

***Advocacy:  
It's not just research it's  
what you do with it!***

*Amelia Robinson  
Audience Research and Advocacy  
Science Museum*

# ***Audience Research and Advocacy, Science Museum***

*To help deliver cultural products such as exhibitions, online,  
resources and events that are **educational, enjoyable &  
accessible** for their intended audience...*

*through understanding visitors' **needs, wants and expectations***





# The role of the Audience Advocate

- Advisors
- Assessors
- Communicators
- Strategist
- Trainers
- Horizon scanners



## ***This session will look at:***

- 1. Effective communication of findings*
- 2. Writing useful recommendations*
- 3. Challenges*
- 4. Long-term strategies*

# What do you do next with research?

- **Who** do you disseminate research to?
- What **formats** do you disseminate research?



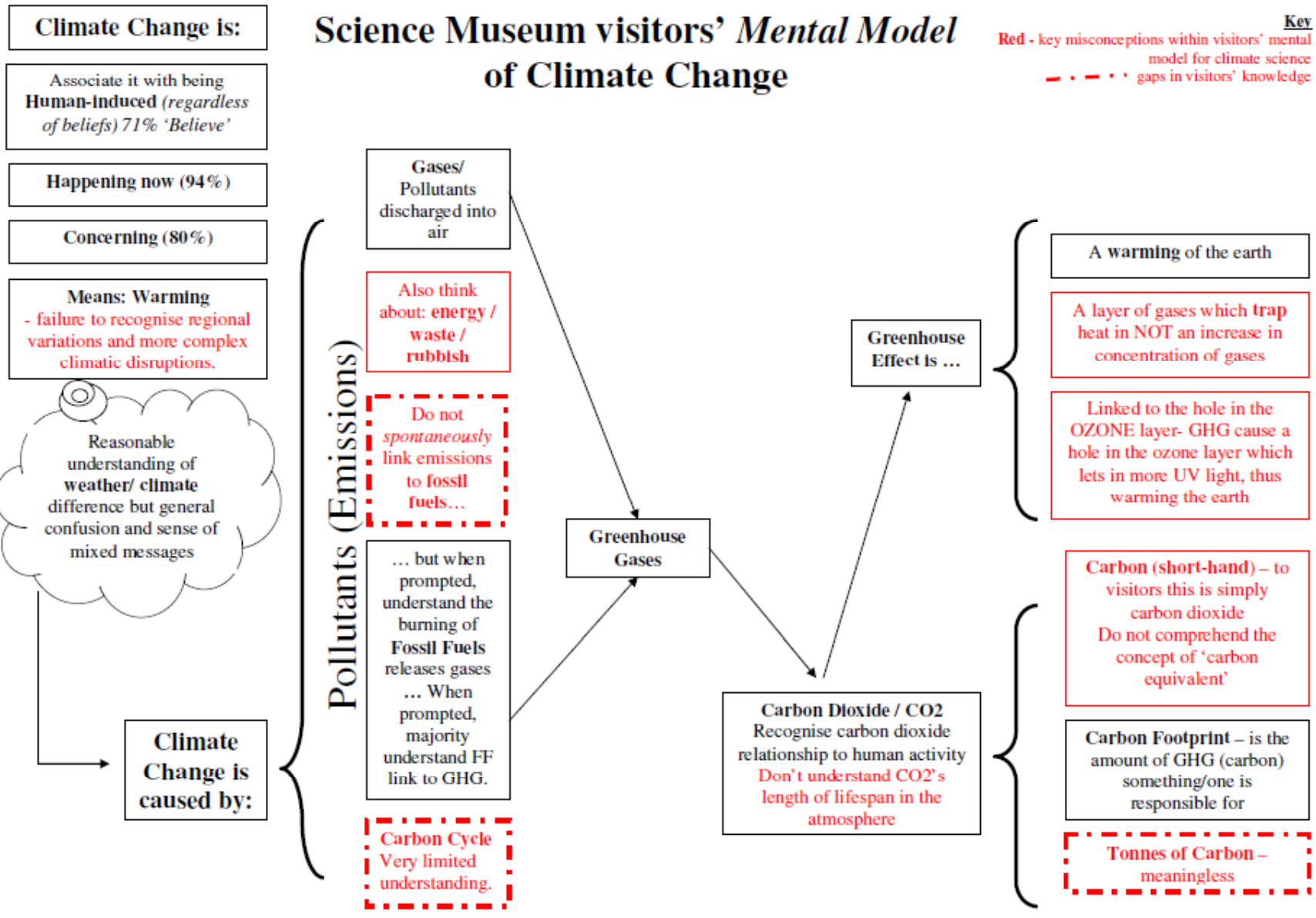
# *What do you do next with research?*

1. *Report*
2. *Presentations*
3. *Feedback meetings*
4. *Emails*
5. *Summary documents*
6. *Training*
7. *Collate research*
8. *Creative approaches*



