

Arizona Tourism
University

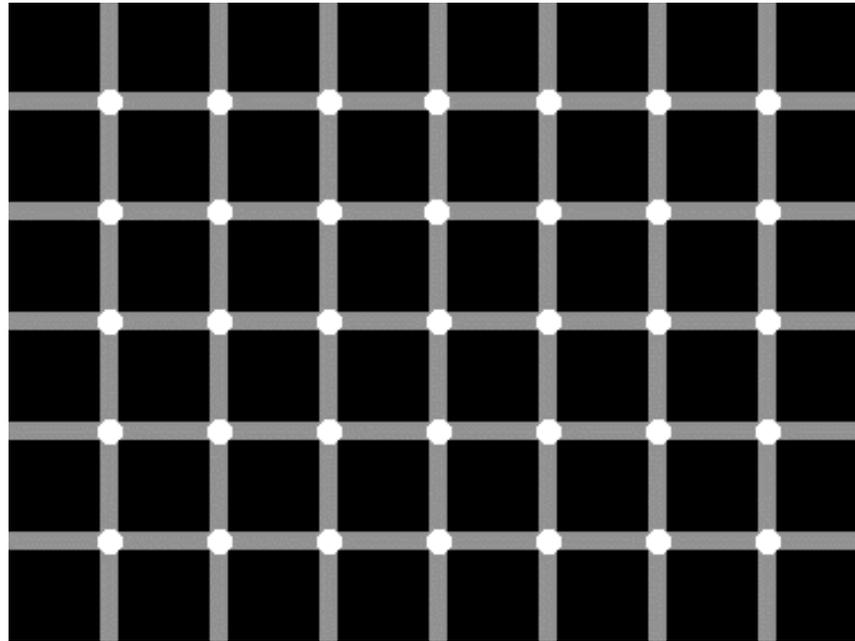
How to Conduct a
Visitor Survey



Don't Rely on Your Assumptions

Don't Rely on Your Assumptions

Are your eyes deceiving you?



There are only white circles
at the intersections

Don't Rely on Your Assumptions

Look at this image:



Now look at this image upside down:



Don't Rely on Your Assumptions

How many F's do you see in the following sentence?

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

Don't Rely on Your Assumptions

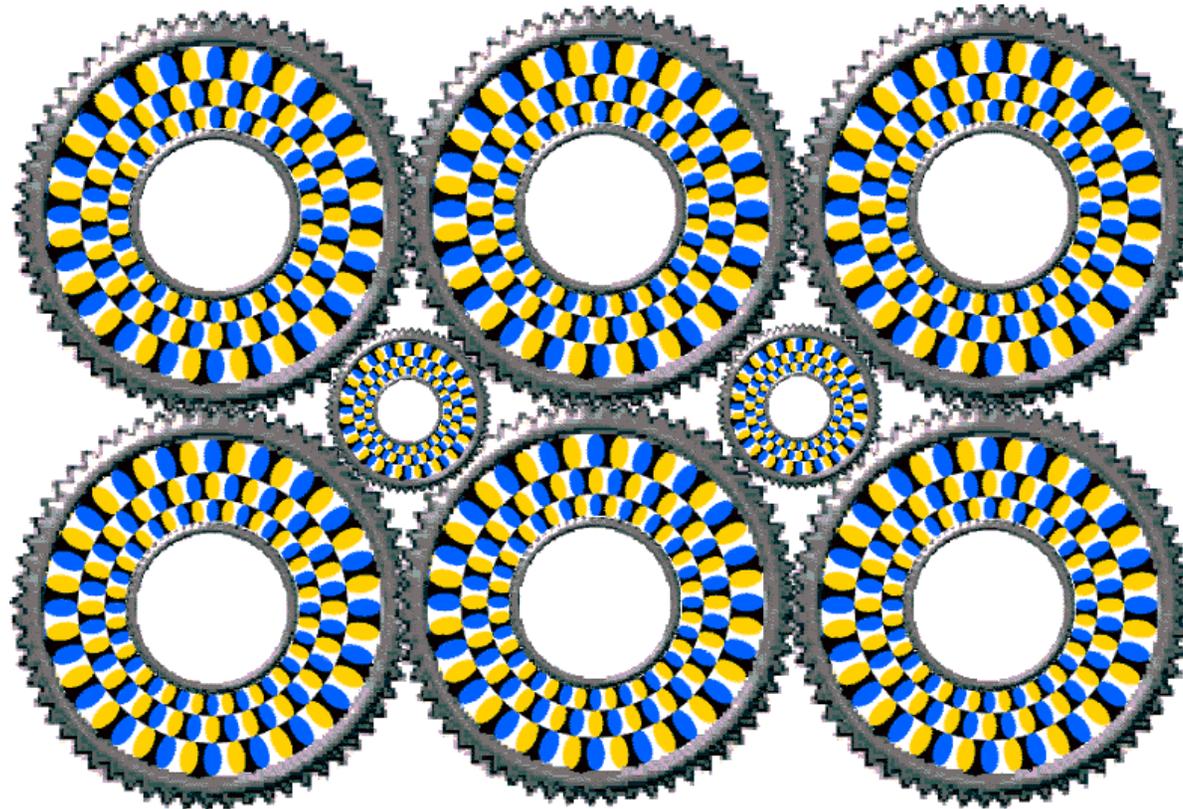
How many F's do you see in the following sentence?

