommodate the newest generations. He argues it is most important to learn where each generation consumes their media and then use these tools.

These trends change rapidly so it is important to stay on top of the most relevant platforms (Anderson, 2007).

Much of the literature regarding the recent push for inclusivity in museum practices predominantly focuses on attracting minority audiences to museums. San Jose, California is home to a significant Latin population that was underrepresented at local museums. The Children's Discovery Museum sought to boost Latin representation by reexamining its museum practices (Martin & Jennings, 2015). Their approach involved two forms of action: increasing marketing outreach and providing a signature annual event for the Latino community. The museum was able to fill a need for the community by hosting the Tres Reyes Magos special weekend event, which is still held annually today (Martin & Jennings, 2015). North American communities only rarely celebrate this Mexican holiday. This event increased their audience to 20% Latino visitors, matching that of the San Jose community. By increasing Latino engagement, the Children's Discovery Museum opened up funding opportunities such as grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the museum to put towards their inclusion strategies.

This same museum identified years later that they could also benefit from attracting a new audience: the Vietnamese community (Martin & Jennings, 2015). The museum then launched a new outreach initiative modeled after the same strategies utilized to attract the Latino community. The museum again implemented marketing and event planning tactics that worked well to increase membership rates by 33% (Martin & Jennings, 2015). However, other unexpected challenges arose. For example, the Vietnamese community consumed media differently than the Latino community. Multiple groups owned radio and television stations rather than a single entity, making it more difficult to get a universal message out to the community. In this situation, the museum realized that not all the same strategies would work for both groups of people and that they would have to adapt throughout the initiative to see results.

In recent years, a few museums have experimented with admission policies by decreasing admission costs. Several institutions have made their visits completely free for those who can show proof of local residency (license, tax form, passport, etc.) (Northern Echo, 2002). Two UK museums, in particular, the James Herriot Museum and the Green Howards Regimental Museum, had special events where admission for residents was free. The James Herriot museum saw over

1,000 visitors in a weekend (Minting, 2016). Neither museum conducted research initiatives to study the lasting effects. However, Booth (2017) conducted a study in the Australian Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) where instead of temporary free admissions for locals, they had permanent free admissions for locals. This study found that the local community was not taking advantage of this free admission as they felt like the other costs they would have to spend at the museum (food, parking, etc.) would outweigh the price of the ticket itself (Booth et al., 2017). Le Gall-Ely (2007) conducted another study on French museums that concluded free admission would remove a barrier to a consumer's decision to visit a museum. However, a concern is that specific free admission days would indirectly segregate the visitors by socioeconomic class. Wealthier visitors will concentrate more on days when museum entry is not free to avoid the crowd or an unpleasant atmosphere (Gall-Ely et al., 2007).

Relevant Variables for Museum Data Analysis

Determining what motivates people to visit museums is complex. Research has divided museum visitors into local patrons and visiting tourists. Each group of visitors has different reasons and goals for being at museums. This section expands upon relevant variables for the Charles Dickens Museum to consider post-lockdown.

In order to attract a variety of visitors, researchers have explored what influences different groups of people to visit museums. One study on the Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid, Spain ranked the level of influence certain attributes of the museum have on local residents versus tourists (Orea-Giner et al., 2021). For tourists, this study noted that the location, building, and permanent collection make the largest impression on the experience. Similarly, the local community also ranked these three attributes highest in addition to the museum's temporary exhibits (Orea-Giner et al., 2021). Moreover, the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Australia conducted a study to better understand its large visitor profile of tourists and determine what caused the lack of local engagement. The study revealed that locals had a problem with the affordability of the museum. One patron even noted that it was "good for rich tourists and stuff but not for the everyday Glenorchy person" (Booth et al., 2017). Locals also noted that even the aesthetics of the museum caused them to feel left out as it looked like it could be from "overseas" instead of in their local town. Tourists on the other hand felt that the museum was not

only a museum, but more of a get-together place to promote social interaction and entertainment (Booth et al., 2017).

Most studies only consider attendance when they measure a person's visit to a destination (Gall-Ely et al., 2007; Mas et al., 2021; Olson, 1984). Attendance is an important metric for the Charles Dickens Museum as it is an independent museum which relies wholly on admissions for their finances (Treleaven, 2021). With the COVID-19 pandemic forcing museums to focus on local visitors, there is a new emphasis on the importance of revisit intention. Revisit intention refers to a visitor's intention to experience a particular product, place, brand, or region in the future (Tosun et al., 2015). Hassan and Soliman (2021) associates revisit intention with the destination's social responsibility, service quality, reputation, and the perceived trust of the visitors in the destination (Hassan & Soliman, 2021; Tosun et al., 2015). These studies imply that the relationship between these variables is causal, not just correlative. Hassan and Soliman (2021) and Tonsun (2015) reveal two relevant moderators of these variables' relationship to revisit intention: past experience and fear arousal.

Past experience is an applicable variable to destinations during the pandemic, as destinations now need to rely more on local visitors as their main visitor demographic. Museums have a limited pool of potential visitors, so there is a much higher chance that the average visitor has been to the museum before. Tosun's (2015) study mainly investigated destination affective image (DAI) perception and past experience in relation to revisit intention. DAI is a component of a destination's image and describes a visitor's emotional response to a destination (Huete-Alcocer et al., 2019). Tosun found that the effect of a tourist's destination affective image perception on revisit intention is more powerful for repeat visitors than for initial visitors. Furthermore, fear arousal affects visitor behavior at museums. It is a social psychological effect of the COVID-19 pandemic that scales with the severity of pandemics (Nidal Moukaddam, 2019). In 2020, the three most common barriers to entry to the Charles Dickens Museum were COVID-19 related health or financial concerns (BVA BDRC & Alligator, 2020). The United Kingdom currently has no COVID-19 restrictions, so this phenomenon might be less relevant to consider.

The Charles Dickens Museum

The author museum, for example Carlye's House or the Charles Dickens Museum, is a common genre of museum, especially in Europe. The traditional author museum tends to focus on an author's biography and literary achievements, situating their works primarily in their historical context (Prottas, 2020). The visitorship to author museums is also broad. Some visitors treat author houses as pilgrimage sites, intending to pay homage to their literary heroes (Young, 2015). Other visitors that are less familiar consider the author museum to be a generic heritage site (Herbert, 2001). Author museums are unique in the way that visitors themselves provide the biggest opportunity for personal connection. Visitors often come in with their own sense of nostalgia or creative fantasies about the house and its author, which modifies their visitor experience (Neundlinger, 2020). The house, the author, and the museum's collection all collaborate in hopes of creating an experience that can appeal to all kinds of visitors.

