



*THREE STUDIES AT THE  
NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM:  
SUMMER VISITORS  
POSTAL INSPECTORS: THE SILENT SERVICE  
TRAILBLAZERS AND TRENDSETTERS: THE  
ART OF THE STAMP*



*Office of Policy and Analysis  
March 2008*



## DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

The Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) was pleased to undertake three studies at the National Postal Museum (NPM). The goal of the first of these studies was to understand the characteristics and experiences of summer visitors as they exited the Museum. The other two studies were evaluations of two NPM exhibitions, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp* and *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*.

The data for the studies came from interviews with visitors. We appreciate visitors' willing participation in these studies. The time they provided, in the midst of a summer visit, is evidence of their affection for the Smithsonian and interest in improving the visitor experience.

I would like to thank National Postal Museum staff for their assistance and guidance in the course of the studies. K. Allison Wickens, Director of Education, initiated the studies and coordinated staff input. Nancy Pope, Curator, and Pat Burke, Exhibition Manager, represented the *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service* and *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*, respectively. It was a pleasure to work with them.

Within OP&A, Zahava D. Doering, Andrew Pekarik and David Karns were responsible for the survey design, data collection, analysis, and report preparation. These studies would not have been possible without our dedicated interns – especially Erin Hoppe and Jennifer Chen, who helped with questionnaire design, interviewing and data processing. In addition, because of the magnitude of the data collection, other staff members – Kathy Ernst, Ioana Munteanu, James Smith, and Whitney Watriss – as well as other interns – Bianca Yip and Gretchen Trygstad – assisted with interviewing. Lance Costello was responsible for questionnaire and report production. I thank all of them for their hard work.

Carole M. P. Neves

Director, Office of Policy and Analysis

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# OVERVIEW

In 1990, the new National Postal Museum (NPM) took over the National Philatelic Collection that was formerly part of the National Museum of American History. Several years later, NPM moved into the lower level of the newly renovated Washington City Post Office across the street from Union Station, and opened to the public in 1993. NPM's collections of over six million objects consists primarily of stamps, but also includes objects related to postal history, stamp production, and mail delivery, such as postal stationery that predate stamps, vehicles used to transport the mail, mailboxes, meters, covers, greeting cards, and letters.

The Museum occupies about 75,000 square feet of the building, with about one-third devoted to exhibition space. It also includes a 6,000-square-foot research library, a stamp store and a museum shop.

Visitors enter the Museum through the lobby of the Post Office building and proceed to escalators or elevators that take them down to the floor level of the Museum's 90-foot-high atrium. The atrium, with three suspended airmail planes on loan from the National Air and Space Museum, is one of five main exhibition galleries. The five permanent exhibitions are augmented by temporary exhibitions on view for approximately a year.

As part of its effort to improve the experience of visitors and to enhance exhibition planning, the National Postal Museum asked the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) to undertake three distinct visitor studies. The goal of the first of these studies was to understand the characteristics and experiences of summer visitors as they exited the Museum. The other two studies were evaluations of two NPM temporary exhibitions, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp* and *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*.

This report contains the results of all three studies. Each of the three reports was written as an independent document. Below are some observations that arise when all three studies are considered together.

**Rating.** Because these studies included a sample of entering visitors and a sample of exiting visitors who were asked many of the same questions, it is worthwhile comparing their answers. In particular, the difference between prospective and actual ratings is revealing. In specific, entering visitors were asked how they thought they would rate their experiences in the museum when they left. Exiting visitors were asked how they rated their actual experience. The scale for the rating was: Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent, Superior. Upon exiting NPM, three-quarters of NPM visitors rated their experience in the museum as Superior (15%) or Excellent (60%). This was substantially better than the expected ratings reported by entering visitors (7% Superior and 42% Excellent). The exit rating is somewhat higher than the Smithsonian average (21% Superior, 48% Excellent). The NPM exit rating is slightly higher than that given either *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp* (17% Superior, 53% Excellent) or *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service* (12% Superior, 63% Excellent). These ratings, combined with the strongly positive difference between museum entrance and exit, suggest that these studies did not capture the major elements of the visit that contribute to the positive experience. A more holistic study of NPM might significantly add to our understanding of this museum.

**Experiences.** Visitors entering NPM were invited to choose from a set of seven experiences the ones that they were especially looking forward to during their visit. Three experiences were particularly important for visitors entering the museum: “Gaining information” (53%), “Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things” (48%), and “Enriching my understanding” (44%). Visitors exiting NPM were asked to choose the experiences that they found especially satisfying during their visit. Questions about satisfying experiences were also included in the studies of *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp* and *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*. In general, visitors found the experiences they sought. However, “Reflecting on the meaning of what I’m looking at” and “Imagining other times/places” among visitors exiting the museum showed substantial increases over the expectations of visitors entering the museum, while “Gaining information,” “Enriching my understanding” and “Recalling memories” also were higher on exit. The results suggest that one strategy NPM could use to improve overall

satisfaction is to emphasize the experiences that visitors value. An alternate strategy is to strengthen experiences visitors value, but have not found.

***Demographic characteristics.*** In profiling the demographic characteristics of visitors to NPM, we found that the percentage of local visitors was lower than that at other Smithsonian museums (7% at NPM compared 15%, on average, at other SI museums). The summer 2007 audience consisted of a larger percentage of first-time visitors than most Smithsonian museums that have been open for several years (93% compared to an average of about 66%).

These studies were not designed to explore possible reasons, e.g., location, visibility, etc. for these results. As the museum plans both outreach efforts and exhibitions, a deeper understanding of visit decisions might be useful.



*SUMMER VISITORS  
TO THE  
NATIONAL POSTAL  
MUSEUM*





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The survey:** A sample of visitors exiting the National Postal Museum was surveyed. The response rate was 83 percent.

**Visitors:** A large majority of NPM visitors were making their first visit to the Museum (93%). Relatively few visitors lived in the metropolitan Washington, DC, region. Only eight percent of the visitors lived within 40 miles of the National Mall. The average age was 41.

**Rating:** The rating that exiting visitors gave the museum (0% Poor, 4% Fair, 22% Good, 60% Excellent, and 15% Superior) was somewhat higher than the Smithsonian average. This was substantially better than the expected ratings reported by entering visitors (42% Excellent and 7% Superior).

**Returning:** Two out of five visitors marked that they would “definitely” return for another visit if they were in Washington next year (40%), while more than half indicated that they might visit again (51%).

**Discussion:** Overall, visitors were satisfied with the visit, and on the whole found more satisfying experiences than they had anticipated. Most find the experiences that they are seeking (gaining information and enriching understanding), but they also emerge from the museum with more experiences imagining other times, reflecting on what they saw, or recalling memories. Consistent with seeking a knowledge based experience, NPM visitors are interested in being able to get more information, especially from staff in the galleries who can answer questions or electronic devices like iPods, cell phones, or other hand-held devices.

## INTRODUCTION

The Office of Policy and Analysis is conducting a series of studies of the demographic characteristics and experiences of visitors to the National Postal Museum (NPM). During July and August, 2007, three studies were conducted. The goal of the first of these studies was to understand the characteristics and experiences of summer visitors as they exited the Museum. The other two studies were evaluations of two NPM exhibitions, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp (Trailblazers)* and *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service (Postal Inspectors)*.

## THE SURVEY

Data for the exit study were collected with a sample survey. This survey was administered at the same time as data were collected for the studies of *Trailblazers* and *Postal Inspectors*. Those studies involved intercepts of visitors before and after their visits to the respective exhibitions. The “before visit” sample for *Postal Inspectors* was intercepted at the Museum entrance. In this report, the “before visit” data collected at the entrance will be compared with the data collected at exit. The characteristics of the exit sample are presented in Appendix M-A, along with comparable characteristics of the entrance sample. The questionnaires are presented in Appendices M-B and M-C.

Two-hundred eighty-two exiting visitors were intercepted during eight 90-minute sessions and asked to complete a one-page, self-administered questionnaire about their NPM visit. Two-hundred thirty-three completed the questionnaire for a cooperation rate of 83 percent.

### *The NPM Audience Overall*

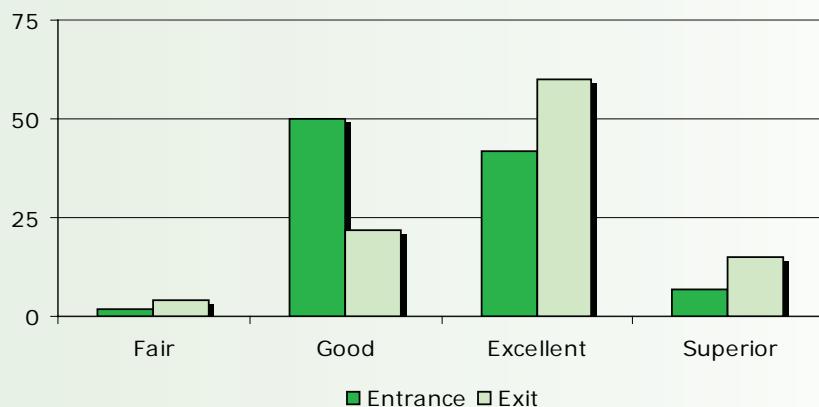
A large majority of NPM visitors were making their first visit to the Museum (93%).