***Think about  
your  
audience!***

# Atmosphere, Science Museum





# Large Hadron Collider, *Science Museum*

## ***A Typical Visitor to the LHC Exhibition***

*I remember hearing about scientists trying to recreate the Big Bang in the news a couple of years ago. It didn't work did it? I hope they don't create a black hole and destroy the earth in the process!*

*I think they are looking for something with a weird name but have no idea why finding it is so important.*

*I would quite like to know more about what they are doing, why they are doing it and what the outcomes might be.*

*I can't imagine how scientists might go about recreating the Big Bang. I'd love to see it actually happening; see where they conduct their experiments and a picture of what they are actually looking for. Do they have footage of the actual Big Bang being recreated? .....*

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# Front-End Research for Medical Gallery Redevelopment

- **Medical Science** is perceived as a hard, remote subject, which no sensible person wants to get involved with until they have to.

*“To engage with disease is to open yourself to the idea of being diseased yourself.”*

- **Biomedicine** seems to have a hard side, allied to science and testing, and a soft side to do with nature, bodies and therapy. The soft side stems from the prefix ‘bio’ which is familiar from commercial products. In fact, most people don’t really know what it is at all.

*“Bio medicine! I don’t know what it is. It’s a big ‘no-no’.”*

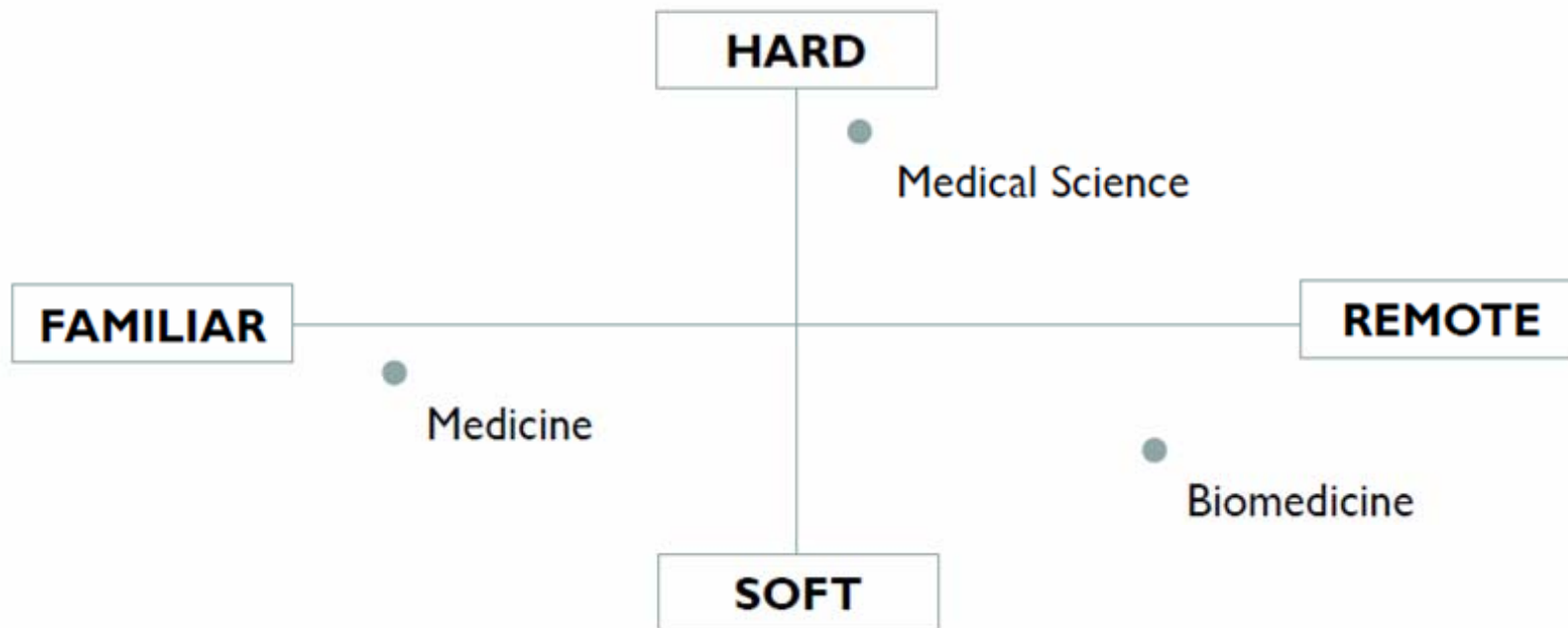
- **Medicine**, familiar and with a human face, is the easiest label to engage with.

