



**Audiences
SOUTH**

HELPING CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS DEVELOP AUDIENCES

Audience segmentation tool provides new insight into arts engagement

Gaining an understanding of your audience and the ways in which they behave is a fundamental starting point for any organisation trying to engage with new and existing audiences.

Segmentation is a way of dividing and organising the population in terms of behaviour, preferences and characteristics, so that you can set strategies to engage particular clusters of them based on appropriate features which they share.

Leo Sharrock is Audiences South's resident Market Intelligence Manager and for the past 8 years has been working with arts organisations to segment and communicate more effectively with their audiences.

Two key tools of the segmentation trade which you may be familiar with are the audience segmentation models, ACORN and Mosaic which he uses to profile arts audiences. More recently, Arts Council England has developed a new segmentation tool called Arts Audiences Insight.



Graphic representations of Audience Insight segments

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Arts Audiences Insight was developed with the aim of shedding new light on 'how and why different kinds of people engage with the arts today'. The principle difference between this model and existing segmentation tools (such as ACORN and Mosaic) is that the research has been developed with the chief aim of exploring the arts engagement of English adults. By comparison, ACORN and Mosaic start with the socio-demographic features of different groups, while Audiences Insight starts by first considering the arts engagement of different groups, (based on data derived in part from the DCMS "Taking part" survey).

Leo explains: "if you take an organisation's booker database and profile it using Mosaic and ACORN you can understand a lot about the socio-demographics of the people that are engaging with that organisation. Arts Audiences Insight operates differently by first clustering people together based on shared patterns of arts engagement (at the most basic level looking at whether they're highly engaged, have some engagement, or are not currently engaged) and then describing in more detail the patterns of engagement and lots of other demographic features about 13 distinct groups making-up the English population". These groups range from the loyal and highly engaged 'Traditional Culture Vultures' to the currently not engaged 'Limited Means, Nothing Fancy'. Thus Audiences Insight provides a specialised tool tailored to the purposes of arts marketing.

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Each segment's engagement level with the arts is described in detail, as are their leisure activities, demographics, media habits and important spheres of influence which impact upon a segment's overall consumption of the arts.

The result is a new insight into how and why people engage with the arts in England today. For example; 'Mature Explorers' account for 11% of English adults and whilst 'curious', 'inquisitive' and 'active' by nature, their arts habits

are characterised by attending arts and craft exhibitions and outdoor public arts which tend to fit their 'outdoorsy' active lifestyle.

When put into practice the model can be used both as a basis for a deeper understanding of an organisation's audience and a tool to attract new ones. Leo has been using the model to profile the databases of some arts organisations in the south, and has also been working with some local authorities to help them understand how the system can be useful to them in the process of planning to increase levels of engagement with the arts.

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Leo says: "What this system is quite good at is identifying types of people and telling you more about their habits which can give you hints as to how to engage them. For example; the system can analyse your booker database and describe the segment profile of customer neighbourhoods based on your postcode data. You'll then be able to see which segments are well represented and which are poorly represented within your booker footprint, and how those segments might best be addressed when devising strategies aimed at engaging more people like them or retaining existing bookers. Does a particular segment need to be won over with discounted offers to more traditional events, or are they more likely to respond to exclusive packages of premium priced seats to more cutting edge events? The Arts Audiences Insight system could provide you with the answers.

Leo thinks that a limitation of the system could be that it is less effective at showing how successfully an organisation is performing in engaging particular groups over a period of time, because of some technical features of the design. However, this is something that Mosaic and ACORN are able to demonstrate with greater levels of confidence.

Audiences Insight then is a bespoke tool for arts organisations looking to further understand and develop current and potential audiences, and it makes a significant contribution to the existing collective knowledge on arts engagement against the wider socio-demographic backdrop.

The use of Audiences Insight in its simplest form is free to all funded / not for profit arts organisations and full details can be found on the Arts Council's website (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/audienceinsight/>). In more depth, booker data can be profiled in relation to the thirteen segments and compared to the wider area at large as part of an audience profile. To find out more about audience segmentation and see if Audiences South can help your organisation please contact: leo.sharrock@hants.gov.uk.

Audiences South is a regional agency able to identify and understand the issues relevant to the cultural sector in the South of England and beyond.

We work with cultural organisations to help develop their audiences. We supply organisations with information and knowledge and support turning that into successful actions.

www.audiencesouth.org