- Slightly more than half of the exiting visitors were male (54%).
- The NPM audience was highly educated. Four out of five visitors over 25 years old had at least a Bachelor's degree (79%) with half (51%) reporting a graduate degree.
- Nearly one-quarter of exiting visitors living in the United States reported that they identified with one or more racial or ethnic minority community (23%). Nearly one in ten indicated that they considered themselves Latino or Hispanic (6%) while a similar percentage marked that they considered themselves Asian (6%). Fewer marked that they were Black (4%). More than eight out of ten (85%) marked White either by itself or in conjunction with another racial or ethnic description.
- The vast majority of NPM visitors (90%) live in the United States with ten percent being international visitors. Relatively few visitors lived in the metropolitan Washington, DC, region. Only eight percent of the visitors lived within 40 miles of the National Mall, while 80 percent lived more than 100 miles from the Mall.
- One in ten NPM visitors reported having used the Museum's website to plan their current visit, while nearly nine out of ten marked that they had never visited the website. Few reported having used it to learn about the history of stamps (3%) or for another reason (1%).
- Nearly all NPM visitors were accompanied by other persons on their visit (93%). About one-quarter were in an adults only group (26%), while two-thirds (66%) were in a group of adults with youth under 18.
- One-third of NPM visitors over 12 were between 42 and 52 years old (32% Trailing Edge Boomers), with about one-fourth each between 31 and 41 (23% Generation X) and under 30 (26%). The mean age was 40.7 while the median age was 42.

## *Satisfaction with NPM Visit*

- Three-quarters of NPM visitors rated their experiences visiting NPM as Superior (15%) or Excellent (60%) (Figure 1). This was substantially better than the expected ratings reported by entering visitors (7% Superior and 42% Excellent) (Figure 2). Visitors who rated the “Quality of exhibits” Superior were most likely to report a Superior overall experience (43%).

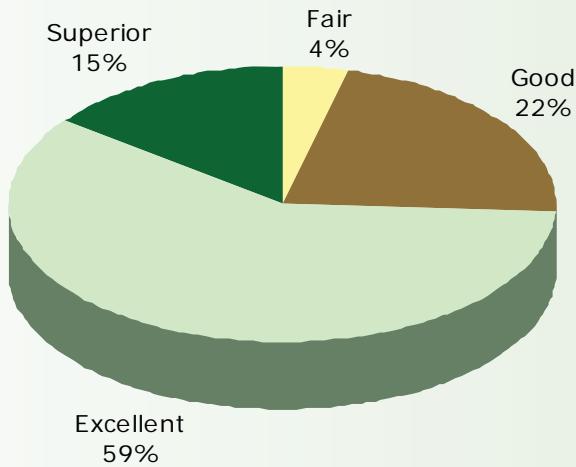
*Figure 1. Rating of Museum Experience  
(In percent, there were no Poor ratings)*



- Nearly two-thirds had a better experience than they had expected (63%).
- Combining the visit experience rating and whether the experience was better than expected produces a score of 12% for “Advocates”<sup>1</sup> Nearly two out of five visitors who rated the exhibits as Superior (38%) were Advocates. Similarly, about one-third of visitors who rated activities for children as Superior (31%) were Advocates. Ratings of NPM’s museum store merchandise selection and ratings of explanations and interpretative information were positively correlated with being an Advocate. Visitors who reported “being

<sup>1</sup> The combination of Superior and Better than Expected parallels a measure used by J. D. Power and Associates to rate services and consumer products.)

*Figure 2. Rating of Experience in Museum at Exit and Expected Rating at Entrance (In percent)*



moved by beauty" were nearly three times as likely to be an Advocate (32%) as other visitors.

■ Two out of five visitors marked that they would "definitely" return for another visit if they were in Washington next year (40%), while more than half indicated that they might visit again (51%). The quality of the visit experience was important to the intention to return. Eighty-three percent of the "Advocates" marked "definitely," nearly twice the response for the next category of "Supporters" (44%) who had a superior experience as they expected or an excellent experience that was better or as they expected.

### *Experiences During NPM Visit<sup>2</sup>*

■ Six out of ten NPM visitors marked "Gaining information" (60%) as an experience that they found especially satisfying during their visits, slightly more than marked the related "Enriching my

<sup>2</sup> Visitors who marked all seven experiences or left all seven unmarked were considered "response sets" and assigned as missing values (3% of all respondents).

understanding” (56%). Only one out of five visitors (21%) failed to mark one of these two experiences. Three out of eight marked both (38%).

- Fewer marked “Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things” (47%) or “Imagining other times/places” (44%). Fewer repeat visitors reported “Imagining” (12%) than first-time visitors (47%).
- Even fewer marked “Reflecting on the meaning of what I’m looking at” (22%), “Recalling memories” (22%), and “Being moved by beauty” (13%) with Advocates mentioning beauty much more frequently (37%).
- “Reflecting on the meaning of what I’m looking at” and “Imagining other times/places” showed substantial increases over the expectations of entering visitors, while “Gaining information,” “Enriching my understanding” and “Recalling memories” also were higher on exit.
- The average number of experiences was 2.65, substantially higher than 2.1 reported by entering visitors.

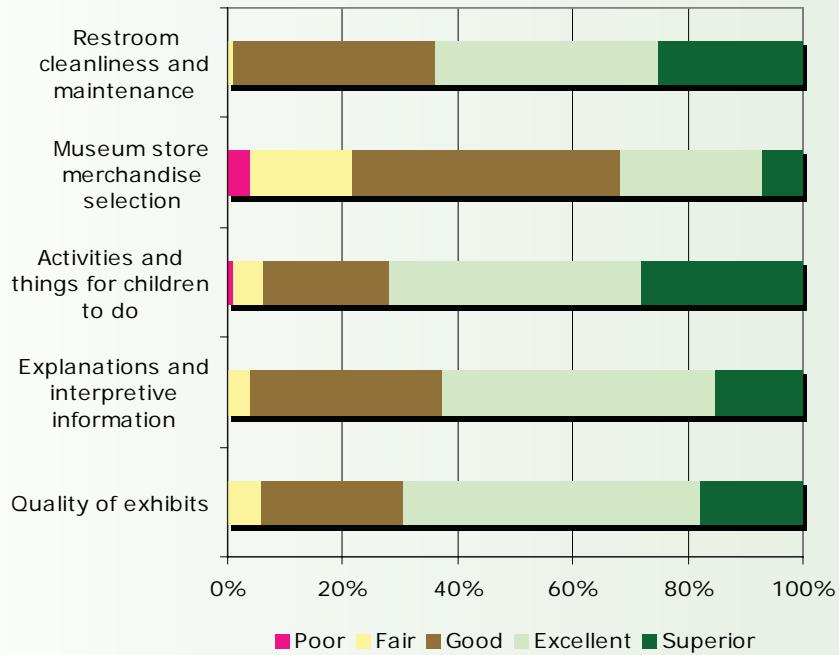
### *Ratings of NPM Facilities and Amenities<sup>3</sup>*

- The highest rated aspects of NPM facilities and amenities were “Activities for children” (28% Superior) and “Restroom cleanliness and maintenance” (25% Superior). Advocates rated “Activities and things for children to do” highly (67% Superior).
- The “Quality of exhibitions” (18% Superior) and “Explanations and interpretative information” (15% Superior) were rated less positively, although more Advocates rated the “Explanations and interpretative information” as Superior (46%). Ratings of “Quality of exhibits” were correlated with visitors’ ratings of “Explanations

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<sup>3</sup> Respondents who marked the same value for each of these five aspects were considered to have not differentiated in their evaluations and were treated as missing (15% of all visitors).

*Figure 3. Ratings of NPM Facilities and Amenities (In percent)*



and interpretative information” and “Activities and things for children to do”.

- The selection of merchandise in the museum store was rated least well at 7% Superior.

### *Ways to Improve NPM Visit Experiences<sup>4</sup>*

- Asked about ways to increase their enjoyment visiting NPM, nearly three out of five (58%) marked “More activities related to stamp collecting.” Visitors who reported being moved by beauty were more likely to want more activities related to stamp collecting (80%).

<sup>4</sup> Again, respondents who marked all or none of the options were treated as missing.

- Nearly as many visitors marked having Museum staff in the galleries to answer questions (50%) and being able to use hand-held electronic information devices (49%) with minority visitors expressing more interest in handheld devices (64%) than other visitors.
- Slightly fewer marked more activities related to letter writing (42%) or more written information in the exhibits (33%). Generation X visitors (62%) and Generation Y visitors (57%) were most likely to mark an interest in letter writing activities.
- Fewer than one in ten (9%) marked less written information in exhibits. The youngest visitors (12 to 18) were more likely to mark this item (47%) than older visitors. Visitors who had unsatisfying experiences were significantly more likely to want less information (29%) than other visitors.

## OBSERVATIONS

The audience at the National Postal Museum was mainly composed of visitors from outside the local area like the Big Three Smithsonian museums (National Museum of Natural History, National Air & Space Museum and National Museum of American History), but unlike the art museums. The summer 2007 audience consisted of a larger percentage of first-time visitors than most Smithsonian museums that have been open for several years. Like other Smithsonian museums, it attracts a highly educated audience, many of whom come seeking knowledge based experiences. Most find the experiences that they are seeking, but they also emerge from the museum with more experiences imagining other times, reflecting on what they saw, or recalling memories. In accordance with seeking a knowledge based experience, NPM visitors are interested in being able to get more information, especially from staff in the galleries who can answer questions or from electronic devices like iPods, cell phones, or other hand-held devices. They also would like more activities related to stamp collecting. It

is interesting that the summer visitors would like more activities related to stamp collecting, but they have not used NPM's website for research on stamps or postal history.

NPM should take pride in the fact that visitors gave quite high ratings to activities for children.

Overall, NPM's ratings by its visitors were somewhat high for Smithsonian museums. When NPM visitors both have a Superior experience and an experience that is better than expected, they are more likely to become Advocates being interested in returning for another visit. They may also generate "Word of mouth" promotion for NPM.

NPM has an opportunity to increase its local visitation, to increase repeat visitation, enhance the museum store merchandise, and link the virtual stamp information on its website with physical museum visits.