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RE-
SULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIF-
IC STUDY COMBINED WITH
THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

The answer is 6.

Observations are not always as
accurate as you think.

Don't Rely on Your Assumptions



The axels are not actually moving.

Don't Rely on Your Assumptions

Before making decisions based on your assumptions alone, take the initiative to measure the results of your tourism functions through research.

Why Invest in Tourism Research?

Why Invest in Tourism Research?



Why Invest in Tourism Research?

Conducting viable research can help you target your customers more effectively, which can increase the number of visitors you draw and can bring new money into your community.

- The focus of this workshop is “How to conduct a visitor survey” because that is a good step to take at a local level to generate needed information.
- This type of research may not always meet your needs but the steps in this process tend to be similar with many types of tourism research.

How do I Begin?

How do I Begin?

Starting out can seem mind boggling.....

What do you want to know?

Qualitative or Quantitative?

What is your key objective?

Do you have employees that can do this type of research?

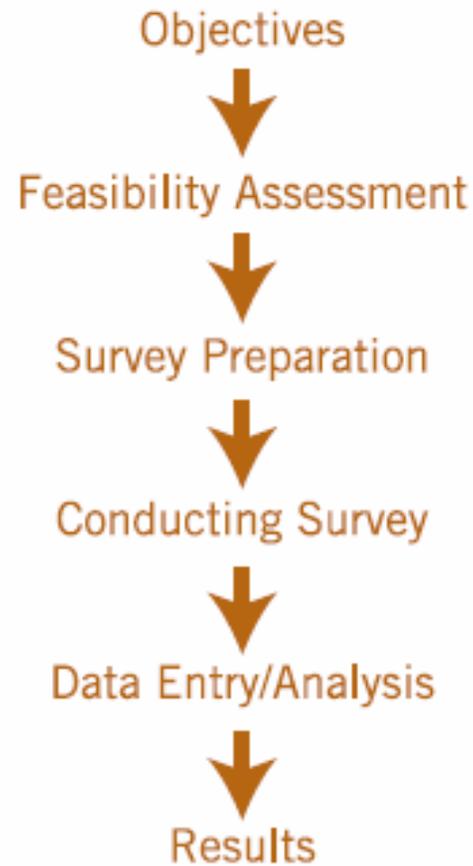
Existing sources of information?

How do I Begin?

...But it doesn't have to be if you properly assess the feasibility of the project through determining your research needs.

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey



Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 1: Determining the Objectives of your Survey

Possible Visitor Survey Objectives

- Visitor Economic Impact – measuring the visitor spending generated by an event or specific geographic location.
~ for more information on doing an Economic Impact Study, refer to *Appendix B (p. 14)*.
- Visitor Profile – a description of demographic and behavioral characteristics, such as age, income, accommodations preferences travel party size of visitors.
- Visitor Perceptions – understanding the perception of visitors and potential visitors have of your community and competing destinations.

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Visitor Perception Evaluation

- Located in *Appendix I* (p. 20) of toolkit
- Useful way to evaluate the needs of your local community

Community:
How can the community improve its appearance or become more attractive to visitors?
What do visitors see as they enter town?
Are directional signs to attractions available and easy to follow?
Are signs in town attractive? Are they regulated in terms of size, materials, placement, etc.?
How is the area landscaped?
Are maps available to help visitors find their way around the area?
What do you find most appealing about the community as a visitor?
Are local residents friendly towards visitors?
Are historic structures renovated and put to new uses?
Are there attractive parks available or other public areas?
Are adequate public rest rooms available?
Are adequate trash receptacles available?
Is parking adequate, especially in the downtown area and near attractions?
Is there a visitor center or other place to get information about the community? Is it easy to find?
Are ATM machines readily accessible?
If a lot of foreign visitors come to the community, are there places that they can exchange foreign currency for U.S. dollars?

