NG200: How the National Gallery is Understanding Visitors to its Bicentenary Celebrations

VSG Conference, 10th May 2024

NG**200**

THE NATIONAL GALLERY

What We Will Cover Today

- Overview of NG200

- Overarching evaluation framework for NG200

- The National Gallery's Segmentation model

- How we plan to track socioeconomic status

- Q&A

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- Today, the National Gallery, London turns 200. Our session today will explore how we are going to evaluate the associated program that the National Gallery is using to celebrate the bicentenary, NG200.

- We'll start by explaining what NG200 is and the background to how we created an evaluation framework.

- We'll then tell you briefly about the evaluation framework that we have created, before exploring two elements of the methodology in greater detail.

- Firstly, we'll tell you about our new segmentation model and then some of the ways we considered when deciding the how to measure the socioeconomic status of NG200's audience.
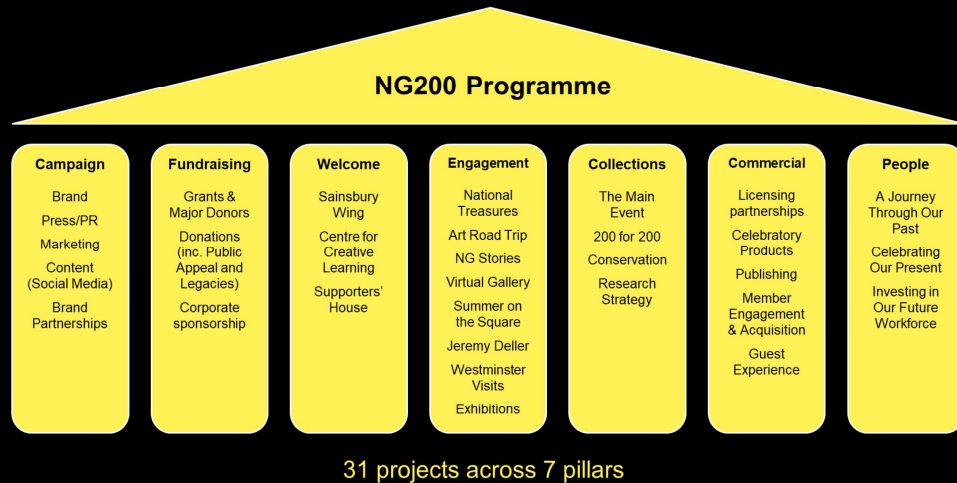
- The NG200 Programme is divided into 7 pillars:
  - Campaign, which is responsible for communicating the various activities of the programme
  - Fundraising, which reflects our work to fund the various projects within NG200 and connect with future donors
  - Welcome, which includes the capital works including the new Sainsbury Wing
  - Engagement, which is responsible for exhibitions and public programmes in London and around the country
  - Collections, which is responsible for a rehang of the general collection of paintings and associated work
  - Commercial, which is responsible for producing quality products to commemorate the bicentenary and for our Member engagement
  - People, which is focused on engaging the employees of the National Gallery with NG200

- Each pillar contains multiple projects and there are varying levels to which these projects overlap and intersect with each other

So, why evaluate?
- To identify successes and challenges
  - We want to be able to provide a narrative account of what was achieved and what difficulties were encountered, offering a balanced view of the programme's implementation and outcomes.
- To understand the level of impact
  - We want to assess the extent to which NG200 has affected its participants and the broader community, evaluating both intended and unintended outcomes.
  - This will be used to demonstrate our impact internally, to funding partners, and government.
- To inform future programming
  - We want to utilize the insights gained from the evaluation to refine and improve the design and delivery of future events, so that NG200 can launch us into our third century.

- Underpinning this, we know that like many heritage organisations, we're facing difficult financial headwinds over the coming years. Our evaluation will allow us to see which parts of NG200 offered the best value for money and

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what activities we should invest in going forward.

Our Approach

'Bottom-up' approach to identify key themes across projects.

Identify indicators that are required to establish a pre-NG200 baseline, where possible.

Identify where additional research is required.

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Overall NG200 Goals
Pillar Goals
Project Goals
Project Indicators

External Evaluation
Existing Surveys
BAU Reporting
New Surveys

- As you may have worked out, evaluating NG200 is a huge project.

- The NG200 strategic objectives were our starting point for the evaluation framework but they were created *after* many of the projects had been started.

- To create a clear evaluation framework, we had to work from the bottom up, with project briefs and what the project teams told us about their plans, and fit what was happening within projects into the strategic framework.

- We collaborated with project leads to identify all the indicators that could be measured to track their success.

- This allowed us to pick out key themes across all the projects to then create pillar and programme level goals.