*“The basics are from childhood, liquid medicines. Now take a pill!”*

# Medicine: Front-End Research

Can We Compare these Three Labels?

Here's a map of the territory.



# ***Making Recommendations***

- *They are actions*
- *They are evidence/experience based*
- *They are important because they tell people how to resolve the issues raised by your findings.*
- *They are difficult*
  - *To write and to hear*

# ***Delivering Recommendations***

- ***Hierarchical** - So that they can't be missed!*
- ***Be clear** - one issue at a time*
- ***Be neutral** in tone*
- *Use words like **must** and **need** – for essential changes*
- *Use words like **could**, **might**, **maybe**, **perhaps**, **consider** - for possible solutions*
- *Be more specific the further into the development*
- *Be realistic – time and money*
- *Try and present the positive – flattery works!*

# A Short Task!

## ***The Bad Prototype***

### ***Designer***

*Visitors don't understand how it works or what they're supposed to be doing*

## ***The Disastrous Workshop***

### ***Workshop Leader***

*None of the group were focussed on the task, and didn't get the work completed in time*

## ***The Difficult Content***

### ***Curator***

*Visitors thought it was about television, which they already knew a lot about, not about the internet*

# What are the challenges with Advocacy?





# Challenges

- *Evaluation is a new process*
  - 惘 “Why should I listen to this?”
- *Criticising your research*
  - “Why did you do it like that?”
  - “What questions did you ask?”
  - “That’s not what happens”
- *Negative findings*
- *Making recommendations*



## *...and how to overcome them*

*What else can you do?*

- *Embed the evaluation process*
- *Work with the team*
- *Team as observers*
- *Train*
- *Advocacy and support*

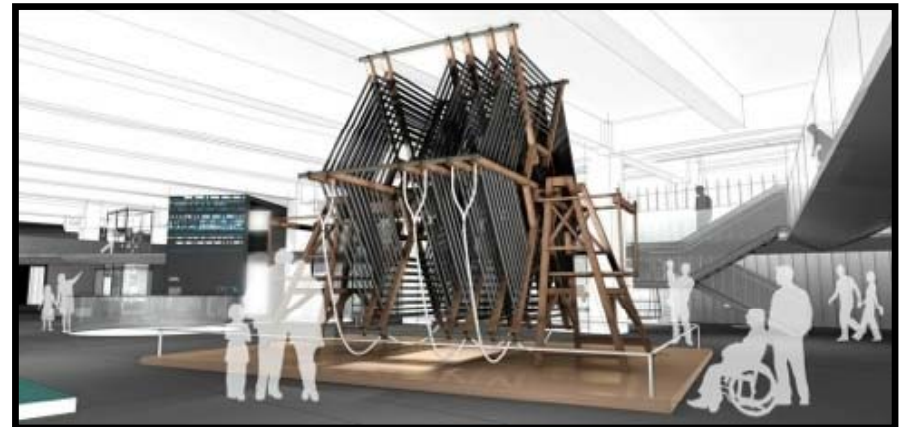


# *Long-Term Advocacy*

- *Summary documents*
  - *Collate your research*
- *Staff training*
  - *Audience Awareness training*
- *Knowledge sharing*
- *Advocacy*

# *A Case Study: Information Age*

- *Audience Awareness Training / disability awareness training*
- *Audience Advocate throughout*
  - *Collating research about science objects*
  - *Disseminating front-end and formative evaluation*
  - *Ensuring focused audience*
- *Issues*
  - *New process*
  - *Some scepticism!*



***Any Questions?***