## APPENDIX M-A

National Postal Museum Summer 2007 Survey  
 Frequency Distributions (in percents)

		Exit Sample (%)	Entrance Sample (%)
<b>1. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?</b>			
	No	7	16
	Yes	93	84
	Total	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
<b>2. Are you visiting alone or with other people?</b>			
	I am alone	7	7
	I am with other people	93	93
	Total	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
<b>Description of visit group.</b>			
	Unaccompanied visitor	8	na
	Adult only group	26	na
	Adult & youth group	66	na
	Total	<u>100</u>	<u>na</u>
<b>4. Please rate your experience in this museum. (Exit)</b>			
<b>How do you think you will rate your experience in this museum when you leave (Entrance)</b>			
	Poor	0	0
	Fair	4	2
	Good	22	50
	Excellent	60	42
	Superior	15	7
	Total	<u>100</u>	<u>101*</u>

\* Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

\*\* Respondents could mark more than one.

	Exit Sample (%)	Entrance Sample (%)
<b>5. How did your experience in the museum compare to what you expected?</b>		
Not as good	5	na
About as expected	31	na
Better	63	na
Total	<u>99*</u>	<u>na</u>

**Combination of experience rating and expectations**

Advocate (Superior and Better than expected)	12	na
Supporter (Superior or excellent/as expected & Excellent/better)	62	na
Satisfied	22	na
Unsatisfied	5	na
Total	<u>101*</u>	<u>na</u>

**6. Which of these experiences did you find especially satisfying in this museum today? (Exit) (Mark one or more)\*\***

**Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today? (Entrance) (Mark one or more)\*\***

Being moved by beauty	13	20
Gaining information	60	54
Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things	47	47
Imagining other times/places	44	21
Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at	22	8
Recalling memories	22	15
Enriching my understanding	56	46

\* Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

\*\* Respondents could mark more than one.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Superior
<b>7. Please rate the following in this museum today:</b>					
Quality of exhibits	0	6	25	52	18
Explanations and interpretive information	0	4	33	47	15
Activities and things for children to do	1	5	22	43	28
Museum store merchandise selection	4	18	47	25	7
Restroom cleanliness and maintenance	0	1	35	39	25
					Exit Sample (%)      Entrance Sample (%)
<b>8. Would the following have increased your enjoyment?**</b>					
Staff in galleries to answer questions			50	na	
More written information in the exhibits			33	na	
Less written information in the exhibits			9	na	
More activities related to letter writing			42	na	
Handheld electronic information devices			49	na	
More activities related to stamp collecting			58	na	
<b>9. If you were in Washington in the next year, would you visit this museum again?</b>					
No, I would not			10	na	
I might			51	na	
Yes, I definitely would			40	na	
Total			<u>101*</u>	<u>na</u>	
<b>10. Do you live in the United States or another country?</b>					
United States			90	92	
Another country			10	8	
Total			<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	

\* Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

\*\* Respondents could mark more than one.

	Exit Sample (%)	Entrance Sample (%)
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**Distance between visitor's zip code and the National Mall**

5 mile radius	4	8
10 mile radius	2	4
20 mile radius	1	5
40 mile radius	1	2
100 mile radius	2	4
250 mile radius	9	13
Other U.S.	72	55
International	10	8
Total	<u>101*</u>	<u>99*</u>

**Visitor's residence based on AAM regions**

Metro Washington (DC, VA & MD suburbs)	7	15
South East	25	na
Mid Atlantic	11	na
Midwest	18	na
New England	5	na
Mountain Plains	10	na
West	11	na
Unspecified U.S.	3	77
Country other than U.S.	10	8
Total	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

**11. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?**

High school or less	3	na
1-2 years of college, no degree	8	na
Associates degree	10	na
Bachelors degree	28	na
Graduate/professional degree	51	na
Total	<u>100</u>	na

\* Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

\*\* Respondents could mark more than one.

	Exit Sample (%)	Entrance Sample (%)
<b>12. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?</b>		
No	91	na
Yes	9	na
Total	<u>100</u>	<u>na</u>
<b>13. What race do you consider yourself? (Mark one or more)**</b>		
African American/Black	4	na
American Indian/Native Alaska	0	na
Asian	6	na
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	na
White	85	na
<b>14. What is your age?</b>		
Millenials (12-18)	7	na
Generation Y (19-30)	19	na
Generation X (31-41)	23	na
Trailing Edge Boomers (42-52)	32	na
Leading Edge Boomers (53-61)	12	na
Postwar (62-79)	7	na
WWII (80-85)	1	na
Total	<u>101*</u>	na
<b>15. Are you male or female?</b>		
Male	54	50
Female	46	50
Total	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
<b>16. Have you ever used this museum's web-site?**</b>		
No	88	na
Yes, to plan this visit	9	na
Yes, to learn about stamps and/or postal history	3	na
Yes, another reason	1	na

\* Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

\*\* Respondents could mark more than one.

# APPENDIX M-B

## National Postal Museum, Summer 2007 Exit Survey Questionnaire

7027583473



National Postal Museum, Summer 2007

1. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?  No  Yes
2. Are you visiting alone or with other people?  I am alone  I am with other people
3. Other than yourself, how many people are with you?  
 # of adults (18 and over)  
 # of youth 12 to 17  
 # of youth under 12
4. Please rate your experience in this museum?
5. How did your experience in the museum compare to what you expected?  
 Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Superior  
 Not as good  About as expected  Better
6. Which of these experiences did you find especially satisfying in this museum today? (Mark one or more)
  - Being moved by beauty
  - Gaining information
  - Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things
  - Imagining other times/places
  - Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at
  - Recalling memories
  - Enriching my understanding
7. Please rate the following in this museum today:  

	Not Applicable	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Superior
Quality of exhibits	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Explanations and interpretive information	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Activities and things for children to do	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Museum store merchandise selection	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Restroom cleanliness and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>					
8. Would the following have increased your enjoyment?  
 Staff in galleries to answer questions  
  
 More written information in the exhibits  
  
 Less written information in the exhibits  
  
 More activities related to letter writing  
  
 Handheld electronic information devices  
  
 More activities related to stamp collecting
9. If you were in Washington in the next year, would you visit this museum again?  
 No, I would not  I might  Yes, I definitely would
10. Do you live in the United States or another country?  
 United States, specify zipcode:      
 Another country, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (Mark one)
  - High school or less
  - 1-2 years of college, no degree
  - Associates degree
  - Bachelors degree
  - Graduate/professional degree
12. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?  

13. What race do you consider yourself? (Mark one or more)
  - African American/ Black
  - American Indian/ Native Alaskan
  - Asian
  - Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
  - White
14. What is your age?
15. Are you male or female?  
 Male  Female
16. Have you ever used this museum's website? (Mark one or more)
  - No
  - Yes, to plan this visit
  - Yes, to learn about stamps and/or postal history
  - Yes, another reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your assistance

Session  Segment  1  2  3 Status  C  R  L  I Interviewer  ID

# APPENDIX M-C

## National Postal Museum, Summer 2007 Entrance Survey Questionnaire

5705468106

National Postal Museum, Summer 2007  
Entrance Survey


1. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?  No  Yes

2. What led you to visit this museum today?  
(Mark one or more)

Came for a general visit  
 Came to see *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*  
 Came to see *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*  
 Came for the Museum Store  
 Came for another reason  
What was it? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you think you will rate your experience in this museum when you leave?

Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Superior

4. Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today? (Mark one or more)

Being moved by beauty  
 Gaining information  
 Seeing rare/valueable/uncommon things  
 Imagining other times/places  
 Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at  
 Recalling memories  
 Enriching my understanding

5. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the job of U.S. Postal Inspectors? (Mark one)

Ensure that postal machinery is working properly  
 Investigate criminal cases involving U.S. mail  
 Conduct background checks on Postal employees  
 Litigate civil suits involving the U.S. Postal system  
 None of the above  
 I'm not sure

6. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection? (Mark one)

Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices  
 Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing  
 Collages made from stamps  
 Commissioned art made for postage stamps  
 None of the above  
 I'm not sure

7. Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service?

No  Yes

8. Do you live in the United States or another country?

United States, specify zipcode:  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Another country, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your age?  \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you male or female?  Male  Female

11. Are you visiting alone or with other people?  I am alone  I am with other people

12. Other than yourself, how many people are with you?  # of adults (18 and over)  
 # of youth 12 to 17  
 # of youth under 12

Thank you for your assistance

Session  Segment  1  2  3 Status  C  R  L  I Interviewer  ID  \_\_\_\_\_

*VISITOR VIEWS OF  
POSTAL INSPECTORS:  
THE SILENT SERVICE*





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The survey:** A sample of visitors entering the museum and a separate sample of visitors exiting *Postal Inspectors: The Slient Service (Postal Inspectors)* were surveyed. The museum entrance sample was presumed to represent visitors entering *Postal Inspectors*. The response rate was very high: 95%.

**Visitors:** One in ten visitors leaving the exhibition was foreign and one in eight lived locally. The average age was 41. The average group size was 3.7. One in twelve visitors entering the museum came specifically to see *Postal Inspectors*. One in eight exiting visitors was a repeat visitor to the National Postal Museum, and one in four reported that they or a family member had worked for the U.S. Postal Service.

**Knowledge:** About two out of five visitors entering the museum correctly answered the question about the nature of the job of Postal Inspectors. Three out of five visitors exiting the exhibition were correct. Thus, one in five visitors learned the correct answer in the exhibition.

**Hands-on Stations:** Six out of seven visitors reported that they (or someone with them) tried a hands-on station. On average, visitors tried 2.3 stations. The most popular was reading fingerprints. Those who read fingerprints or tried the sketch match were more likely to have correctly described the job of Postal Inspectors.

**Experiences:**<sup>1</sup> Approximately half of visitors entering the museum were especially looking forward to gaining information, seeing rare things, and enriching their understanding. Visitors exiting this history exhibition found one experience more satisfying than visitors entering the museum expected it to be: imagining other times or places. Three experiences were less satisfying than expected: seeing rare things, being moved by beauty, and recalling memories. Visitors who found information experiences especially satisfying tried more hands-on stations (2.6) than those who did not (2.0).