- To minimise the workload and make the evaluation as efficient as possible, we identified existing reporting and evaluation methods that we could use to track NG200's success.

- We then identified where additional research was required.

How Will We Evaluate?

We will be using a mixed methods approach to evaluate the whole programme.

We will structure reporting around key questions, such as:

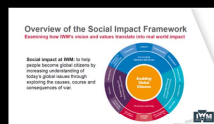What did the project set out to achieve?

What worked well, less well and why?

What happened?

How did external factors impact the project?

What could have been improved?

Following our own existing research methods and sector best practices:

Imperial War Museum
Social Impact Framework

HM Treasury
Magenta Book

MAGIC Consortium
Visitor Research

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- We've already mentioned the NG200 strategy is the basis of our evaluation framework.

- This NG200 strategy sets out an overarching vision for NG200, to accelerate our journey to being the Gallery for the Nation. A space for everyone, everywhere, where great paintings of the past inspire new ideas for our future.

- There are four objectives within this vision, which we will go through over the next four slides.

- To create our evaluation framework, we looked at how each project and pillar aims to contribute to each of the four objectives and how we can measure the extent to which it has done so.

Ownership & Participation

A Gallery for the nation is **a public realm for all**.

Objective:
Establish the public as key stakeholder of
National Gallery spaces.

Outcome:
A sense of ownership encourages a lifelong
relationship and active participation with the
Gallery.

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- We will be measuring this through our rolling exit survey, observations of sessions, participant feedback and partner feedback.

- We'll ask questions such as:
    - Do you agree or disagree with the statement 'I feel a sense of connection to the National Gallery'?
    - Do you agree or disagree with the statement 'I feel the National Gallery is a Gallery for the whole nation'?
    - Do you plan to engage with the National Gallery in the future?
    - How could we improve our offer to better foster a sense of community ownership?

- We will measure this through surveys, interviews and observations, including tracking how visitors behave in our exhibitions. We will also track participation rates in our events in the new Centre for Creative Learning and Supporters House

- We'll ask questions such as:
    - Did you find out something new about a painting or artist in the collection?
    - Did the event make you think about paintings in a new way?
    - Did you find out something new about the National Gallery's history?
    - Have you tried a new way of being creative at this event?
    - Have you gained new skills from working on this project with the National Gallery?

Impact & Leadership

A Gallery for the nation is **a cultural catalyst**.

Objective:
Establish a global reputation as sector-leading and culture-shaping.

Outcome:
Sustained investment and advocacy for the Gallery fuelled by the energy from NG200.

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- We will track how many new or existing partners we have developed programmes in collaboration with, collect feedback from our peers within the sector and track any sector awards that we win. We will also track income from our activities and the proportion of donors who continue to donate beyond NG200.

- We will ask questions such as:
    - How likely are you to recommend the National Gallery?
    - Did you feel supported by the National Gallery while working on this project?
    - Do you feel like the National Gallery delivered high quality activities for your community?
    - Have you used this project to support any applications for funding or future partnerships?
    - Would you like to work with the National Gallery in the future?

- This is the objective we will be talking about as the focus of this presentation.

- It includes tracking the number of people engaging with each programme, geographic spread, the segmentation profile and the demographic profile of our audiences.
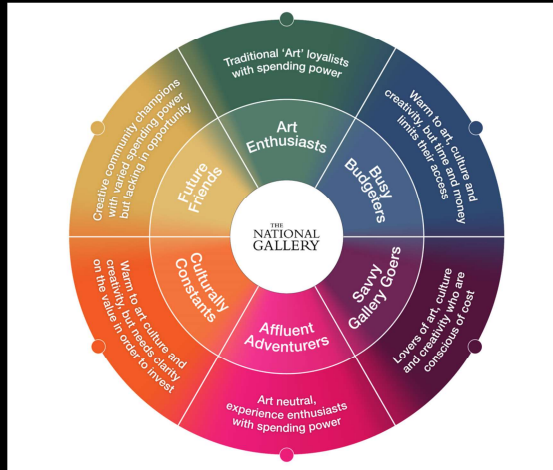
Bringing People and Paintings Together

- In early 2023, the Gallery initiated a comprehensive segmentation study to enhance our understanding of our audiences.

- This study involved surveying 4000 individuals across the UK to gather both demographic and psychographic insights.

- Through an analysis of respondents' answers, a series of 10 key questions was created, enabling us to segment individuals into these six distinct groups.

- These findings provide invaluable insights into the preferences, behaviours, and interests of our audience, guiding our strategies for better engagement and tailored experiences.