Like many author museums, the Charles Dickens Museum faces many limitations concerning resource availability and audience appeal. For one, the physical size of the house limits visitor numbers. It also has to strike a delicate balance between different visitor demands. Most of the visitors are interested in Charles Dickens and his work. However, many have specific areas of interest that the museum wants to cater to. Additionally, the Victorian house itself is a point of interest for many historically-inclined visitors who may care less about Dickens. Within its physical constraints, the museum will always be lacking in one area while fulfilling another. In 2015, the International Committee for Literary Museums (ICLM) had a group of members discuss having a new definition on what author museums should be. In order to connect with the modern museum visitor, the ICLM recommended museums to "[connect] literature and authors to social justice, creative process, and the experiences of visitors, increasingly rethinking displays and forms of engagement" (Prottas, 2020). Olivares & Piatak (2021) argue that museums should take a more holistic approach by telling stories and sharing experiences in their exhibitions that aim to "dismantle racism instead of putting it on display." This is the best way to ensure that the spirit of Dickens lives on in the house museum.

The Charles Dickens Museum is looking to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed their visitation. Employing inclusion tactics to promote better community engagement may help the Charles Dickens Museum increase local visitation. However, based on our analyzed data, 80.5% of the museum's visitors are from a white background (UK, U.S.). Improving its

visitor demographics to include people of different ages and races will help the museum become a more welcoming center for the community.

The Charles Dickens Museum is located on 48 and 49 Doughty Street in London, England. The curators designed the museum to look the way Charles Dickens had it from 1837 to 1839 and immerse visitors into the Victorian time period. It aspires to be the world's leading center for the study, appreciation, and enjoyment of Charles Dickens' life and works. Unlike many other museums, the Charles Dickens Museum does not receive regular government funding and relies heavily on donations and admission fees for its upkeep. This monetary challenge is one of the reasons why the Charles Dickens Museum, unlike many others in London, has had to overcome the bigger challenges of the pandemic without public funding. The lockdown forced the museum to close from March 2020 to July 2020 and November 2020 to May 2021. The administration did not want the Charles Dickens Museum to go to financial ruin and lose all its visitor growth; they became active on social media to promote the works of Charles Dickens and different exhibitions at the museum. Using social media enabled the museum's audience to remain engaged with the museum, even though visitors were not physically allowed to visit. Museums are constantly working to develop new ways to bounce back and attract current and new visitors' attention (Sughrue et al., 2020).

Methods

The purpose of the study was to assess the current visitor experience and to increase local visitor rates at the Charles Dickens Museum. To this end, we identified the visitor profile of the Charles Dickens Museum and why visitors came. We also identified the barriers to entry that prevented residents in the local neighborhood from visiting (such as cost, distance, lack of interest, etc.).

Our project examined research conducted in 2015 and 2020 to guide our data collection process. By comparing the results of our study to the 2015 and 2020 data, we reflected on how the museum visitorship has changed since before the pandemic began. Based on visitor feedback, the museum can implement changes to increase visitation from locals.

We hoped to increase visitor admission rate by providing recommendations to the museum on how to improve the visitor experience and engagement with the local community. We collected qualitative information on both current visitors and locals by conducting interviews at locations within a one-mile radius from the museum. The team conducted short and long interviews with visitors to the museum. The team also conducted interviews at five sites within a one-mile radius from the museum. This section describes the methods we employed, why we chose them, and their limitations (see Figure 1 for an overview of our methods).

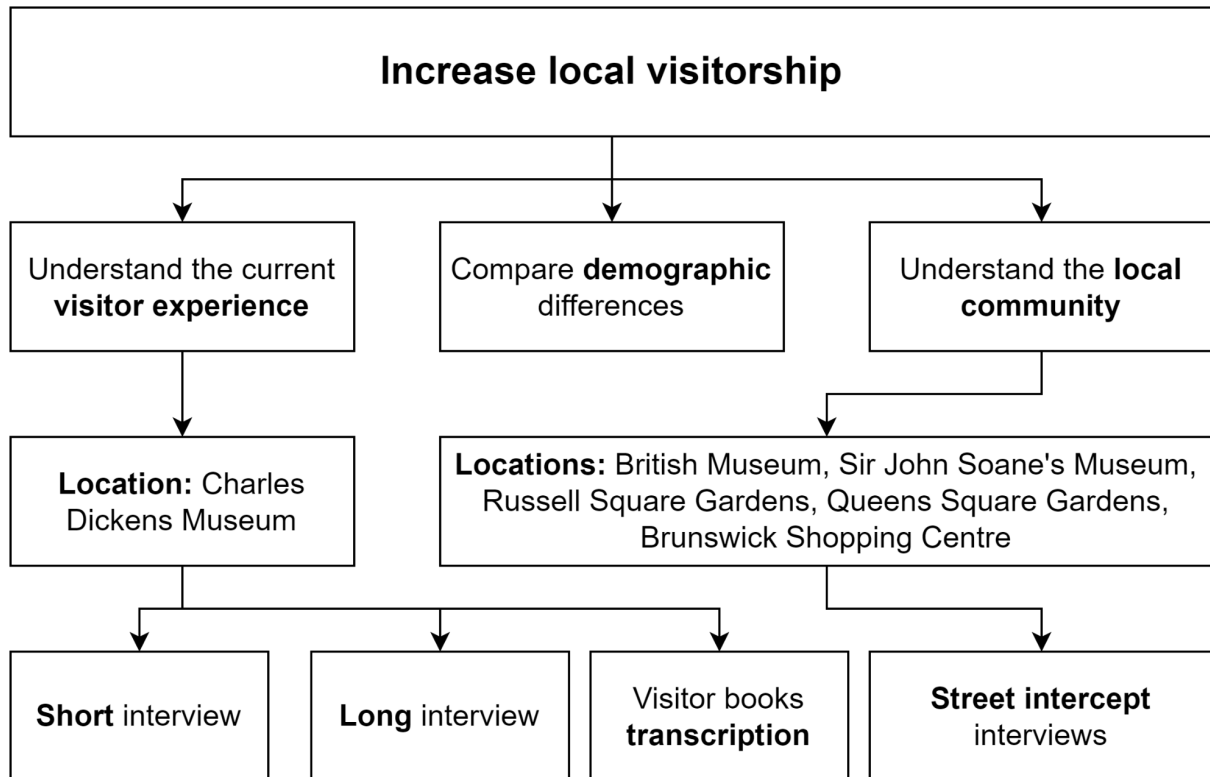


Figure 1: An overview of the methods we utilized to increase local visitation to the Charles Dickens Museum

The Current Visitor Experience

The Charles Dickens Museum was interested in collecting as much demographic information from their visitors as possible to understand who their visitors were and what their experience was like. The visitorship of the Charles Dickens Museum has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most significantly, the pandemic drastically reduced the number of international tourists visiting the museum. Thus, the museum decided to focus on appealing more to local residents. To this end, it is necessary for the museum's staff to understand the current visitor and their experience. If the visitor experience is better, outreach initiatives will be more effective at increasing local visitor rates.

The team used two different interviews to understand the demographic characteristics of visitors, the purpose of their visits, and their overall experience at the Charles Dickens Museum: short, semi-structured exit interviews and long semi-structured sit-down interviews. Our host, Jordan Evans, was the main author of the interview questions. We included some questions

specifically to gather data for funding opportunities for the museum. Our team made additional suggestions on questions to add or change.