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<sup>1</sup> Those who marked none of the seven experiences or all seven were not included in the analysis of experiences.

**Rating:** The rating that exiting visitors gave the exhibition was 0% Poor, 2% Fair, 24% Good, 63% Excellent, and 12% Superior. The exit rating for this exhibition was higher than the rating that entering visitors anticipated that they would give the museum overall. Visitors who found the experiences of seeing rare things or enriching their understanding to be especially satisfying gave the exhibition higher ratings.

**Comparison:** Visitors were divided between those who said the exhibition was better than they expected (50%) and those who said it was as expected (47%).

**Low-experience visitors:** A substantial proportion of exiting visitors (46%) reported only one of the seven listed experiences as especially satisfying. This suggests that they were not strongly engaged with the material.

**Discussion:** Overall visitors were satisfied with the exhibition, although they found fewer satisfying experiences than they had anticipated when entering the museum. The hands-on stations appear to have supported learning experiences.

**Suggestions:** 1) Focus on the three key experiences for this museum: gaining information, seeing rare things, and enriching understanding. Talk with visitors to clarify what might be most effective. 2) Study the low-experience visitor. 3) Experiment with minor changes of text and design in *Postal Inspectors* and conduct a follow-up study to see which changes made a difference.

## INTRODUCTION

*Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service (Postal Inspectors)* is an exhibition that opened at the National Postal Museum on February 7, 2007 and that is due to continue until February 28, 2009. The exhibition presents some of the history of the U.S Postal Inspection Service, one of the oldest federal law enforcement agencies in the country. The exhibition highlights some of the agency's most prominent investigations, from mail train robberies in the 1800s to the Unabomber in the late 1990s.

The survey included two samples of visitors: visitors surveyed at the entrance to the museum, and different visitors surveyed at the exit from the exhibition. The survey sampling periods were planned so that the same times of day and week would be covered and approximately the same number of visitors would be selected for each sample. At the museum entrance 201 visitors completed surveys and at the exhibition exit 159 visitors completed surveys. The response rate was 95% at the museum entrance and 94% at the exhibition exit. The study was designed in order to enable comparison between the responses of entering and exiting visitors as a way of determining the effect of the exhibition on the visitors.

The exhibition is located at the end of the permanent exhibition, *Binding the Nation*, a linear display which presents the early history of mail service. Because there is no strong separation between the two exhibitions, visitors to *Binding the Nation* found themselves in *Postal Inspectors* without having chosen to enter it. Because of this unusual layout it was not possible to interview visitors at the *Postal Inspectors* entrance. Instead, the sample of visitors entering the museum was taken to be an adequate representation of the visitors entering *Postal Inspectors*, since it was presumed that most visitors to the museum would visit *Binding the Nation*, which begins just opposite the museum entrance, and would thus find themselves in *Postal Inspectors* as well.

# FINDINGS

## *Demographic characteristics<sup>2</sup>*

There were no statistically significant differences between the demographic characteristics of visitors entering the museum and those exiting *Postal Inspectors*.<sup>3</sup> The audience had slightly more women (52%), and the average age of visitors was 41. Foreign residents comprised 11 percent of the audience, and 12 percent lived in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area. Only a few (5%) came alone. Most came with other adults and some came with children; the average group size for exiting visitors was 3.7. Among exiting visitors 12 percent had been to the National Postal Museum before, and 23 percent reported that they or a member of their family had worked for the U.S. Postal Service.

## *Knowledge*

Visitors entering the museum and visitors leaving the exhibition were asked the same knowledge question: “In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the job of U.S. Postal Inspectors?” The answer options were:

- Ensure that machinery is working properly
- Investigate criminal cases involving U.S. mail
- Conduct background checks on Postal employees
- Litigate civil suits involving the U.S. Postal system
- None of the above

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2 For detailed data, see Appendix A.

3 A difference is said to be “statistically significant” when there is no more than a one in twenty chance that a difference is only an accident of the sample. In other words we can be very confident that there is a difference in the population for this statistic. If a difference is not statistically significant, there is a reasonable chance that the difference observed in the sample is an accident of the sample.

- I'm not sure

Two answers showed statistically significant differences between museum entrance and exhibition exit. At the museum entrance 20 percent of visitors chose “Ensure that machinery is working properly,” but at the exhibition exit only 10 percent chose that answer. On entrance 43 percent of visitors chose the correct answer “Investigate criminal cases involving U.S. mail,” and on exit 62 percent chose that answer. Very few chose the other answers either on entrance or on exit, except for “I’m not sure” (30% on entrance; 23% on exit).

### *Hands-on stations*

Visitors leaving the exhibition were asked, “Which of the following hands-on stations did you (or someone with you) try in the exhibit?” The list was:

- Reading fingerprints
- Handwriting analysis
- Fake money order
- Creating a profile
- Make a match from a sketch
- Reconstruct a mail bomb
- Be observant (find the hidden camera)
- Identity theft
- None of these

The most popular station was Reading fingerprints (41% of visitors). All of the others were reported by 21 percent to 29 percent of visitors. Only 13 percent said that they had tried none of these. The average number of hands-on stations tried per person was 2.3.

## *Hands-on stations and knowledge*

Those who correctly described the job of a U.S. Postal Inspector were also more likely to have read fingerprints or to have tried the sketch match. The average number of hands-on stations for those who correctly described the job of Postal Inspectors was 2.7, while the average for those who gave a wrong answer or didn't know was 1.8.

## *Experiences<sup>4</sup>*

Visitors entering the museum were invited to choose from a set of seven experiences the ones that they were especially looking forward to during their visit. Three experiences were particularly important for visitors entering the museum: gaining information (53%), seeing rare things (48%), and enriching understanding (44%).

Those leaving the exhibition were asked to select the ones they found especially satisfying in *Postal Inspectors*. Three of the seven experiences were chosen to about the same degree at both the museum entrance and the exhibition exit:

- Gaining information (*information*) (53% at museum entrance; 58% at exhibit exit)
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at (*reflecting*) (6%; 5%)
- Enriching my understanding (*understanding*) (44%; 48%)

One experience – imagining other times or places – was significantly more common at exhibition exit. At the museum entrance 20 percent said that they were especially looking forward to imaginging, but at the exhibition exit 35 percent reported that they had found imagining especially satisfying.

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<sup>4</sup> Those who marked none of the seven experiences or all seven were not included in the analysis of experiences.

For the remaining three experiences, fewer visitors reported them at the exhibition exit than had said they were looking for these experiences at the museum entrance.

- Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things (*rare things*) (48% on entrance; 31% on exit)
- Being moved by beauty (*beauty*) (17%; 5%)
- Recalling memories (*memories*) (13%; 5%)

A substantial number of exiting visitors (46%) chose only one of the seven experiences as especially satisfying

### *Hands-on stations and experiences*

Visitors who said that they had especially satisfying information experiences tried more hands-on stations (2.6) than those who did not (2.0). In particular, they were more likely to have read tried the money order or created a profile.

### *Rating*

There was a significant difference in the ratings from museum entrance to exhibition exit. Entering visitors were asked how they thought they would rate their experience in the museum when they left. Exiting visitors were asked how they rated their experience in *Postal Inspectors*. The scale for the rating was: Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent, Superior.

Those who are critical of the exhibition to some degree choose Good, Fair, or Poor. In this exhibition no one chose Poor and only 2 percent chose Fair. The Good rating was chosen by 50 percent of visitors entering the museum, but only 24 percent of visitors leaving the exhibition.

Excellent is a rating that indicates that the visitor is very satisfied and has no criticisms. At the museum entrance 42 percent of visitors anticipated that they would rate the museum Excellent when they left. A higher per-

centage of visitors (63%) leaving *Postal Inspectors* gave the exhibition an Excellent rating.

The Superior rating is selected by those who feel that the exhibition is so special that Excellent is not adequate as a rating. Superior was marked by 7 percent of visitors entering the museum and 12 percent of those leaving the exhibition.

Compared to the Smithsonian average, the visitors exiting *Postal Inspectors* emphasized Excellent (63% vs. 48% for the Smithsonian average). Fewer people felt that the exhibition was so good that it should be rated Superior (12% vs. 21% for the Smithsonian average), and, at the same time, fewer were critical enough of it to rate it Good or Fair (26% vs. 31% for the Smithsonian average).

*Table I-1: Ratings of Postal Inspectors  
vs. Smithsonian Average*

	Smithsonian	<i>Postal Inspectors</i>
Superior	21%	12%
Excellent	48%	63%
Good	26%	24%
Fair	4%	2%
Poor	1%	0%

### *Rating and Hands-on Stations*

Those who tried the sketch match were less likely to rate the exhibition Excellent (48% vs. 68% for other visitors) and more likely to rate it Good (39% vs. 19% for other visitors). In other words, they were more likely to be critical of the exhibition.

## *Rating and Experiences*

Two experiences reported on exit – seeing rare things and enriching understanding – were significantly associated with higher ratings. Those who said they had found seeing rare things especially satisfying were more likely to rate *Postal Inspectors* Superior (21% of them rated the exhibition Superior, compared to 7% of all other visitors). Those who said that they found enriching understanding especially satisfying were less likely to rate the exhibition as Good (32% of them rated the exhibition Good, compared to 44% of all other visitors), and more likely to rate it Excellent (60% of them rated it Excellent, compared to 44% for all other visitors).

## *Comparison*

Visitors were also asked to compare their experience to what they expected. Responses were divided between those who marked that it was about as they expected (50%) and those who indicated that it was better than expected (47%).

## *Low-experience Visitors*

Nearly half of the exiting visitors (46%) reported that they found only one of the seven listed experiences especially satisfying,<sup>5</sup> and across all exiting visitors the average number of especially satisfying experiences was slightly less than two.

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<sup>5</sup> Those who selected none and those who selected all seven were not included in the analysis of experiences.