The Segmentation Model

PSYCHOGRAPHICS	Enable development of meaningful relationships with people on a human level (their personality & beliefs)
LIFESTYLE	Understand life stage and personal situation to see how that impacts art engagement
ART ENGAGEMENT	Understand existing interaction with art and how to encourage increased engagement
NG ENGAGEMENT	Practical understanding of engagement with the NG (awareness, perceptions & use) and any barriers that exist

To what extent do you agree or disagree that…

More public money should be invested in improving access to art

I prioritise spending money on experiences rather than on things

I am happy to pay for added value services/access at an event or attraction if it improves my overall experience

I am currently struggling to pay my regular bills

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- It is important to point out that our golden questions revolve quite heavily around individuals' willingness to spend.

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How and why, we use the model?

- To shape our new audience strategy.
- To provide a unified framework for discussing our diverse audiences.
- To facilitate a deeper, nuanced understanding of our visitors.
- To enhance our ability to curate programmes and offerings that appeal to a broad range of audiences.
- To better understand audience motivations and demographics.
- To effectively target and support individuals from diverse backgrounds.

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- The segmentation model played a **pivotal role in shaping a new audience strategy** at the Gallery.

- It was implemented across departments**, providing a unified framework for discussing our diverse audiences**.

- Utilized in various surveys, including our ongoing rolling research survey, the model **facilitated a deeper, nuanced understanding of our visitors**.

- By leveraging the model, we **enhance our ability to curate programmes and offerings** that appeal to a broad range of audiences.

- Moreover, the model enables us to **better understand audience motivations and demographics**, empowering us to effectively target and support individuals from diverse backgrounds.

- We aim to attract new, more diverse audiences, specifically individuals who may not have traditional access to art. However, we also have commercial objectives that need to be met simultaneously. So, it is about

balancing these two very different priorities.

Navigating Challenges: Implementing the Segmentation Model

- Some partners do not want to integrate the segmentation questions into surveys at their sites.

- Some internal stakeholders lack a comprehensive understanding of the data, leading to generalized statements about the segments.

- Adding 10 more questions to our surveys can significantly lengthen what was designed to be a concise survey.

- There are complexities associated with interpreting patterns in the data and transforming them into actionable insights.

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- Challenges have emerged when requesting our partners to integrate the segmentation questions into surveys at their sites.

- Internal stakeholders may lack a comprehensive understanding of the data, potentially leading to generalized statements about the segments, particularly in relation to demographics.

- From a logistical standpoint, the addition of 10 more questions to our surveys can significantly lengthen what was initially designed to be a concise survey.

- Given that our segmentation focuses on behaviours and psychographics, one area we're actively exploring is how the current socio-political climate influences the segmentation of individuals.

- Furthermore, there are complexities associated with interpreting the data and transforming them into actionable insights.

Measuring Socioeconomic Status

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- We have considered a range of ways to measure the socioeconomic status of our audience across NG200, which we will now talk you through.

- We found that it was tricky to find a solution that worked for all our projects, with most of the measures we considered having both arguments for and against using them.

Socioeconomic profile: Household income

Pros	Cons
• Concrete measure – you can observe a tangible numerical value linked to socioeconomic status.	• Perceived as intrusive, resulting in a decreased response rate.
• A simpler choice for individuals to engage with in surveys.	• Variability across the country in defining a "good income" which may stem from differences in the cost of living.
• Data previously collected for our Pay What You Wish scheme, Annual Membership research, and Summer on the Square 2023, thus providing baseline data.	• Commonly, nationwide data tends to emphasize "disposable income," post direct taxes, whereas our data collection method involves gathering pre-tax information.
• Household income may correlate with consumer behaviour, such as spending patterns, purchasing decisions, and lifestyle choices.	• The measure fails to convey the inclination or capacity to invest in art.
	• Household income alone may not provide a comprehensive understanding of respondents' financial situations

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- The first thing we considered was household income. This has been used before at the National Gallery to measure socioeconomic status and provides a very concrete measure.

- However, we've found that visitors are often unwilling to provide us with this information. When we asked it recently as part out of Membership survey, 33% of members on chose prefer not to say and in August last year, when asked at our family festival Summer on the Square, 37% of attendees chose prefer not to say. In contrast, only 13% chose prefer not to say for ethnicity.

- Household income also does not really give a sense of disposable income. NG200 projects span the whole country and we know that what is seen as a 'good' income in one place, doesn't correlate to a comfortable income everywhere. It doesn't take into account housing, transport, food or childcare costs.