We conducted interviews with museum attendees at the end of their visit. We split up into two groups of two and stationed ourselves at the exit of the museum. When visitors walked through, we asked them if they were interested in giving the museum feedback on their experience. We gave visitors the option of choosing either the short interview or the long interview. If they were willing to answer the long interview, we offered some free tea or coffee for their time. For both interviews, one member conducted the interview verbally and the other member took notes. We decided to audio record the interviews in case visitors spoke faster than we could type. If we missed anything, we would make a note to refer to the audio recording for that interview to add the information. These interviews were semi-structured. The short interview lasted about five minutes, while the long interview would typically last ten to fifteen minutes. We had specific topics that we wanted to ask about, such as where visitors heard about the museum from and if they thought it was good value for money. We also prompted the visitor for more information if they hinted at other issues to get more of the visitor's thoughts about the museum. We then asked the interviewee to complete a short demographic survey on an iPad (see Appendix A and B). We collected 117 short interview responses and 34 long interview responses during two business weeks for the Charles Dickens Museum (10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday). These numbers include the extra 17 short interviews and 4 long interviews that we utilized to determine whether we reached information saturation.

Additionally, the team transcribed the museum's visitor books from 2019, 2020, and 2021. We analyzed nearly 2500 different comments from visitors during those three years using "NVivo," a software that performs sentiment analysis on qualitative data. Sentiment analysis identifies what visitors feel about the museum. By analyzing this sentiment data, we were able to find similar trends from the museum's visitors in order to make recommendations.

To analyze the interview data, we first explored the quantitative results of our interviews to determine any trends. By identifying what visitors felt at the museum and what caused those feelings, we can understand the visitor experience and analyze that experience to make a report to improve upon it. Generally, there are three different levels of sentiment analysis that we could conduct: document level, sentence level, and aspect level (Lei & Liu, 2021). Document-level analysis assesses the sentiment of the entire document for a summarized opinion. Sentence-level

analysis is more specific as it evaluates the sentiment of each sentence. Aspect-level analysis is often conducted for “entities that have many attributes” because individuals often “have a different opinion about each of the aspects” of a product (Feldman, 2013). We performed aspect-level analysis to identify sentiment analysis for each part (aspect) of the museum. We conducted sentiment analysis using NVivo’s sentiment auto-coding and conducted aspect-level analysis manually. Thematically, we focused on tangible issues museum visitors experienced while at the museum. For example, we found selling points of the museum by asking visitors what aspects of the museum they enjoyed the most. Once we completed our analysis, we compiled a list of positive comments that visitors had for the museum, categorized by subject. To analyze the demographic data, we compared the results to the 2011 Camden Borough Census data. Since the Charles Dickens Museum wants to get more locals involved in the museum, we decided to quantitatively compare the demographic data we received from short interviews to the demographic data from the Census. We compared three different data points: age, ethnicity, and gender.

Very few people were unwilling to give feedback. Additionally, while we stationed ourselves by the intended exit for the museum, many visitors left the museum from the entrance rather than the exit. Visitors with impaired mobility also used the elevator instead of the stairs. While there were only a handful of visitors that needed to use the elevator during our interviews, we were unable to collect data on how a serious mobility impairment changed the visitor experience due to our interview location. As a result, our interview location may have created bias in our findings as everyone we interviewed was able to use stairs. We were also concerned that we would not be able to interview some visitors due to a language barrier. However, this barrier was not a problem as most visitors were fluent in either English, Spanish, or Chinese. One member of the team was fluent in Chinese, and another member was fluent in Spanish, so a language barrier was uncommon. 69.4% of the interviewees for the short interview were female, compared to 48.5% in the long interview. The Camden Borough Census comparison also had important limitations. We were unable to use the 2021 census report as it was not published at the time of our research. We also recognized that the museum is at the edge of Camden borough (as identified in Figure 2) and that the census is not the best representation of hyper-local demographics. Finally, some of the visitor book comments were illegible or in a different language, so we were unable to include those comments in our analysis.



Figure 2: Map of the Camden Borough. The red dot represents the Charles Dickens Museum.

Exploring Local Awareness of the Charles Dickens Museum

The Charles Dickens Museum experienced a drastic reduction in tourist visitation rates due to the pandemic and became reliant on their local community for funding. Understanding why locals are not visiting the Charles Dickens Museum was our second objective in this project. The Charles Dickens Museum believes it is essential to work on increasing their reach (within one mile) to attract locals to the museum. In the 2015 research report, the second most common reason why people were unwilling to visit the museum was because it was too far away. By focusing on locals within the one mile radius, the museum controls for this barrier to entry. Especially with the decline of international tourism in England and the entire world, we have worked on collecting information from the local community to provide suggestions on how to

attract more local visitors for the museum. It is important that the museum looks for new ways to market the museum to people who have never visited, and improve the museum to attract those who did not return. Catering to a wide variety of peoples' interests will strengthen the bond between the visitor and museum, causing more of them to associate the museum with a positive experience.

The team conducted short street-intercept interviews to understand what the local community members perceived as barriers to entry to the Charles Dickens Museum in 2022. We interviewed 30 people at each of these five locations: Russell Square, Queens Square Garden, Sir John Soane's Museum, Brunswick Shopping Center, and the British Museum. These locations are all within a one-mile radius of the Charles Dickens Museum. At each of the five locations, the team split into groups of two while conducting interviews. We stopped people to ask if they would be willing to answer a couple of questions regarding a research study for the Charles Dickens Museum. One member of the team asked the interview questions and the other noted down the responses. These interviews typically lasted less than one minute. For street-intercept interview questions, see Appendix C.

For the street-intercept interview, we first explored the quantitative results of our interviews to determine any obvious trends. For the qualitative responses, we looked for common or insightful responses regarding the visibility of the Charles Dickens Museum, key barriers to entry, as well as effective motivators for visiting the Charles Dickens Museum.

Our methods had limitations. While the purpose of our study is to improve local visitorship, we still included tourists in our street-intercept interviews because they had valuable insights on the awareness of the museum. There is also the possibility of convenience bias and volunteer bias. We chose our five street-intercept locations for their convenience. These locations were popular spaces with lots of foot traffic so we could collect responses quickly. Additionally, people who were willing to be interviewed were likely to be more sociable individuals, so we could have an overrepresentation of extroverted interviewees.

Results and Analysis

Through our interviews at the Charles Dickens Museum, we identified who the museum's visitors are and how they compare with the local population by examining data from the 2011

Camden Borough Census. Additionally, we identified factors that affected the visitor experience, as well as made discoveries on reasons why people do not visit the Charles Dickens Museum through our community interviews. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis of long and short museum interviews, community interviews, and comments from the visitor book contributed to the following results.

Visitor Demographic Comparisons

Our demographic data from our interviews allowed us to create a visitor profile for the typical visitor to the Charles Dickens Museum. The data that we collected shows that a typical visitor is a white female who is 45 years old or older.

Age

Based on our short interviews, the age group of visitors is diverse. 67.9% of the museum's visitors are 45 or older. The other 32.1% of the visitors are between the ages of 16 and 44. Compared to Camden's age population (the borough of the museum), only about 35% of the population is above 50 years old. However, when looking at the percentage of tourist visitors that the Charles Dickens Museum receives (51.7%), we can conclude that the majority of the 45 year or older visitors are most likely tourists and that the older local community does not visit the museum regularly.