## DISCUSSION

### *Satisfaction*

The data suggests that visitors overall were satisfied with this exhibition. Exiting visitors rated it higher than visitors entering the museum expected to rate their overall visit.

Visitors in the exhibition found about the same number of satisfying experiences as visitors entering the museum anticipated overall. While the exhibition led to more imagining experiences, it also inspired fewer aesthetic, rare object, and memory experiences. This was probably due in part to the nature of the subject matter. It is easy to see how the stories told in the exhibition could provoke the imagination, but the objects on display were not selected for aesthetic reasons, many of the incidents were too old to inspire memory, and the items on display might not have seemed particularly rare or unusual.

### *Knowledge and Hands-on*

The exhibition successfully informed some visitors that Postal Inspectors investigate criminal cases involving the U.S. mail. It seems that the hands-on stations may have helped communicate this message, especially reading fingerprints, and trying the sketch match. The link between gaining information and using the hands-on stations is further shown by the higher number of stations used by those who had satisfying information experiences.

At the same time, those who tried sketch match were also more critical of the exhibition. This suggests that it might be worth investigating more closely whether those who use this hands-on station are having some kind of problem with it.

## *Lower-experience Visitors*

Nearly half of the exiting visitors (46%) reported that they found no more than one of the seven listed experiences especially satisfying, and across all exiting visitors the average number of especially satisfying experiences was slightly less than two. This suggests an audience that was not strongly engaged with the material. Perhaps they were more socially oriented, or were casually passing time, or were just vaguely curious about the museum and not deeply committed to its subject matter.

This relatively low level of engagement might also reflect a large walk-in audience. It takes a special effort to capture the attention and interest of such visitors and to involve them to the degree that they will find unanticipated learning, object, and introspective experiences to be especially satisfying. While such experiences might not be desired or enjoyed by all visitors, museums understandably strive to make them as accessible and compelling as possible.

## SUGGESTIONS

### *Focus on the Key Experiences*

Three experiences were particularly important for visitors entering the museum: gaining information (53%), seeing rare things (48%), and enriching understanding (44%). Among visitors leaving the exhibition, those who noted seeing rare things or enriching understanding as especially satisfying were much more likely to feel that the exhibition was Excellent. The same pattern was found in the exhibition *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*.

The results suggest that improving these three experiences for visitors might be an efficient way to raise overall satisfaction. Specific suggestions follow.

**Gaining information.** All facts are not equally interesting to visitors. The ones that will be most satisfying are those that capture attention and lead visitors to ask their companions and friends, “Did you know ... ?” It is difficult to judge in advance what information others will find fascinating. At an early stage in the exhibition process it is worthwhile to share with visitors the information that the exhibition team considers most important to the exhibition. In this way it is possible to identify the specific words and ideas that are most likely to inspire visitors. These key ideas can be highlighted graphically in the final texts.

**Seeing rare things.** In this case the exhibition planning team can show visitors images of collection objects, photographs, and other likely exhibition contents, to find out which of these is most compelling. In the act of discussing these images with visitors, one can also learn what titling would be most likely to raise that level of interest. The items that seem to have the greatest drawing power can then be positioned prominently in the final design, so that their attractiveness has maximum impact. In an ideal design the significance of the object is clear with at most minimal reading.

**Enriching understanding.** Many visitors come to museums for more than facts or objects – they want to come away with a new perspective, a fresh way of thinking about the topic. For the benefit of these visitors the exhibition team should make a list of key thematic ideas that address the museum’s mission. These ideas can be discussed with visitors in one-on-one interviews to see if the public is interested in what they are likely to be offered. These ideas should then be worked into the exhibition texts as key messages.

In order to effectively deliver key messages the exhibition team should incorporate those messages in various ways in a variety of texts. To test the effectiveness of the result, one can take a random selection of the draft texts (with images of the objects they accompany), show them to visitors, and ask them what they think the main message of the exhibition is. If visitors successfully identify the message from different random samples, the message has been compellingly embedded in the texts and objects. When

a visitor fails to identify the message from the texts, exhibition developers can tell the visitor the message they wanted to deliver and ask visitors for suggestions on where they see a good fit between that idea and the images and texts they have just reviewed. Perceptive responses by visitors will raise new possibilities for the writers.

### *Study the Low-experience Visitor*

A substantial percentage of the exhibition's visitors found only one of the seven experiences to be especially satisfying, thus suggesting that much of the audience was not deeply engaged with the subject matter. It would be very valuable to understand more about these visitors. Are they neophyte museum-goers? Do they have an agenda that is not reflected in the list of seven experiences? Are they having trouble finding what they want in the exhibition? These visitors could be studied either with qualitative interviews or with a detailed entrance survey.

### *Experiment*

Since *Postal Investigators* will be on display for another year, it offers an excellent opportunity for experimentation. For example, if one identified the objects that are most interesting to visitors (as suggested above), simple changes in the design and labeling of these items might make a significant difference in the number of visitors who report satisfying rare object experiences when they leave. Similar attempts could be made to improve information and understanding experiences. A follow-up study could reveal which of these changes were most successful.

## APPENDIX I-A

National Postal Museum Entrance vs. *Postal Inspectors* Exhibition Exit

Postal Museum Entrance	<i>Postal Inspectors</i> Exit
Percent	Percent

**How do you think you will rate your experience in this museum when you leave?**

**Please rate your experience in this exhibition,  
*Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service.***

Superior	7	12
Excellent	42	63
Good	50	24
Fair	2	2
Poor	0	0

**How did your experience in this exhibition,  
*Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*, compare to what you expected?**

Better	47
About as expected	50
Not as good	3

**Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today?**

**Which of these experiences did you find especially satisfying in this exhibition, *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*, today?**

Being moved by beauty	17	5
Gaining information	53	58
Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things	48	31
Imagining other times/places	20	35
Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at	6	5
Recalling memories	13	5
Enriching my understanding	44	48
<i>Mean number of experiences marked</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>1.9</i>

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE  
Statistically significant DECREASE

Postal Museum Entrance Percent	<i>Postal Inspectors</i> Exit Percent
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**In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the job of U.S. Postal Inspectors?**

Ensure that machinery is working properly	20	10
Investigate criminal cases involving U.S. mail	43	62
Conduct background checks on Postal employees	1	1
Litigate civil suits involving the U.S. Postal system	2	2
None of the above	5	3
I'm not sure	30	23

**In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection?**

Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices	12
Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing	17
Collages made from stamps	4
Commissioned art made for postage stamps	29
None of the above	1
I'm not sure	37

**Which of the following hands-on stations did you (or someone with you) try in the Postal Inspectors exhibit?**

Reading Fingerprints	41
Handwriting analysis	29
Fake money order	25
Creating a profile	21
Make a match from a sketch	26
Reconstruct a mail bomb	27
Be observant (find hidden camera)	24
Identity theft	23
None of these	13
<i>Mean number of hands-on stations</i>	<i>2.3</i>

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE

Statistically significant DECREASE

Postal Museum Entrance Percent	<i>Postal Inspectors Exit Percent</i>
---	---

**Have you or a member of your family ever  
worked for the U.S. Postal Service?**

Yes	16	23
No	84	77

**Do you live in the United States or another  
country?**

United States	92	89
Washington Metropolitan Area	15	12
Other United States locations	77	77
Another country	8	11

**Distance of residence from the National Mall**

5 miles or less	8	4
5 to 10 miles	4	2
10 to 20 miles	5	5
20 to 40 miles	2	7
40 to 100 miles	4	4
100 to 250 miles	13	10
Other US	55	58
Another country	8	11

**What is your age?**

12 to 29	26	27
30 to 54	53	55
55 and over	21	18
Mean age	40	41

**Are you male or female?**

male	50	48
female	50	52

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE  
Statistically significant DECREASE

Postal Museum Entrance Percent	<i>Postal Inspectors</i> Exit Percent
---	---

**Are you visiting alone or with other people?**

I am alone	7	5
I am with other people	93	95

**Other than yourself how many people are with you?**

At least one adult	90	81
At least one youth 12 to 17	33	34
At least one youth under 12	29	37
Mean group size	3.2	3.7

**Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?**

Yes	84	88
No	16	12

**What led you to visit this museum today?**

Came for a general visit	77
Came to see Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service	8
Came to see Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp	4
Came for the Museum Store	5
Came for another reason	17

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE

Statistically significant DECREASE

# APPENDIX I-B

## Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service Exit Survey Questionnaire

1981557343

### Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service Exit Survey



1. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?  No  Yes
2. What led you to visit this museum today?  
(Mark one or more)
- Came for a general visit  
 Came to see *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*  
 Came to see *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*  
 Came for the Museum Store  
 Came for another reason  
What was it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please rate your experience in this exhibition, *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*.  
 Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Superior
4. How did your experience in this exhibition, *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*, compare to what you expected?  
 Not as good  About as expected  Better
5. Which of these experiences did you find especially satisfying in this exhibition, *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*, today?  
(Mark one or more)
- Being moved by beauty  
 Gaining information  
 Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things  
 Imagining other times/places  
 Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at  
 Recalling memories  
 Enriching my understanding
6. Which of the following hands-on stations did you (or someone with you) try in the *Postal Inspectors* exhibit?  
(Mark one or more)
- Reading Fingerprints  
 Handwriting analysis  
 Fake money order  
 Creating a profile  
 Make a match from a sketch  
 Reconstruct a mail bomb  
 Be observant (find hidden camera)  
 Identity theft  
 None of these
7. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the job of U.S. Postal Inspectors? (Mark one)
- Ensure that postal machinery is working properly  
 Investigate criminal cases involving U.S. mail  
 Conduct background checks on Postal employees  
 Litigate civil suits involving the U.S. Postal system  
 None of the above  
 I'm not sure
8. Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service?  
 No  Yes
9. Do you live in the United States or another country?  
 United States, specify zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Another country, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is your age?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Are you male or female?  
 Male  Female
12. Are you visiting alone or with other people?  
 I am alone  I am with other people
13. Other than yourself, how many people are with you?  