Lodging Places:
Are hotels and lodging places attractive to the visitor or do they look run down?
Are there inns and bed and breakfast establishments available? Are they attractive?
Are the hotel staff friendly and attentive?
Are the hotel staff able to provide information about local attractions and things to do?
Are the prices for lodging fair for the quality of lodging offered?
Are the rooms clean and neat?
Is the room decor attractive?
Are there special services or products that the lodging places supply to guests?

Restaurants:
Is there a selection of places where visitors can eat?
Are there a variety of menus and prices at these restaurants?
Are the restaurants attractive to the visitor?
Do the restaurant staff provide good quality service during the meal?
Is the quality of the food good?
Are the prices fair for the type of food served?
Are local food specialties served?
Do the restaurants do anything extra special for diners?

Retail Shops:
Are there a variety of shops offering attractive products to visitors?
Are the prices fair for the quality of products offered?
Do shops offer unique visitor-oriented products?
Can visitors buy locally made products?
Are the shop staff friendly and helpful?
Are the displays appealing to the visitor?
Do the shops seem clean and uncluttered?
Are the shop fronts and street front areas attractive and inviting?
Are the operating hours convenient for visitors?
Do shops take credit cards and checks?

Source: Leones, Julie. *Strategies for Monitoring Tourism in Your Community's Economy*. 1999

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 2: Feasibility Assessment

Research Inventory Assessment

Make sure to check all available resources before investing in a research project.

Data may be available through the following sources:

- Newspaper articles, trade magazines, internet resources
- Information on nearby communities or at county level
- Arizona Tourism University 2007 Reference Guide
- Additional resources are located in *Appendix B (p. 14)*

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 2: Feasibility Assessment (Cont)

Project Management

Deciding whether or not to conduct the research yourself or pay someone else to do it.

When making this decision make sure to consider the following:

- Personnel
- Software
- Cost
 - ~ University vs. Private Vendor
 - ~ Use other people's money – may be able to participate in regional study or look for grants that are available (AOT's TEAM grant)

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 3: Survey Preparation

Determining Survey Approach

- Quantitative – Most common approach taken. This method allows you to put numbers to results.
- Qualitative – This method allows you to explore issues and to understand the “whys” of attitudes or opinions.

Refer to Appendix A (p. 13) for a more in-depth explanation on the above research methods

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Mock Focus Group

GOT SOAP?



The shower is not the only place to be thinking of good hygiene.

a message brought to you by W.A.S.H

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 3: Survey Preparation (Cont)

Designing a Questionnaire

- Questionnaire design matrix

Figure B (p. 5)

SAMPLE OF MATRIX:

Question	Economic Impact	Visitor Profile	Visitor Perception of your area
# in Travel Party (Adults/Kids)	X	X	
Total Spending	X	X	
Expenditures by Category	X	X	
Accommodation Satisfaction			X

- Tips on writing and formatting a questionnaire

Figure C (p. 6)

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Sample Visitor Survey

- Located in *Appendix E* (p. 16) of toolkit
- A great reference to use when creating a visitor survey for your local community

Sample Visitor Survey Questionnaire:
Hello! Thank you for visiting our town. Please take the time to tell us how your stay was.

City _____ State/Province _____ Country _____

1. Where do you live? _____ Yes _____ No

2. Was this the first time you visited Western Town? _____

3. What is the primary purpose of your visit?
_____ vacation/recreation _____ visit friends and family
_____ business _____ shopping
_____ special event (please tell us which one) _____
_____ just passing through (please list your destination): _____
_____ other purpose: (please explain) _____

4. How long are you staying in Western Town? _____ Hours _____ Days

5. How many people are in your group? _____ persons

6. If staying overnight in Western Town, enter the number of nights you are spending in each of the following:
Hotel _____ Bed & Breakfast _____
Motel _____ Private Campground _____
Private Home _____ Public Campground _____
Other (please specify): _____