Gender

Our short interview showed that 66.1% of the interviewees were female. In the census report, 48.9% of the population were female. The high percentage of females in our results may have been due to more females agreeing to participate in the study or other contributing factors. The number of females most likely did not skew our qualitative results.

Ethnicity

Most visitors to the Charles Dickens Museum considered themselves to be of White British, White Irish, or other White ethnicities. According to the census results, the highest percentage of people also considered themselves to be White (66.3%). Our data showed that

85.2% of the museum visitors also considered themselves to be white. Since most people responded with White in both our interviews and the census, we can conclude that our interviews captured the ethnicity of most people. The next highest ethnicity in the census report was Asian (16.1%). While the next most common ethnic group among our interviewees was Chinese, our findings did not represent other Asian backgrounds.

Disabilities

We were unable to represent people with disabilities due to our interview location. While the percentage of visitors who needed the lift was small, not being able to include those visitors could have skewed the results for the demographic question about disabilities.

Visitor Experience

Through quantitative and qualitative evaluation of our interview responses at the Charles Dickens Museum, we developed the following findings regarding the visitor experience.

- 1. The overall sentiment towards the museum was overwhelmingly positive.** Every visitor we interviewed found their visit to be either good or excellent. 99% of the visitor book comments we transcribed were positive. Visitor sentiment towards the study, kitchen, and dining room was very positive. The writing desk in the study amazed many visitors. These visitors were able to imagine Charles Dickens sitting in the writing desk in front of them, writing. The kitchen room gave many visitors insight to the daily routine and upkeep of the house during Victorian times. The dining room showed how Dickens and his wife liked to entertain at their house. Visitors who enjoyed the dining room also mentioned the youthfulness of Dickens depicted by the museum. This room subverts expectations, as many respondents at the museum and from the community surveys thought of Dickens as an “old white man.” The servants room received mixed reviews. A few visitors found the room anticlimactic as the final room of the museum. However, more visitors enjoyed the poignant, timeless quotes depicted on the walls.
- 2. The museum provided an authentic, immersive Victorian experience for most visitors.** The recreation of the average dining conversation in the dining room impressed many visitors with its attention to detail. Two visitors in particular were able to reminisce on their childhood as they grew up in a Victorian house similar to the museum. However,

a few visitors wanted a stronger narrative throughout the museum. They wanted to follow his life from start to finish, rather than through the structure of the house. A museum curator said, “[the museum] doesn't put Dickens in the center or tell you about who he was. [It's] more for [the] furniture.” However, visitors who knew less about Dickens were more engaged with the rooms that described the daily Victorian lifestyle. The current structure of the house appeals to a broad range of visitors, regardless of their level of knowledge about Dickens. One visitor even said, “We wouldn't come to the museum if it was just about Dickens but the house was lovely.” Visitors who knew more about Dickens also appreciated the authenticity of the furniture and ephemera displayed.

Accessibility, Inclusivity, and Convenience

1. **The audio guide only appealed to some visitors.** The visitors who used the audio guide liked the information it provided. However, there were different opinions on the pacing of the audio guide. Some visitors appreciated having an audio guide that invited them to slow down and take their time in each room. However, other visitors wanted a shorter audio guide or opted out of the audio guide entirely so that they could experience the museum at their own pace. Many visitors, particularly the older ones, had trouble using the audio guide due to technical issues and would rather have an actual guide instead. Finally, the museum offered French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian translations, but a few visitors were still unable to listen to the audio guide in their preferred language (Urdu and Chinese).
2. **Many visitors had trouble reading signage.** Our main theme here is the trade-off between immersion and accessibility. Many signs at the museum have an antique look. However, these immersive details often make signs more difficult to read than they need to be. Some visitors thought the signs were difficult to read due to their small size and poor lighting. Additionally, Dickens' own handwriting was difficult for visitors to make out, especially without a transcription to compare it to. Visitors also had trouble reading the quotes in the servants room due to the different fonts.
3. **Many visitors did not use the lift, even though they wanted to.** These visitors were either unaware of the existence of the lift or chose not to ask for access from the staff. Some visitors were unable to experience the full museum due to their mobility issues and

their difficulty with the stairs. Many visitors were aware of the lift but did not want to inconvenience the staff to use it. One visitor said, “I had a knee replacement but I didn’t want to bother anyone with the elevator.” Finally, some visitors wanted seating throughout the museum so that they could rest during their stay. Studies have shown that prolonged standing, even for periods as short as 30 minutes, leads to physical fatigue and discomfort (Waters, 2015). A minimalist run-through of the audio guide is just under 30 minutes. This does not include any of the extra audio clips provided nor the special exhibition. While there is some seating at the museum, visitors were hesitant to sit on those seats in case they were actually seating from Victorian times and are unsuitable for sitting in.

Community Deterrents

Through quantitative and qualitative evaluation of our interview responses at nearby locations surrounding the museum, we developed the following findings regarding the awareness and perception of Charles Dickens and the museum.

1. **Museum audiences knew less about the location of the Charles Dickens Museum than audiences in other community spaces but were more interested in visiting the Charles Dickens Museum.** People at the community spaces (Russell Square, Brunswick Center, Queen Square Gardens) knew the location of the Charles Dickens Museum more often compared to those people at the British Museum and Sir John Soane’s Museum as seen in Table 2 in Appendix D. However, those visiting the British Museum and Sir John Soane’s Museum were more interested in visiting the museum compared to those people in the other community spaces, as seen in Table 3 in Appendix D. Sir John Soane’s Museum especially stands out as 93.3% of people expressed interest in visiting the Charles Dickens Museum whereas 55-65% of people at other locations expressed interest in visiting the museum. The Charles Dickens Museum is missing out on this key audience. But, this audience is experiencing a barrier to entry: a lack of knowledge of the location of the Charles Dickens Museum. If these people knew the location of the museum, they are more likely to visit the museum compared to other community members.

2. **The primary concern for community members is the price of the museum.** Most people reported that a decrease in price would encourage them to visit, especially since many nearby museums were free. Price was the main concern regardless of the person's interest in the museum.
3. **COVID-19 is no longer a barrier to entry.** The 2020 research report identified COVID-19-related concerns as the main barriers to entry (BVA BDRC & Alligator, 2020). In our street-intercept interviews, there was no mention of COVID-19 as a concern. Out of the 151 interviews conducted at the museum, four visitors were appreciative of the signs encouraging social distancing.

Conclusions & Recommendations

From 2020 to now, museums have been overwhelmingly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since museums rely on international tourism, attendance numbers have dramatically declined since the onset of the pandemic. During the peak of the pandemic, international tourism in the United Kingdom decreased by 90% (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2022). The Charles Dickens Museum is just one of the many museums that saw fewer international visitors. As the museum began to reopen, the museum staff realized that local visitors would need to take priority to make up for the decreased number of international tourists.