_____	# of adults (18 and over)
_____	# of youth 12 to 17
_____	# of youth under 12

Thank you for your assistance

# APPENDIX I-C

## National Postal Museum, Summer 2007 Entrance Survey Questionnaire

5705468106

National Postal Museum, Summer 2007  
Entrance Survey

1. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?  No  Yes

2. What led you to visit this museum today?  
(Mark one or more)

Came for a general visit  
 Came to see *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*  
 Came to see *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*  
 Came for the Museum Store  
 Came for another reason  
What was it?

3. How do you think you will rate your experience in this museum when you leave?  
 Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Superior

4. Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today? (Mark one or more)

Being moved by beauty  
 Gaining information  
 Seeing rare/valueable/uncommon things  
 Imagining other times/places  
 Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at  
 Recalling memories  
 Enriching my understanding

5. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the job of U.S. Postal Inspectors? (Mark one)

Ensure that postal machinery is working properly  
 Investigate criminal cases involving U.S. mail  
 Conduct background checks on Postal employees  
 Litigate civil suits involving the U.S. Postal system  
 None of the above  
 I'm not sure

6. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection? (Mark one)

Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices  
 Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing  
 Collages made from stamps  
 Commissioned art made for postage stamps  
 None of the above  
 I'm not sure

7. Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service?  
 No  Yes

8. Do you live in the United States or another country?  
 United States, specify zipcode:      \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your age?

10. Are you male or female?  
 Male  Female

11. Are you visiting alone or with other people?  
 I am alone  I am with other people

12. Other than yourself, how many people are with you?  
 # of adults (18 and over)  
 # of youth 12 to 17  
 # of youth under 12

Thank you for your assistance

Session  Segment  1  2  3 Status  C  R  L  I Interviewer  ID



*VISITOR VIEWS OF  
TRAILBLAZERS AND  
TRENDSETTERS:  
THE ART OF THE STAMP*





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The survey:** A sample of visitors entering *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp* and a separate sample of visitors exiting the exhibition were surveyed. The response rate was very high: 94% on entrance and 92% on exit.

**Visitors:** About one in ten was foreign and one in six lived locally. The average age was 41. The average group size among entering visitors was slightly more than 3. One in five was a repeat visitor to the National Postal Museum, and one in five reported that they or a family member had worked for the United States Postal Service (USPS).

**Knowledge:** About one in four visitors entering the museum and the exhibition correctly answered the question about the nature of the United States Postal Service art collection. Exiting visitors were more confident in their answers, but not more correct.

**Experiences:**<sup>1</sup> About half of entering visitors were especially looking forward to gaining information and seeing rare things. Exiting visitors to this art exhibition found three experiences more satisfying than entering visitors expected them to be: being moved by beauty, reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at, and recalling memories.

**Rating:** The rating that exiting visitors gave the exhibition (0% Poor, 5% Fair, 25% Good, 53% Excellent, and 17% Superior) was close to the Smithsonian average. This was very close to the rating that entering visitors thought they would give the exhibition. Visitors who found the experiences of enriching their understanding and seeing rare things to be especially satisfying gave the exhibition higher ratings.

**Comparison:** Visitors were divided between those who said the exhibition was better than they expected (53%) and those who said it was as expected (46%).

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<sup>1</sup> Those who selected all or none of the seven experiences were not included in the analysis of experiences.

**Selection:** The visitors who chose to enter the exhibition were *less* likely to be looking forward to being moved by beauty compared to all the visitors entering the museum. They also had more positive expectations for the exhibition than all visitors entering the museum had for the visit as a whole.

**Low-experience visitors:** A substantial proportion of exiting visitors (39%) reported no more than one of the seven listed experiences as especially satisfying. This suggests that they were not strongly engaged with the material.

**Discussion:** Overall, visitors were satisfied with the exhibition, and on the whole found more satisfying experiences than they had anticipated. They did not leave more aware of the nature of the USPS art collection, however. The fact that aesthetically inclined visitors were *less* likely to enter this art exhibition is unexpected. It might have been due to the title.

**Suggestions:** 1) Test titles and title graphics with visitors early in the planning process. 2) Focus on three key experiences: information, rare things, understanding. Talk with visitors to clarify what might be most effective. 3) Study the low-experience visitor.

## INTRODUCTION

*Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp (Trailblazers)* opened at the National Postal Museum on November 16, 2006 and is due to close on June 2, 2008. The exhibit displays 75 original artworks commissioned by the United States Postal Service (USPS) over the last 40 years. The paintings and drawings represent the work of 42 different artists. Data for the study were collected in a visitor survey conducted in July and August, 2007.

The survey included two samples of visitors: visitors surveyed at the entrance to the exhibition, and different visitors surveyed at the exit from the exhibition. The survey sampling periods were planned so that the same times of day and week would be covered and approximately the same number of visitors would be selected for each sample. At the entrance 153 visitors completed surveys, and at the exit 141 visitors completed surveys. The response rate was 94% at the entrance and 92% at the exit. The study was designed in order to enable comparison between the responses of entering and exiting visitors as a way of determining the effect of the exhibition on the visitors.

Another exhibition at the museum *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service (Postal Inspectors)* was surveyed at the same time as *Trailblazers*. In connection with that study, visitors were surveyed as they entered the museum and they were asked many of the same questions that visitors entering *Trailblazers* were asked. Thus it was also possible to determine whether there were any differences between those who entered the museum and those who chose to enter *Trailblazers*.

# FINDINGS

## *Demographic Characteristics*

*The typical visit group was from outside the local area.*

The entrance and exit samples were equally representative, i.e., there were no statistically significant differences in demographic characteristics between the two groups.<sup>2</sup> The audience had slightly more women, and the average age of visitors was 41. About 10 percent of visitors lived outside the United States, and about 17 percent lived in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area. Only about one in twenty came alone. Most came with other adults and some came with children; the average group size was just over 3 visitors. On average, about 20 percent had been to the National Postal Museum before, and nearly as many (19%) reported that they or a member of their family had worked for the USPS.

## *Knowledge*

Visitors entering and visitors exiting were asked the same knowledge question: “In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service’s art collection?” The answer options were:

- Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices
- Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing
- Collages made from stamps
- Commissioned art made for postage stamps

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<sup>2</sup> Saying that a difference is statistically significant means that there is only a one-in-twenty chance that an observed difference is an accident of the samples that were chosen. In other words, we can be very confident that a difference truly exists in the population as a whole. The population in this case is the set of all visitors who came to the exhibition during the period that the survey was being conducted. For the detailed data, see Appendix A.

None of the above

I'm not sure

The differences between entrance and exit were not statistically significant except for the last answer, “I’m not sure.” The percentage of those not sure decreased from 36 percent on entrance to 21 percent on exit. **Exiting visitors thus answered more confidently, but not more correctly.** The most common answer for both entering and exiting visitors was the correct answer (“Commissioned art made for postage stamps”) which was chosen by an average of 24 percent of visitors on entrance and 33 percent on exit. The answer “Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing” was a close second with 17 percent among entering visitors and 27 percent among exiting visitors.

### *Experiences<sup>3</sup>*

Visitors entering the exhibition were invited to choose from a set of seven experiences the ones that they were especially looking forward to during their visit. Three experiences were particularly important for visitors entering the exhibition: gaining information (56%), seeing rare/uncommon/valuable things (52%), and enriching my understanding (38%). Three out of four visitors entering the museum said that they were especially looking forward to at least one of these three.

*Entering visitors were especially looking forward to gaining information and seeing rare things.*

Those leaving the exhibition were asked to select the ones they found especially satisfying in *Trailblazers*. Four of the experiences were chosen to the same degree at both entrance and exit:

Gaining information (*information*) (56% on entrance; 48% on exit)

<sup>3</sup> Those who selected all or none of the seven experiences were not included in the analysis of experiences.

- Seeing rare/uncommon/valuable things (*rare things*) (52%; 45%)
- Imagining other times/places (*imagining*) (22%; 26%)
- Enriching my understanding (*understanding*) (38%; 43%)

The other three experiences increased from entrance to exit. In other words **existing visitors found these three experiences more satisfying than entering visitors expected them to be.** The three that increased were:

- Being moved by beauty (*beauty*) (from 6% to 23%)
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at (*reflecting*) (from 8% to 21%)
- Recalling memories (*memories*) (from 12% to 28%)

Because of the increase in these three experiences from entrance to exit, the overall average of the number of experiences that visitors found satisfying (2.3) exceeded the average of the number they anticipated (1.9).

### *Rating*

Entering visitors were asked how they thought they would rate their experience in *Trailblazers* when they left. Existing visitors were asked how they rated their experience in *Trailblazers*. The scale for the rating was: Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent, Superior. There were no significant differences in the ratings from entrance to exit. On exit 53 percent chose Excellent, a rating that indicates that a visitor is very satisfied and has no criticisms. Those who are critical of the exhibition to some degree choose Good, Fair, or Poor. In this exhibition no one chose Poor and only 5 percent chose Fair. The Good rating was chosen by 25 percent of existing visitors. The Superior rating is selected by those who feel that the exhibition is so special, that Excellent is not adequate as a rating. Superior was marked by an average of 17 percent of existing visitors.

**Overall this rating is very close to the average for all Smithsonian exhibitions.** Across 40 exhibitions surveyed in many different Smithsonian museums over the last four years the average ratings are:

*Table T-1: Ratings of Trailblazers vs. Smithsonian Average*

	Smithsonian	<i>Trailblazers</i>
Superior	21%	17%
Excellent	48%	53%
Good	26%	25%
Fair	4%	5%
Poor	1%	0%

### *Rating and Experiences*

Two experiences reported on exit – seeing rare things and enriching understanding – were significantly associated with higher ratings. Those who said that they had found seeing rare things especially satisfying in the exhibition were more likely to rate *Trailblazers* Superior or Excellent (23% of them rated the exhibition Superior, compared to 12% of other visitors; 63% rated it Excellent compared to 46% of other visitors). Those who said they had found enriching understanding especially satisfying were more likely to rate the exhibition as Superior (28% of them rated the exhibition Superior, compared to 9% of all other visitors).