7. What activities will you participate in? (List all activities that apply)
_____ Shopping _____ Golfing
_____ Visit museums _____ Skiing
_____ Hiking _____ Biking

8. Please indicate the breakdown of your total spending while in Western Town:
Lodging approx. \$ _____ Gas and auto services approx. \$ _____
Restaurants/meals approx. \$ _____ Local transportation/taxis approx. \$ _____
Retail stores approx. \$ _____ Other (please specify) approx. \$ _____

9. What three things did you LIKE about visiting here?

10. What three things did you NOT like about visiting here?

Thank you for your help! By filling out your name and address on the backside, you will qualify to enter a drawing to win a weekend trip to the Western Town Ranch Inn.

Research Nuts & Bolts
Utah Tourism Economic Development Conference

May 1998

ARIZONA
OFFICE OF TOURISM

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 3: Survey Preparation (Cont)

- Do you have an adequate sample size?

~A link to a sample size calculator can be found in *Appendix B (p. 14)*

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 3: Survey Preparation (Cont)

- Did you prepare instructions for the interviewer to refer to during the survey administration?

Example:

How many nights did you spend in Arizona?

 day(s) *night(s)*

Interviewer 1:

 3 *day(s)* 2 *night(s)*

Interviewer 2:

 2 *day(s)* 2 *night(s)*

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 3: Survey Preparation (Cont)

- Here's a better way to write this question:

*How many nights did you spend in Arizona?
____night(s) (if a day trip, enter"0")*

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 3: Survey Preparation (Cont)

- Did you pre-test the questionnaire with volunteers and a the survey site to determine any potential problems with the questions?

Example:

What business brings you to Arizona?

A better way to ask this question:

What type of business brings you to Arizona?

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 4: Conducting the Survey

Tips to get the best results when conducting the survey

- If this is based on visitation to a destination, it is best to survey through the course of a full year in order to account for any seasonal variations.
- Survey at sites with high traffic volume.
- In order to avoid interviewer fatigue, make sure to schedule enough properly trained interviewers.

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 5: Data Entry and Analysis

Data Entry

- Data entry should begin as soon as data starts coming in from the field.
- Organization will allow you to detect problems early in the process and correct them.
- Once you have all the data, edit the data to ensure it is properly coded and data makes sense.

Analysis

- The software package chosen for data entry will determine what kind of analysis you can complete.

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 5: Data Entry and Analysis (Cont)

Example:

How many nights did you spend in Arizona?

___day(s) ___night(s)

Interviewer 1:

3 day(s) 2 night(s)

Interviewer 2:

2 day(s) 2 night(s)

It becomes the responsibility of the person entering data to determine how to handle ambiguous responses due to ambiguous questions.

Steps to Completing a Visitor Survey

Step 6: Results

Keep the key objective that you have determined early on in mind as you formulate the results of your survey

Tips in formatting report

- Choose method(s) to report results based on needs and audience
- The report structure should be properly organized
- Graphics should be displayed in a way that makes it easy to interpret
- Make recommendations based on findings

For additional tips on report formatting , refer to p. 9

Other Ways to Measure Visitation

Other Ways to Measure Visitation

Common Methods Used to Gather Visitor Information

- Zip Code Surveys
- License Plate Surveys
- Web site Surveys
- On-line Surveys
- Attraction/Event Visitor Counts
- Visitor Information Center Log

Other Ways to Measure Visitation

Visitor Information Center Log

Location: _____

Date: _____

Local/ Visitor	Name	State	Zip	Country	Purpose of Visit (√ all that apply)	Total # in Travel Party	Total # of Adults	Total # of Children under 18	# of Nights in this community	# Nights in AZ
<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor					<input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting Family/Friends					
<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor					<input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting Family/Friends					
<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor					<input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting Family/Friends					

Located in *Appendix F* (p. 17) of toolkit

Other Types of Tourism Research

Other Types of Tourism Research

Database Management

A database built and maintained by your organization that will allow you to access information on those that either inquire or visit your community.