The goal of our project was to identify factors that affect the visitorship of the Charles Dickens Museum post lockdown and recommend how the museum could increase local visitor attendance. We established two main objectives. We identified who the Charles Dickens Museum's visitors were in 2022, why they were visiting, and how they perceived the visitor experience. We also wanted to identify awareness of the Charles Dickens Museum and any perceived barriers to entry for locals within the one-mile radius. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis of long and short museum interviews, community interviews, and visitor book comments contributed to our results. Our results informed our recommendations on ways for the Charles Dickens Museum to increase local visitor attendance. Our main findings included but are not limited to demographic differences, accessibility issues, and community barriers to entry. Our findings informed the recommendations included below:

Community Outreach and Awareness

1. We compared our UK demographic data from the short interview to the Camden Borough of London census demographic data, exploring themes such as age, gender, and ethnicity. Our results differed from the census data on multiple instances. The census data was approximately evenly split between males and females while our data skewed towards females. Additionally, Camden has an overall larger population of young individuals while the museum's visitors are slightly biased towards an older generation. Similar to the census, a majority of visitors identified themselves as white. Although the census did not mention disability status, a portion of people at the Charles Dickens Museum had mobility issues where the stairs of the museum caused difficulty for them.

- a. Based on the census data, young adults make up the majority of Camden's community. Therefore, the museum should take advantage of the opportunity to attract more young individuals. Anderson (2007) suggests that museums could focus on accommodating the newest generations by learning where each generation consumes their media and staying on top of the trends and relevant platforms. The museum does have Tik Tok and Instagram, but many of the suggestions from the community survey on where people found things to do locally focused on influencer Instagram accounts. People from the UK mentioned following popular London-themed accounts such as @timeoutlondon or @secret.london. We recommend the museum focus on partnering with creators of these accounts. This collaboration can reach a wider audience than just the Charles Dickens Museum Instagram itself, @dickensmuseum.
- b. There was less representation of ethnic groups in the Charles Dickens Museum's demographic audience when compared to the community of Camden borough. The majority of the museum's visitors considered themselves to be white, primarily from the United Kingdom as well as the United States. Martin & Jennings (2015) discuss an approach from a museum in California that was struggling with attracting the Latinx community. The museum increased marketing outreach and provided a signature annual event for the Latinx community. This strategy turned out to be successful since their Latinx visitor rates began to rise. The census showed the Asian population was the second most common ethnicity represented in the community (35,446 making up 16.1% of Camden's community). We found in our data that this Asian population was underrepresented at the Charles Dickens Museum. We suggest that the museum explore ways to be more inclusive to different ethnicities. For example, having an event targeted toward different Asian communities could entice members from those communities to the museum. As Morse & Monro (2018) suggest, private and small engagement sessions that are exclusive to a specific target audience of people can help create a unique and memorable experience. The museum can also host special exhibitions that address Dickens' controversial opinions on race (Moore, 2004). Finally, we recommend the museum advertise more on sites that

are frequently used by other ethnicities, such as the Little Red Book (the social media platform.)

2. Those in the community interviewed at a local museum knew less about the location of the Charles Dickens Museum than visitors in other community spaces, but were more interested in visiting the Charles Dickens Museum. The Charles Dickens Museum is missing out on a key audience. The museum can benefit from a targeted marketing strategy toward current museum goers to increase awareness of the location of the museum.
 - a. We recommend that the museum targets audiences that are already interested in museums, especially those audiences at museums that have a similar size and demographic to the Charles Dickens Museum. For example, 93.3% of those interviewed at Sir John Soane's museum expressed interest in attending the Charles Dickens Museum, but 76.7% were unaware of the location of the Charles Dickens Museum. We suggest that the Charles Dickens Museum, Sir John Soane's Museum, Carlyle's House, Handel and Hendrix in London, Keats House, and other interested museums collaborate and offer a special discounted package price to attend each museum. We chose these museums because they are also house museums of famous cultural figures around London. This is similar to the National Art Pass that the Charles Dickens Museum already participates in, but would be more specific to smaller, niche museums. This way, the cross-promotional marketing increases awareness of the Charles Dickens Museum while at the same time possibly gaining new audience members. A future research project could identify other thematically adjacent museums in London or the United Kingdom for the Charles Dickens Museum to partner with.
3. The primary deterrent for community members was the price of the museum. Additionally, many visitors to the Charles Dickens Museum found that the people they went with enhanced their experience. After all, museum visits are often social experiences (Coffee, 2007; Falk and Dierking, 1992; McManus 1987, 1988). People in community spaces also mentioned being more likely to visit the museum if they were going with a companion.

- a. We understand that the museum recently raised its prices and needs ticket sales for upkeep. Instead of making tickets free, we recommend that the museum offers a ticket package similar to a two-for-one deal. People who are already interested in the museum will have an incentive to bring companions with them who might otherwise not come to the museum.

Accessibility, Inclusivity, and Convenience

Based on our findings, we recommend small-scale changes aimed at improving the museum's accessibility, inclusion, and convenience.

1. Most visitors with mobility issues were either unaware of the lift or afraid of being bothersome by asking museum staff for permission to use the lift. We recommend asking people about accessibility concerns at the front desk and encouraging them to use the available services. We also recommend maintaining staff presence near the lifts to increase the comfort level of visitors who want to use the lifts.
2. A number of visitors, especially older visitors, mentioned they would have liked somewhere to sit, so we also suggest including resting places on each floor. We also recommend making a clear label for available seating so visitors will not have to worry about sitting on fragile, antique furniture.
3. Many visitors had trouble reading signage at the museum. We recommend increasing the font sizes and brightening up the lighting of signs. The ideal font size of signs varies for each room, but signs should be readable even when multiple visitors are looking at the same sign. Based on a study on readability, we recommend changing the font to Helvetica, Courier, Arial, Verdana, or Computer Modern Unicode (Rello & Baeza-Yates, 2016). We noticed that the capital C and capital G on the museum website look very similar to each other so we also recommend changing the website font to one of the aforementioned more readable fonts.
4. Some visitors had trouble reading Dickens' handwriting without a transcription to compare words to. We recommend adding a few transcriptions to important letters and manuscripts for visitors' reference.

5. A few visitors would prefer having a translation of the audio guide in their primary language. We are aware that the museum has already made several translations of the audio guide but our research suggests that the current offering of translation is not comprehensive yet.
6. Some visitors would prefer having a shorter, more concise audio guide. The museum might benefit from creating two different options for audio guides. One long and descriptive audio guide could dive into details about the works and objects in a room and a short audio guide might briefly explain what the visitor is looking at. This method will satisfy those who want to take in every second of the museum, as well as those who are in a rush.
7. Many visitors, particularly the older ones, had trouble using the audio guide due to technical issues and would rather have an actual guide instead. The museum could offer free tours at the museum that visitors could sign up for. We also recommend lending out audio equipment for free with a refundable deposit so that the museum could provide tech support.