Socioeconomic profile: NS-SEC

Pros	Cons
• The NS-SEC measure is utilized in our rolling research exit survey, ensuring the production of comparable data.	• The survey question is lengthy.
• The official socioeconomic classification for the UK, it can be compared to census data.	• The job titles often require individuals to select the "best fit" answer.
• It offers a more detailed and nuanced understanding of socio-economic status compared to simpler measures like occupation or income alone.	• The complexity of the measure necessitates a slightly more intricate analysis.
	• Job role may not necessarily correlate with disposable income.

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• Next we considered using NS-SEC. Again, this is a measure we already use at the National Gallery, so it would produce data we can benchmark against both for our own audience and using the census data.

• But it's a lengthy series of questions, adding three questions to what in some cases are already quite long surveys. It also takes more effort than other measures to analyse.

• Socio-economic classification in this way also does not necessarily reflect disposable income, as jobs can be paid very different amounts in different sectors and locations. It also does not reflect the other costs people have which impact on disposable income.

Socioeconomic profile: Occupation

Pros	Cons
ACE measure, facilitating comparison with other nationally collected data.	It can be challenging to determine which job category best fits oneself, often requiring individuals to choose the "best fit" answer.
Data required for some of our partners who receive ACE funding.	Job roles may not necessarily correlate with disposable income.
Easier to analyse than NS-SEC.	The data may not be directly comparable to our rolling research.

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- Several of our partner organisations are Arts Council England funded. We looked at how ACE asks about socioeconomic status within Illuminate.

- This question, an adapted and self-coded form of NS-SEC is slightly easier to analyse.

- But it can be hard for people to know how to categorise themselves.

- As with NS-SEC, ACE's question does not necessarily tell us anything about disposable income to spend on arts and culture.

Socioeconomic profile: Indices of Deprivation

Pros	Cons
• Generating deciles is straightforward.	• Requires the collection of full postcodes, which may be perceived as intrusive and raise data protection concerns.
• Mapping the data allows us to create a visual output, which can be more reader friendly.	• We need to determine which individual domains are the most relevant to report on.
• It's easier to overlay additional data onto it since it's government data.	• Each nation has a separate Indices of Deprivation data set.
• We can overlay our segmentation profile map onto a map showing indices of deprivation.	• Based on 2019 data, with updates scheduled between 2022 and 2025, which have not yet been implemented.
• Valuable for comprehending and pinpointing regions or partners for national initiatives.	

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- The final measure we considered was indices of deprivation. This measure was used as part of the project planning for some of our nationwide projects.

- The mapping functionality with the Indices of Deprivation allows us to analyse socioeconomic data in an interesting way, showing geographic reach of the projects and allowing us to compare the data with the mapping done as part of our segmentation model research.

- However, people may not want to tell us their postcodes and, when combined with other demographic information, and it makes individuals potentially identifiable.

- We also face a challenge due to devolution – each nation has separate Indices of Deprivation – so we would need to combine these four sets of information to generate results that speak to everything NG200 is doing.

So, what are we measuring for NG200?

Within our overarching evaluation framework, our research across all projects and programmes will track metrics including:

1. **Audience Segments:** Applied universally across all programs, and where feasible through partnerships.
2. **Occupation:** Tailored specifically for public programmes to capture participant demographics.
3. **Indices of Deprivation:** Employed for events and bespoke surveys to assess attendee backgrounds and access.
4. **NS-SEC:** Integrated into our rolling research survey, with a focused examination during the NG200 period.

It's important to recognize the iterative nature of our research. Our segmentation model and socioeconomic measures not only bolster our overarching measures of success for NG200 but also enhance our comprehension of segmentation and socioeconomic data.

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- We decided to use four of the measures we considered – segmentation, ACE's occupation question, the indices of deprivation and NS-SEC.

- Why the difference? Well, we had to account for the preferences of our partners and consider what baseline data we have. For our general admission visitors we want to benchmark back to previous years to see how NG200 has changed things, something that we can't do for our projects outside of the National Gallery or for our events and exhibitions, where we don't usually collect socioeconomic status data.

- Tracking the four measures will also allow us to combine what we find out and better understand the audience, rather than generalise. We should have a much better understanding of what each indicator tells us when we cross-reference the other forms of data.

Why this Matters?

Today's presentation delved into the array of measures we employ to comprehend our audiences during the NG200 period. **But why is any of this significant?**

- We're leveraging NG200 as a pivotal juncture to pause, reflect, and refine our research methodologies.
- The specific measures we discussed are instrumental in enriching our understanding of all our data, including our overarching NG200 objectives, segmentation model, and insights gleaned from various surveys.
- This underscores the importance of developing a cohesive framework and aligning institutional strategies with audience research initiatives.
- As we celebrate reaching the milestone of 200 years, it prompts us to contemplate: What will the next 200 years entail? This question serves as a catalyst for continuous improvement and innovation.

The National Gallery

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