### *Comparison*

Visitors were also asked to compare their experience to what they expected. Responses were divided between those who marked that it was about as they expected (53%) and those who indicated that it was better than expected (46%). The average number of experiences reported by those who

said it was about as they expected was 2.0. For those who said it was better than expected, it was 2.8.

### *Low-experience Visitors*

A substantial percentage of the exiting visitors (39%) reported that they found no more than one of the seven listed experiences especially satisfying, and across all exiting visitors the average number of especially satisfying experiences was slightly more than two.

### *Selection into Trailblazers*

When the responses of those entering the museum are compared to the responses of those entering *Trailblazers* there were no statistically significant differences with respect to demographic characteristics, but there were some differences in expectation.<sup>4</sup>

*Those who were seeking aesthetic experiences were less likely to enter the exhibition.*

**Those entering *Trailblazers* were less likely to be looking forward to an aesthetic experience than those entering the museum as a whole.**

While 17 percent of all visitors entering the museum were especially looking forward to being moved by beauty, only 6 percent of those entering *Trailblazers* were looking forward to that experience.

**Those entering *Trailblazers* were less likely to have come to the museum specifically to see the exhibition *Postal Inspectors* than all those who entered the museum** (1% compared to 8%). In other words, many of those who came to the museum specifically to see *Postal Inspectors* did not visit *Trailblazers*.

Finally, **those entering *Trailblazers* were more positive about what they were likely to experience than those entering the museum as a whole.**

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for the data.

Only 7 percent of visitors entering the museum thought they would rate their experience in the museum as Superior, but 17 percent of those entering *Trailblazers* thought they would rate their experience in the exhibition as Superior. Correspondingly, half of visitors entering the museum expected to rate the museum as Good, but 38 percent of visitors entering *Trailblazers* expected to rate the exhibition as Good.

## DISCUSSION

### *Satisfaction*

The data suggests that, overall, visitors were satisfied with this exhibition. Exiting visitors rated it the same as entering visitors and that rating was close to the Smithsonian average. In other words, they came expecting a “Smithsonian-quality” exhibition, and that is what they got.

The average Smithsonian score, however, is not an ideal. We know from many studies that those who rate an exhibition Good or Fair (36% in this case) are not entirely happy with the exhibition and have some reservations that keep them from rating it Excellent.

There were some pleasant surprises for visitors in *Trailblazers*, however. In particular, they encountered more satisfying aesthetic experiences, reflection, and memories than they had anticipated when they entered. This is in line with the content of the exhibition, which not only provided fine art, but also offered images relating to important events and personalities in America’s recent past, some of which were able to stimulate further thinking about our times.

### *Knowledge*

It is very interesting to note that while 29% of visitors who entered the museum were already aware that the USPS art collection consisted of com-

missioned art made for postage stamps, the other visitors did not pick up this fact in the exhibition. This is not unreasonable. We know from other studies, including close observation of visitors' activities, that most visitors read only a selection of labels and texts. And unless an exhibition's design specifically compels it or the subject matter is particularly foreign, few read the introductory text to an exhibition – they are too eager to get on with the exhibition itself. Unless key information is provided repeatedly in many different formats or in engaging, provocative ways, it is unlikely to be picked up by the average visitor.

In addition, not all visitors are so interested in gaining information that they are eager to read in an exhibition. In this exhibition half of the visitors were looking forward to gaining information. The fact that information experiences did not increase between entrance and exit also suggests that the texts did not draw visitors who were less inclined to gaining information.

Finally, in speculating on possible reasons why more visitors did not learn what the USPS art collection is, we should keep in mind that visitors filter all the statements in an exhibition through their existing interests and opinions. If a point made by the exhibition does not resonate with them in a meaningful way, even if they read it, they will not remember it. It is possible that the idea of what comprises the USPS art collection, because it is not likely to be an important fact for most visitors, would not be inclined to stick in memory, even for those who read it in passing.

### *Self-selection*

Visitors in a museum select the exhibitions that they think might appeal to them. In small museums, too, not all visitors will enter all exhibitions. Here, for example, there was a group of visitors who came specifically to see the *Postal Inspectors* exhibition, and most of them did not come to *Trailblazers*.

More surprisingly, it seems that those who would be most likely to want to visit an art exhibition, namely visitors especially looking forward to aes-

thetic experiences, were *less* likely to enter *Trailblazers*. This is an unexpected finding that is difficult to explain. The most likely possibility, in the opinion of this analyst, is that the main title, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters*, did not strongly signal that this was an art exhibition. Even the subtitle, *The Art of the Stamp*, can be read as emphasizing stamps more than art.

It is hard to imagine what other reason there might be. Although the exhibition was relatively distant from the entrance in the corner of the main gallery space, the entrance area is not remarkable in a way that would be likely to deter those interested in aesthetic experiences.

### *Lower-experience Visitors*

A substantial proportion of the visitors (39%) reported that they found only one of the seven listed experiences especially satisfying,<sup>5</sup> and across all exiting visitors the average number of especially satisfying experiences was 2.3. This suggests an audience that is not strongly engaged with the material. Perhaps they are more socially oriented, or are casually passing time, or are just vaguely curious about the museum and not deeply committed to its subject matter.

This may reflect a large walk-in audience. It takes a special effort to capture the attention and interest of such visitors and to involve them to the degree that they will find unanticipated learning, object, and introspective experiences to be especially satisfying. While such experiences might not be desired or enjoyed by all visitors, museums understandably strive to make them as accessible and compelling as possible.

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<sup>5</sup> Those who selected all or none were excluded from the analysis of experiences.

## SUGGESTIONS

### *Talk With Visitors About Prospective Titles and Title Graphics*

Formative testing of titles and title graphics is an important tool for developing exhibitions that attract the visitors they are intended to serve. By talking with visitors about alternative titles and images during the early stages of exhibition development, the exhibition team can quickly identify what is powerful and compelling for diverse visitors, and what is easily misunderstood or misinterpreted. By repeated cycles of asking visitor opinions and making revisions, one can eventually arrive at a final version that is likely to be much more accessible and powerful than what would otherwise have been installed in the exhibition.

### *Focus on the Key Experiences*

Three experiences were particularly important for visitors entering the museum: gaining information (56%), seeing rare things (52%), and enriching understanding (38%). Among visitors leaving the exhibition, those who noted seeing rare things or enriching understanding as especially satisfying were much more likely to feel that the exhibition was something special, and rated it Superior. The same pattern was found in the exhibition *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*.

The results suggest that improving these three experiences for visitors might be an efficient way to raise overall satisfaction. Specific suggestions follow.

**Gaining information.** All facts are not equally interesting to visitors. The ones that will be most satisfying are those that capture attention and lead visitors to ask their companions and friends, “Did you know ... ?” It is difficult to judge in advance what information others will find fascinating. At an early state in the exhibition process it is worthwhile to share with visitors the information that the exhibition team considers most important

to the exhibition. In this way it is possible to identify the specific words and ideas that are most likely to inspire visitors. These key ideas can be highlighted graphically in the final texts.

***Seeing rare things.*** In this case the exhibition planning team can show visitors images of collection objects, photographs, and other likely exhibition contents, to find out which of these is most compelling. In the act of discussing these images with visitors, one can also learn what titling would be most likely to raise that level of interest. The items that seem to have the greatest drawing power can then be positioned prominently in the final design, so that their attractiveness has maximum impact. In an ideal design the significance of the object is clear with at most minimal reading.

***Enriching understanding.*** Many visitors come to museums for more than facts or objects – they want to come away with a new perspective, a fresh way of thinking about the topic. For the benefit of these visitors the exhibition team should make a list of key thematic ideas that address the museum's mission. These ideas can be discussed with visitors in one-on-one interviews to see if the public is interested in what they are likely to be offered. These ideas should then be worked into the exhibition texts as key messages.

In order to effectively deliver key messages the exhibition team should incorporate those messages in various ways in a variety of texts. To test the effectiveness of the result, one can take a random selection of the draft texts (with images of the objects they accompany), show them to visitors, and ask them what they think the main message of the exhibition is. If visitors successfully identify the message from different random samples, the message has been compellingly embedded in the texts and objects. When a visitor fails to identify the message from the texts, exhibition developers can tell the visitor the message they wanted to deliver and ask visitors for suggestions on where they see a good fit between that idea and the images and texts they have just reviewed. Perceptive responses by visitors will raise new possibilities for the writers.

### *Study the Low-experience Visitor*

A substantial percentage of the exhibition's visitors found only one of the seven experiences to be especially satisfying, thus suggesting that much of the audience was not deeply engaged with the subject matter. It would be very valuable to understand more about these visitors. Are they neophyte museum-goers? Do they have an agenda that is not reflected in the list of seven experiences? Are they having trouble finding what they want in the exhibition? These visitors could be studied either with qualitative interviews or with a detailed entrance survey.

