

Audio Tours

Audio tours can guide people around your waterway without intruding on the natural surroundings. Producing an audio tour is an opportunity to be creative and to produce an evocative experience for the audience with the possibility of using personal testimony, sound effects and music.

Strengths

- Uses two senses (hearing and sight)
- Can help with visitor flow and direction.
- Flexible - can address intellectual access.
- Encourages visitors to look and listen at the same time.

Weaknesses

- Not easy for the visitor to interact with others in their party.
- Some people do not like them.
- Not easy (or cheap) to produce or update.

Audience

- Day and staying visitors.
- Special interest visitors.
- Visitors with special needs.

Costings

- For rough guidance see page 11 of the HLF Interpretation document [here](#).

Planning

- Decide on your target audience and what you want them to get out of the tour. [Click here](#) to find out more.
- Will your audio tour have a theme?
- Consider the type of audio tour device you will use: Handsets, downloadable file or QR code. You will also need to consider the format that the files will be recorded in.

Research

- Establish what you already know.
- What are the key messages you want people to take away with them?
- Focus on interesting stories.
- Do you want to carry out an oral history project? People's views and stories can then be part of your audio. The Oral History Society website provides guidance: <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/>



Audio Tours

Content

The route

- Decide from your research what features you want to include in the tour and how you can link this to interesting stories and facts.
- Consider how you can use the fact that small groups will be doing this tour - families, couples and individuals. With this in mind can you take them to places that perhaps they cannot access on the guided tour due to lack of space or access problems?
- Guidance on length is around 90 seconds and no longer than 2 minutes for each stop. Depending on the type of system you could provide the listener with the option to hear more.
- Source points must be well placed and easy to identify.

Adding interest

- How can you make this as engaging as possible? Extracts of people discussing their memories, experts sharing their insight, sound effects and music can all be good additions.
- Try and surprise people.
- The audio script should be written as if you are talking directly to the audience. Engage them through asking questions. [Click here](#) to find out more.
- Remember that audio narration should sound natural and not as if reading from a script.
- The tour needs to be descriptive and paint an image.
- The script needs to be simple as visitors will get one chance to understand the point you are making so avoid using jargon, and explain specialist language.



Evaluate and Celebrate

- Simple surveys.
- Can further publicity be gained from the event.
- [Click here](#) to find out more about evaluation.





Peak District: Moors for the Future Partnership

The Peak District National Park is a dramatic landscape of moorlands which walkers visit in thousands each year. In 2006 to complement the already successful guided walks (organised by Peak District National Park rangers) a series of audio trails were released on the website.

Audio trails were chosen because they provide interactive, up-to-date content which is essential to interacting with a wide audience. The success of this project has been recognised externally when in 2006 an award from the CPRE for countryside design awards was received. The trails combine the use of current technology and the learning experience of guided

walks to offer an effective and personalised learning experience. The trails are aimed at visitors who wish to take a walk through the Peak District and South Pennine landscapes and learn some interesting facts along the way, catering for a range of abilities and interests, ranging from gentle strolls to more challenging walks in moorland wilderness.

The aim is to reach as many visitors to the moorlands as possible so they can understand what, why and how this internationally important habitat is being restored. Successful marketing has helped the project to reach new audiences. Leaflets for the trails are available in Peak District Visitor centres and are promoted on the Peak District National Park website. Also, media interest in the trails in magazines such as Derbyshire Life, local radio and outdoor websites like Grough, has helped to get the word out- which is crucial in ensuring the success of a project.

‘Since the launch of the first trails in Easter 2006 they have been consistently popular, attracting regular downloads from our website’.

Debra Wilson
(MoorLIFE Communications Officer)

<http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/audio-trails>