Most of our museum recommendations are based on visitor complaints, but these complaints might not be representative of visitor preference. We have tried to choose recommendations that only benefit the museum, but there is a possibility that visitors prefer what's currently at the museum instead of our proposed change. For example, visitors might prefer immersion-focused signs more than accessibility-focused signs, but chose not to share that preference during our interview. Future studies could ask visitors to compare different signs at the museum to find their true preference before implementing these recommendations.

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Appendix A: Charles Dickens Museum Short Interview Questions

Informed Consent: We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts in the USA and we are working with the Charles Dickens Museum to identify and make recommendations on the factors that affect the visitorship of their museum post lockdown. To clarify, we are not employees of the Charles Dickens Museum and we want to collect your honest feedback regarding your experience at the museum today. Currently, we are conducting interviews with people who have just finished their tour of the Charles Dickens Museum. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please remember that your answers will remain anonymous. No names or other identifying information will appear on the questionnaires or any of the project reports or publications. If interested, we can provide a copy of our results through an internet link at the conclusion of the study.

Note: Our host, Jordan Evans, was the main author of the questions below. Our team made suggestions on questions to add or change.

1. What was your main reason for visiting today?
 - a. I am interested in Charles Dickens as a person.
 - b. I am interested in the books by Charles Dickens.
 - c. I am interested in exploring a Victorian home.
 - d. I came to see the exhibition.
 - e. I found the museum by chance.
 - f. Other (please specify):
2. How did you discover the Charles Dickens Museum?
 - a. Social Media
 - b. Website
 - c. Google
 - d. Word of mouth
 - e. Newspaper or magazine

- f. I was in the general area
 - g. I have always known about the museum
 - h. Other (please specify):
3. How did you enjoy your visit?
- a. It was excellent.
 - b. It was good.
 - c. It was alright.
 - d. It was disappointing
 - e. Comments:
4. How did this visit match up with your expectations?
- a. This visit was way better than I expected.
 - b. I expected this visit to be good and it was.
 - c. I didn't know what to expect from this visit.
 - d. I thought this visit would be better than it was.
 - e. Comments:
5. Would you recommend the Charles Dickens Museum?
- a. Yes
 - b. I'm not sure
 - c. No
 - d. Comments:
6. Do you think the Charles Dickens Museum was worth the ticket price?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
 - d. Comments:
7. Which of the following statements most closely matched how you felt during your visit?

	All of the time	Very often	Some of the time	Not very often	None of the time
I felt happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt engaged	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was interested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was amazed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was entertained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What was your favorite part of your visit today?

9. How do you think we could improve your visit today?

10. What country do you currently live in?

- a. UK
- b. Other (please specify):

11. Which age group are you from?

- a. Prefer not to say
- b. 16-24
- c. 25-34
- d. 35-44
- e. 45-54
- f. 55-64
- g. 65 or older

12. Which gender do you identify as?

- a. Prefer not to say
- b. Female
- c. Gender Fluid
- d. Male
- e. Trans
- f. Other (please specify):

13. Which of these groups do you most identify with?

- a. I do not wish to disclose my ethnicity
 - White
- b. British

- c. Irish
- d. Other
 - Asian or Asian British
- e. Chinese
- f. Indian
- g. Pakistani
- h. Bangladeshi
- i. Any other Asian Background
 - Mixed
- j. White and Black Caribbean
- k. White and Black African
- l. White and Asian
- m. Any other mixed background
 - Black or Black British
- n. Caribbean
- o. African
- p. Any other black background
 - Other Ethnic Group
- q. Any other Ethnic Group
- r. Other (please specify):

14. How would you define your sexuality?

- a. Prefer not to say
- b. Bisexual
- c. Gay Man
- d. Gay Woman
- e. Straight / Heterosexual
- f. Other (please specify):

15. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- a. Prefer not to say
- b. Yes
- c. No

16. If yes, would you feel comfortable sharing details of your disability with us, this helps us to consider your needs so that we can improve your visit experience

- a. Prefer not to say
- b. Hearing impairment
- c. Learning difficulties
- d. Mental ill-health
- e. Mobility impairment
- f. Physical coordination difficulties
- g. Progressive conditions
- h. Speech impairment
- i. Visual impairment
- j. Severe disfigurement
- k. Other (please specify):

17. Comments:

Appendix B: Charles Dickens Museum Long Interview Questions

Informed Consent: We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts in the USA and we are working with the Charles Dickens Museum to identify and make recommendations on the factors that affect the visitorship of their museum post lockdown. To clarify, we are not employees of the Charles Dickens Museum and we want to collect your honest feedback regarding your experience at the museum today. Currently, we are conducting interviews with people who have just finished their tour of the Charles Dickens Museum. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please remember that your answers will remain anonymous. No names or other identifying information will appear on the questionnaires or any of the project reports or publications. If interested, we can provide a copy of our results through an internet link at the conclusion of the study.

Note: Our host, Jordan Evans, was the main author of the questions below. Our team made suggestions on questions to add or change.

1. Was this your first visit to the Charles Dickens Museum?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. If you answered 'No,' when was your last visit?
 - a. In the last 1-2 years
 - b. 2-3 years ago
 - c. 3+ years ago
3. How did you hear about the Charles Dickens Museum?
 - a. Social Media
 - b. Website
 - c. Word of mouth
 - d. Newspaper or magazine
 - e. Google (or other search engine)

- f. I was passing by
 - g. Other (please specify):
4. Who is visiting with you today? How are you related?
- a. On my own
 - b. With a spouse or partner
 - c. With a date
 - d. With my family
 - e. With friends
 - f. With a school group
 - g. Other (please specify):
5. Why did you visit the Charles Dickens Museum?
- a. I've always wanted to visit
 - b. I've seen pictures and thought it looked interesting
 - c. I've always been interested in Charles Dickens
 - d. I just saw it in passing and thought it looked interesting
 - e. I've read a Dickens book recently and wanted to learn more
 - f. Other (please specify):
 - g. Comments:
6. What was your main reason for visiting today?
- a. I am interested in Charles Dickens as a person.
 - b. I am interested in the books by Charles Dickens.
 - c. I am interested in exploring a Victorian home.
 - d. I came to see the exhibition.
 - e. I found the museum by chance.
 - f. Other (please specify):
 - g. Comments:
7. Overall, would you recommend the Charles Dickens Museum as a place to visit?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
 - d. Comments:

8. How did you enjoy your visit?
 - a. It was excellent
 - b. It was good
 - c. It was alright
 - d. It was disappointing
 - e. Comments:
9. Do you think the Charles Dickens Museum offers good value for money?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
 - d. Comments:
10. How did this visit match up with your expectations?
 - a. This visit was way better than I expected.
 - b. I expected this visit to be good and it was.
 - c. I didn't know what to expect from this visit.
 - d. I thought this visit would be better than it was.
 - e. Comments:
11. Before you visited today, how much did you know about Charles Dickens?
 - a. I hadn't heard of Charles Dickens
 - b. I had heard of him but didn't know much about him
 - c. I've read one or two of his books
 - d. I knew a lot about Charles Dickens
 - e. Comments:
12. Before your visit today, how did you perceive Charles Dickens as a person?
 - a. Positive
 - b. Negative
 - c. Don't Know
 - d. Comments:
13. How do you perceive Charles Dickens as a person now that you have visited the museum?
 - a. Positive