## APPENDIX T-A

National Postal Museum Entrance vs.  
*Trailblazers and Trendsetters* Entrance

Postal Museum Entrance	<i>Trailblazers</i> & <i>Trendsetters</i> Entrance
Percent	Percent

**How do you think you will rate your experience in this museum when you leave?**

**Please rate your experience in this exhibition, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*.**

Superior	7	17
Excellent	42	42
Good	50	37
Fair	2	4
Poor	0	0

**Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today?**

Being moved by beauty	17	6
Gaining information	53	56
Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things	48	52
Imagining other times/places	20	22
Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at	6	8
Recalling memories	13	12
Enriching my understanding	44	38
<i>Mean number of experiences marked</i>	2.0	1.9

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE

Statistically significant DECREASE

	Postal Museum Entrance	<i>Trailblazers</i> <i>&amp;</i> <i>Trendsetters</i> Entrance
	Percent	Percent
<b>In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection?</b>		
Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices	12	13
Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing	17	17
Collages made from stamps	4	8
Commissioned art made for postage stamps	29	24
None of the above	1	2
I'm not sure	37	36
<b>Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service</b>		
Yes	16	17
<b>Do you live in the United States or another country?</b>		
United States	92	90
Washington Metropolitan Area	15	18
Other United States locations	85	82
Another country	8	10
<b>Distance of residence from the National Mall</b>		
5 miles or less	8	4
5 to 10 miles	4	9
10 to 20 miles	5	6
20 to 40 miles	2	3
40 to 100 miles	4	2
100 to 250 miles	13	17
Other US	55	50
Another country	8	10

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE  
 Statistically significant DECREASE

	Postal Museum Entrance	<i>Trailblazers</i> <i>&amp;</i> <i>Trendsetters</i> Entrance
	Percent	Percent
<b>What is your age?</b>		
12 to 29	26	23
30 to 54	53	57
55 and over	21	20
<i>Average</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>41</i>
<b>Are you male or female?</b>		
male	50	49
female	50	51
<b>Are you visiting alone or with other people?</b>		
I am alone	7	11
I am with other people	93	89
<b>Other than yourself how many people are with you?</b>		
At least one adult	90	88
At least one youth 12 to 17	33	36
At least one youth under 12	29	26
<i>Mean group size</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>3.5</i>
<b>Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?</b>		
Yes	84	85
No	16	15
<b>What led you to visit this museum today?</b>		
Came for a general visit	77	71
Came to see <i>Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service</i>	8	1
Came to see <i>Trailblazers &amp; Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp</i>	3	0
Came for the Museum Store	5	2
Came for another reason	17	24

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE 

Statistically significant DECREASE 

## APPENDIX T-B

*Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*, Entrance vs. Exit

<i>Trailblazers</i>	<i>Trendsetters</i>
<i>Entrance</i>	<i>Exit</i>
Percent	Percent

**How do you think you will rate your experience in this museum when you leave?**

**Please rate your experience in this exhibition, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*.**

Superior	17	18
Excellent	42	52
Good	37	25
Fair	4	5
Poor	0	0

**How did your experience in this exhibition, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*, compare to what you expected?**

Better	46
About as expected	53
Not as good	1

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE  
Statistically significant DECREASE

<i>Trailblazers</i>	<i>Trailblazers</i>
♂	♂
<i>Trendsetters</i>	<i>Trendsetters</i>
Entrance	Exit
Percent	Percent

**Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today?**

**Which of these experiences did you find especially satisfying in this exhibition, *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*, today?**

Being moved by beauty	6	23
Gaining information	56	48
Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things	52	45
Imagining other times/places	22	26
Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at	8	21
Recalling memories	12	28
Enriching my understanding	38	43
<i>Mean number of experiences marked</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>2.3</i>

**In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection?**

Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices	13	10
Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing	17	27
Collages made from stamps	8	8
Commissioned art made for postage stamps	24	33
None of the above	2	1
I'm not sure	36	21

**Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service**

Yes	17	21
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Note: Statistically significant INCREASE  
Statistically significant DECREASE

<i>Trailblazers</i>	<i>Trailblazers</i>
♂	♂
<i>Trendsetters</i>	<i>Trendsetters</i>
Entrance	Exit
Percent	Percent

**Do you live in the United States or another country?**

United States	90	89
Washington Metropolitan Area	18	16
Other United States locations	72	73
Another country	10	11

**Distance of residence from the National Mall**

5 miles or less	4	9
5 to 10 miles	9	3
10 to 20 miles	6	8
20 to 40 miles	3	1
40 to 100 miles	2	2
100 to 250 miles	17	24
Other US	50	48
Another country	10	11

**What is your age?**

12 to 29	23	22
30 to 54	57	63
55 and over	20	15
Mean age	41	41

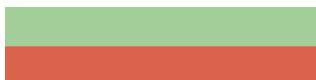
**Are you male or female?**

male	49	46
female	51	54

**Are you visiting alone or with other people?**

I am alone	7	6
I am with other people	93	94

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE  
 Statistically significant DECREASE



<i>Trailblazers</i>	<i>Trailblazers</i>
♂	♂
<i>Trendsetters</i>	<i>Trendsetters</i>
Entrance	Exit
Percent	Percent

**Other than yourself how many people are with you?**

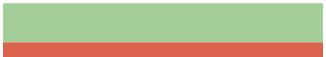
At least one adult	88	87
At least one youth 12 to 17	36	35
At least one youth under 12	26	37
Average group size	3.2	3.1

**Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?**

Yes	85	76
No	15	24

**What led you to visit this museum today?**

Came for a general visit	71
Came to see Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service	1
Came to see Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp	0
Came for the museum store	2
Came for another reason	24

Note: Statistically significant INCREASE 

Statistically significant DECREASE 

# APPENDIX T-C

## *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp* Entrance Survey Questionnaire

7651642630

**Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp  
Entrance Survey**

**1.** Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?  No  Yes

**2.** What led you to visit this museum today?  
(Mark one or more)

- Came for a general visit
- Came to see *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*
- Came to see *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*
- Came for the Museum Store
- Came for another reason  
What was it? \_\_\_\_\_

**3.** How do you think you will rate your experience in this exhibition, *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*?  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Superior

**4.** Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today? (Mark one or more)

- Being moved by beauty
- Gaining information
- Seeing rare/valueable/uncommon things
- Imagining other times/places
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at
- Recalling memories
- Enriching my understanding

**5.** In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection? (Mark one)

- Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices
- Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing
- Collages made from stamps
- Commissioned art made for postage stamps
- None of the above
- I'm not sure

**6.** Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service?  No  Yes

**7.** Do you live in the United States or another country?  United States, specify zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Another country, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**8.** What is your age?

**9.** Are you male or female?  Male  Female

**10.** Are you visiting alone or with other people?  I am alone  I am with other people

**11.** Other than yourself, how many people are with you?   # of adults (18 and over)  
  # of youth 12 to 17  
  # of youth under 12

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*Thank you for your assistance*

Session   Segment  1  2  3 Status  C  R  L  I Interviewer   ID

# APPENDIX T-D

## *Trailblazers and Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp* Exit Survey Questionnaire

2455637136

### Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp Exit Survey



1. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?

No    Yes

2. What led you to visit this museum today?  
(Mark one or more)

- Came for a general visit
- Came to see *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*
- Came to see *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*
- Came for the Museum Store
- Came for another reason

What was it? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please rate your experience in this exhibition,  
*Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*.

Poor    Fair    Good    Excellent    Superior

4. How did your experience in this exhibition, *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*, compare to what you expected?

Not as good    About as expected    Better

5. Which of these experiences did you find especially satisfying in this exhibition, *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*, today?  
(Mark one or more)

- Being moved by beauty
- Gaining information
- Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things
- Imagining other times/places
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at
- Recalling memories
- Enriching my understanding

6. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection? (Mark one)

- Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices
- Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing
- Collages made from stamps
- Commissioned art made for postage stamps
- None of the above
- I'm not sure

7. Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service?

No    Yes

8. Do you live in the United States or another country?

United States, specify zipcode:

Another country, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your age?

10. Are you male or female?

Male    Female

11. Are you visiting alone or with other people?

I am alone    I am with other people

12. Other than yourself, how many people are with you?

# of adults (18 and over)

# of youth 12 to 17

# of youth under 12



Thank you for your assistance

Session  Segment  1  2  3 Status  C  R  L  I Interviewer  ID

# APPENDIX T-E

## National Postal Museum, Summer 2007 Entrance Survey Questionnaire

5705468106

National Postal Museum, Summer 2007  
Entrance Survey



1. Is this your first visit to the National Postal Museum?  No  Yes

2. What led you to visit this museum today?  
(Mark one or more)

Came for a general visit  
 Came to see *Postal Inspectors: The Silent Service*  
 Came to see *Trailblazers & Trendsetters: The Art of the Stamp*  
 Came for the Museum Store  
 Came for another reason  
What was it? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you think you will rate your experience in this museum when you leave?

Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Superior

4. Which of these experiences are you especially looking forward to during your visit today? (Mark one or more)

Being moved by beauty  
 Gaining information  
 Seeing rare/valueable/uncommon things  
 Imagining other times/places  
 Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at  
 Recalling memories  
 Enriching my understanding

5. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the job of U.S. Postal Inspectors? (Mark one)

Ensure that postal machinery is working properly  
 Investigate criminal cases involving U.S. mail  
 Conduct background checks on Postal employees  
 Litigate civil suits involving the U.S. Postal system  
 None of the above  
 I'm not sure

6. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the U.S. Postal Service's art collection? (Mark one)

Artworks used to decorate the insides of post offices  
 Citizen-created artwork inspired by stamps and letter-writing  
 Collages made from stamps  
 Commissioned art made for postage stamps  
 None of the above  
 I'm not sure

7. Have you or a member of your family ever worked for the U.S. Postal Service?

No  Yes

8. Do you live in the United States or another country?

United States, specify zipcode:  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Another country, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your age?  \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you male or female?  Male  Female

11. Are you visiting alone or with other people?  I am alone  I am with other people

12. Other than yourself, how many people are with you?  # of adults (18 and over)  
 # of youth 12 to 17  
 # of youth under 12

Thank you for your assistance

Session  Segment  1  2  3 Status  C  R  L  I Interviewer  ID





Smithsonian Institution  
Office of Policy and Analysis  
Washington, DC 20560-0502  
[www.si.edu/opanda](http://www.si.edu/opanda)