This data can be used to:

- Distribute newsletters, brochures and other media
- Send information to individuals based on date they intend to visit or based on their vacation interests and preferences
- Conduct a profile analysis on the database
- Conduct a conversion study on inquirers from a specific timeframe

Other Types of Tourism Research

Sample Conversion Survey

- Located in *Appendix H* (p. 19) of toolkit
- Will determine if consumers in your existing database have converted to visitors as a result of a direct-response campaign

1. Did you visit Western Town as part of your summer vacation?
 YES NO We did not take a summer vacation this year

IF YES, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 3

2a. IF you did not visit Western Town, where did you go for your vacation? _____

2b. What was the main reason for NOT visiting Western Town? _____

3. Where did you hear about Western Town?
 magazine ads newspaper/magazine story
 friends & family special event advertisement
 previous visit
 brochure, (please specify where you got our brochure): _____

4. Where did you see our toll free number 1-800-Wes-tern?
 magazine ad phone book
 AAA guide other, please specify: _____

5. Prior to requesting information about Western Town:
 Had you definitely decided to visit?
 Were you just thinking about visiting?

6. Which other destinations were you considering? _____

7. To what extent did the information you received influence your decision to visit Western Town?
 to a great extent to a slight extent
 to a moderate extent not at all
 doesn't apply

8. Please indicate how useful each information source was in planning your trip by if you used, please circle 5 = "most useful", 1 = "least useful", or check "Didn't use".

	Most useful		Least useful	Didn't use		
A. Western Town Travel Brochure	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Western Town Website	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Western Town Welcome Center	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Our toll-free number	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Other, please specify: _____						

Thank you for your help! By filling out your name and address on the backside, you will qualify to enter a drawing to win a weekend trip to the Western Town Ranch Inn.

Research Nuts & Bolts
 Utah Tourism Economic Development Conference

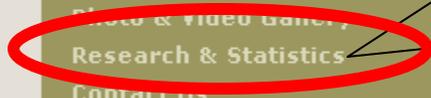
May 1998

Interactive Exercise

Research Assessment Worksheet



- AOT in Action
- Crossroads
- Administration
- Plans, Reports, Calendars
- Programs
- Grants
- Photo & Video Gallery
- Research & Statistics**
- Contact Us



- AOT in Action
- Crossroads
- Administration
- Plans, Reports, Calendars
- Programs
- Grants
- Photo & Video Gallery
- Research & Statistics**
- Annual Industry Reports
- AOT Quarterly Newsletter
- AZ Airport Passenger Volume
- AZ Domestic Visitor Profiles
- AZ International Visitation
- AZ Local Visitor Information Centers
- AZ Lodging Indicators
- AZ National Park Visitation
- AZ Regional Profiles
- AZ State Park Visitation
- Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona

Research & Statistics

- Annual Industry Reports
- AOT Quarterly Newsletter
- AZ Airport Passenger Volume
- AZ Domestic Visitor Profiles
- AZ International Visitation
- AZ Local Visitor Information Centers
- AZ Lodging Indicators
- AZ National Park Visitation
- AZ Regional Profiles
- AZ State Park Visitation
- Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona
- Gross Sales & Tourism Taxes
- Painted Cliffs Welcome Center Visitation
- Selected Research Reports
- Tourism Workforce Development



Governmental promotion
Governor's Arizona Treasures tour, visit www.ArizonaTreasures.gov.

Visitor and travel information is available at ArizonaGuide.com

AOT in Action

AOT in Action is a weekly e-newsletter distributed to more than 2,000 industry contacts, featuring the latest news, reports, statistical information and current events at the Arizona Office of Tourism and around the state, as well as industry news from throughout the tourism industry.

- **Marketing Plan & Programs Guide**
[More Info >>](#)
- **Regional Marketing Program**
[More Info >>](#)
- **Governor's Tourism Awards**
[More Info >>](#)

References

- Costa, Janeen Dr. Research Nuts and Bolts, Utah Tourism Economic Development. 1998.
- Leones, Julie. A Guide to Designing and Conducting Visitor Surveys.
- Leones, Julie. Strategies for Monitoring Tourism in Your Community's Economy (Appendix H). 1999.
- Miller, Denise. Tourism Research 101, TTRA CenStates Chapter.
- Stynes, Dan. Exploring the Economic Impacts of Tourism. TTRA CenStates Chapter.

References

Travel Research Certificate Program

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Contact information is also located in Appendix B (p. 14) of toolkit

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

Things to remember:

- Don't rely on your assumptions – do research!
- Research doesn't have to be complicated.
- There are many available resources to assist you.

And most important.....

Key Takeaways

Conducting viable research can help you target your customers more effectively, which can increase the number of visitors you draw and can bring new money into your community.

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To learn more about AOT, go to www.azot.gov