- b. Negative
- c. Don't Know
- d. Comments:

14. What would you say the museum focused on most, during your visit today?

- a. The books by Charles Dickens
- b. The charity work and social campaigning by Charles Dickens
- c. The private and family life of Charles Dickens
- d. The world and historical era that Charles Dickens lived in
- e. Other (please specify):

15. In the future, what would you like to see the museum focus on more?

- a. The books by Charles Dickens
- b. The Charity work and social campaigning by Charles Dickens
- c. The private and family life of Charles Dickens
- d. The world and historical era that Charles Dickens lived in
- e. Other (please specify):

16. Before your visit today, what were you expecting to see?

- a. Lots of items in glass cabinets
- b. A historically authentic home
- c. A library style visit
- d. Other (please specify):

17. How did you find your welcome to the museum today?

	Agree	I'm not sure	Disagree
I felt very welcome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I received all of the information I needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

18. Did you use the free audio guide?

- a. Yes

- b. No
 - c. I didn't know there was a free audio guide
 - d. I couldn't download the audio guide
19. If yes, how did you find the audio guide experience?
- a. It was very informative, and it gave the right amount of information
 - b. It was informative, but it took too long
 - c. It was informative, but was too short
 - d. It was the right length, but I didn't enjoy the content
 - e. It was a really poor user experience
 - f. Comments:
20. What did you think of the information provided in the museum?
- a. I really enjoyed the labels, interpretation and talks with the room stewards
 - b. I saw the labels, interpretations and room stewards, but didn't enjoy much of it
 - c. I spoke to the room stewards, but didn't read any labels
 - d. I read the labels, but didn't speak to the room stewards
 - e. I didn't see any labels or speak to the room stewards
 - f. Comments:
21. Overall, how did you find your visit to the museum?
- a. I learned a lot at the Charles Dickens Museum, and enjoyed my visit
 - b. I enjoyed my visit, but I didn't really learn anything
 - c. I learned a lot, but didn't really enjoy the experience
 - d. I didn't learn anything, and didn't enjoy my time here
 - e. Comments:
22. Which of the following statements most closely matched how you felt during your visit?

	All of the time	Very often	Some of the time	Not very often	None of the time
I felt happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt engaged	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was interested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was amazed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was entertained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

23. What was your favorite part of your visit today?
24. What was your least favorite part of your visit / how do you think we could improve your visit today?
25. What would you have liked to have seen at the museum / what could we do to encourage you to come back?
26. Do you feel the museum connected with you? Did it provide an emotional response or resonance to you?
27. Please tell us of any other thoughts or comments you have?
28. What country do you currently live in?
 - a. United Kingdom
 - b. Other (please specify):
29. If you currently live in the UK, do you live in London?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
30. What age group are you in?
 - a. Prefer not to say
 - b. 16-24
 - c. 25-34
 - d. 35-44
 - e. 45-54

- f. 55-64
 - g. 65 or older
31. Which gender do you identify with?
- a. Prefer not to say
 - b. Female
 - c. Gender Fluid
 - d. Male
 - e. Trans
 - f. Other (please specify):
32. Do you consider yourself to be, or identify as:
- a. Prefer not to say
 - b. Bisexual
 - c. Gay Man
 - d. Gay Woman
 - e. Straight / Heterosexual
 - f. Other (please specify):
33. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
- a. Prefer not to say
 - b. Yes
 - c. No
 - d. Don't Know
34. If you answered 'yes', would you feel comfortable sharing details of your disability with us, this helps us to consider your needs so that we can improve your visit experience
- a. Prefer not to say
 - b. Hearing impairment
 - c. Learning difficulties
 - d. Mental ill-health
 - e. Mobility impairment
 - f. Physical coordination difficulties
 - g. Progressive conditions
 - h. Speech impairment

- i. Visual impairment
 - j. Severe disfigurement
 - k. Other (please specify):
35. If you answered yes, please share any thoughts you have in terms of how well the museum facilitated your visit, in relation to your disability.
36. Which of these groups do you most identify with?
- a. I do not wish to disclose my ethnicity
 - White
 - b. British
 - c. Irish
 - d. Other
 - Asian or Asian British
 - e. Chinese
 - f. Indian
 - g. Pakistani
 - h. Bangladeshi
 - i. Any other Asian Background
 - Mixed
 - j. White and Black Caribbean
 - k. White and Black African
 - l. White and Asian
 - m. Any other mixed background
 - Black or Black British
 - n. Caribbean
 - o. African
 - p. Any other black background
 - Other Ethnic Group
 - q. Any other Ethnic Group
 - r. Other (please specify):
37. Which faith or religious group do you identify with?
- a. Prefer not to say

- b. Agnostic
- c. Atheist
- d. Buddhism
- e. Christian - Catholic
- f. Christian - Other
- g. Christian - Protestant
- h. Culturally Religious
- i. Hinduism
- j. Islam
- k. Jainism
- l. Judaism
- m. Sikh
- n. Shinto
- o. I have no articulated belief system
- p. Other (please specify):

Appendix C: Street-Intercept Interview Questions

Informed Consent: We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts in the USA and we are working with the Charles Dickens Museum to identify and make recommendations on the factors that affect the visitorship of their museum post lockdown. To clarify, we are not employees of the Charles Dickens Museum and we want to collect your honest feedback regarding your current view of the Charles Dickens Museum. Currently, we are conducting interviews with people who have just finished their tour of the Charles Dickens Museum. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please remember that your answers will remain anonymous. No names of other identifying information will appear on the questionnaires or any of the project reports or publications. If interested, we can provide a copy of our results through an internet link at the conclusion of the study.

Note: Our host, Jordan Evans, was the main author of the questions below. Our team made suggestions on questions to add or change.

1. Have you heard of Charles Dickens?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Comments:
2. What springs to mind when you hear Charles Dickens?
 - a. Comments:
3. Would you say your perception of Dickens is:
 - a. Positive
 - b. Negative
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Don't Know
 - e. Comments:
4. Can you name 1 book by Charles Dickens?
 - a. Comments:

5. Do you find Charles Dickens interesting?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know
 - d. Comments:
6. Do you know where the Charles Dickens Museum is?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Does the Charles Dickens Museum sound like somewhere you'd be interested in visiting, or revisiting if you have been to us before?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I'd want to know more
 - d. Comments:
8. If you visited the Charles Dickens Museum, what would you expect to find?
 - a. Comments:
9. What might entice you to visit the Charles Dickens Museum?
 - a. Local discount
 - b. A special event, such as a performance
 - c. A special exhibition on something cool, like Ghosts
 - d. Honestly I would never visit the museum
 - e. Other (please specify)
10. Where do you look to find things to do locally?
 - a. Comments:
11. Are you a local?
 - a. Comments:

Appendix D: Museum and Community Interview Data

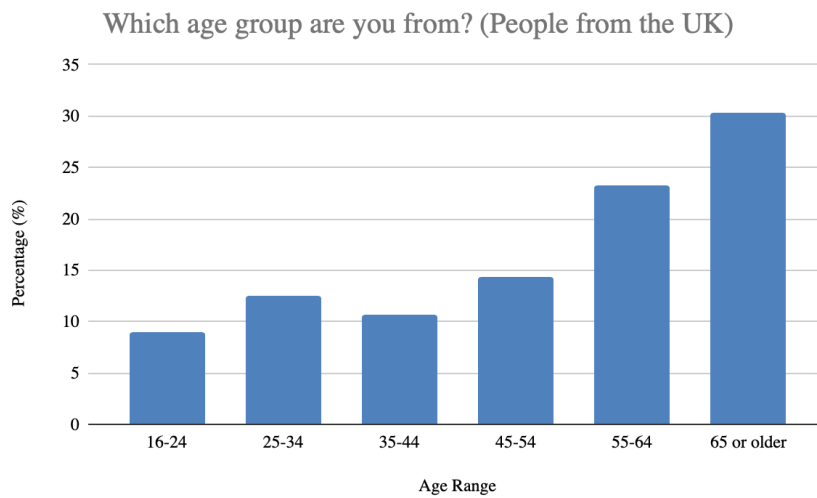


Figure 1: Age group data results from the short interviews conducted at the Charles Dickens Museum.

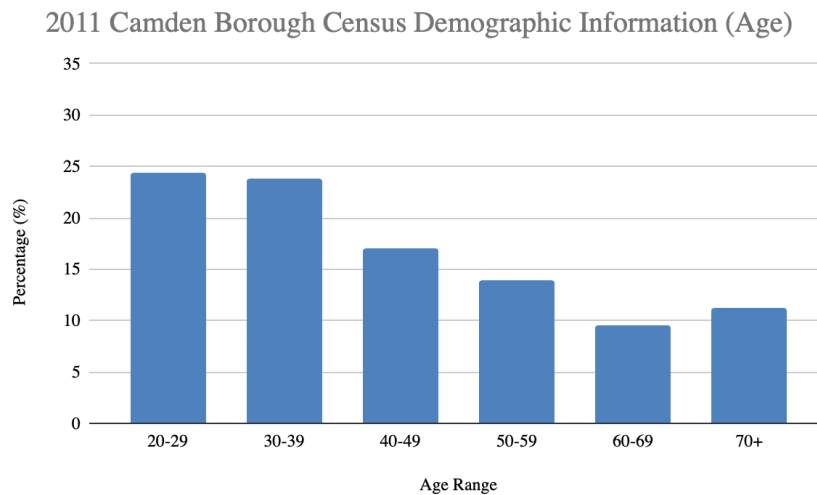


Figure 2: Age group from the Camden borough 2011 census. Data retrieved from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/london/admin/camden/E43000197__camden/.

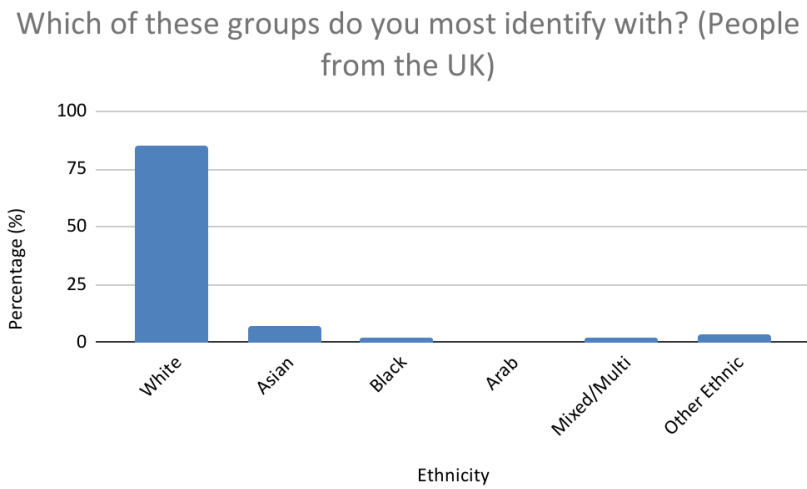


Figure 3: Ethnicity results from our short interview conducted at the Charles Dickens Museum. .

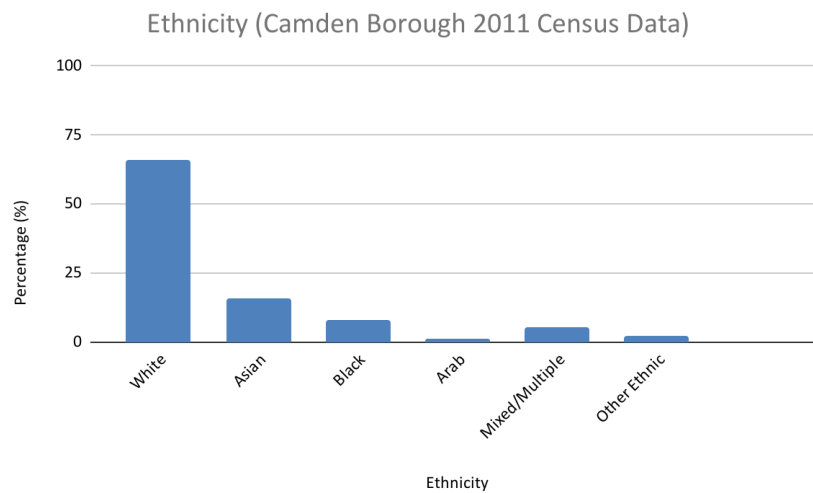


Figure 4: Ethnicity data from the Camden borough 2011 census. Data retrieved from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/london/admin/camden/E43000197__camden/.

	Male	Female
Percentage	30.6%	69.4%

Table 1: The percentages of males and females who completed the short interviews conducted at the Charles Dickens Museum.

	Male	Female
Percentage	51.1%	48.9%

Table 2: Data on gender from the Camden borough 2011 census. Data retrieved from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/london/admin/camden/E43000197__camden/.

	Russell Square	Brunswick Center	Queens Square Gardens	British Museum	Sir John Soane's Museum
Yes	55.2% (16)	48.4% (15)	33.3% (10)	31.0% (9)	23.3% (7)
No	44.8% (13)	51.6% (16)	66.7% (20)	69.0% (20)	76.7% (23)

Table 3: Question 6 from the community survey: “Do you know where the Charles Dickens Museum is?”

	Sir John Soane's Museum	British Museum	Brunswick Center	Russell Square	Queens Square Gardens
Yes	93.3% (28)	63.3% (19)	61.3% (19)	60% (18)	53.3% (16)
No	0% (0)	13.3% (4)	32.2% (10)	26.7% (8)	40.0% (12)
Don't know	6.7% (2)	20% (6)	6.5% (2)	6.7% (2)	0% (0)
I'd want to know more	0% (0)	3.3% (1)	0% (0)	6.7% (2)	6.7% (2)

Table 4: Question 7 from the community survey: “Does the Charles Dickens Museum sound like somewhere you would be interested in visiting, or revisiting if you have been before?”