

# THE SPECTRUM OF INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES: METHODOLOGY

## A 2021 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY

Over the past several years, many museums have made concerted efforts to be more inclusive in the content they share.



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But depending on our audiences, the response can be mixed. That is, there are some audiences that whole-heartedly support these efforts ... but there are other audiences who are more skeptical or may even condemn these efforts.

In order for museums to be most effective in sharing inclusive content, it is critical that we understand our audiences' perspectives on inclusion. Who supports it? Who rejects it? And who isn't thinking about it much one way or the other?

To help us understand individual attitudes towards inclusive content, we asked three questions of audiences.



● **Why three?** We've learned that asking at least three questions is crucial for accuracy: it simply isn't fair to assess someone's attitudes on this topic with just one or two questions.

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### QUESTION 1: Indirect assessment.

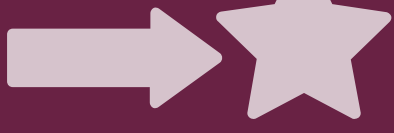
An early question in the survey asked respondents to identify the most important ways they thought museums **should** share content with visitors (they could pick as many as they wanted). We're interested in one of the answer choices:

“Being more inclusive, including stories and perspectives of women, people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ+ people, etc.”

30% of respondents selected

What makes this an "indirect" assessment? To the respondent, it doesn't read as a question about inclusion. It is a question about how museums should share content. That's important because it means that people who don't feel that strongly about inclusive content tend to skip over the answer and choose those that were more important to them ... and they could do so without feeling judged about their answer.

Which means that those who did choose inclusion, well, we can feel pretty confident that they have inclusive attitudes.

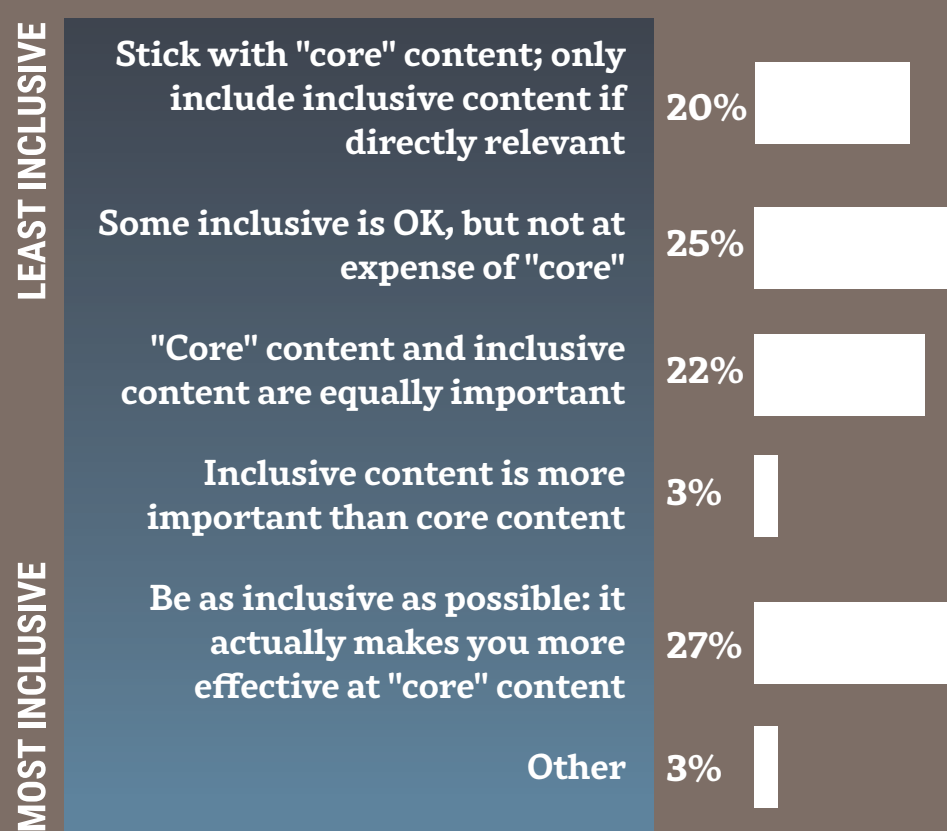


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### QUESTION 2: A nuanced tradeoff.



Over the years, we have collected thousands of written-in comments from frequent museum-goers about inclusive content. Analyzing those comments led us to an important conclusion: for those with less inclusive attitudes, there is a perception that the inclusion of inclusive content comes at a tradeoff of the more traditional "core" content they are accustomed to (and prefer). We designed this question to capture that sentiment ... and to see who disagreed with it.

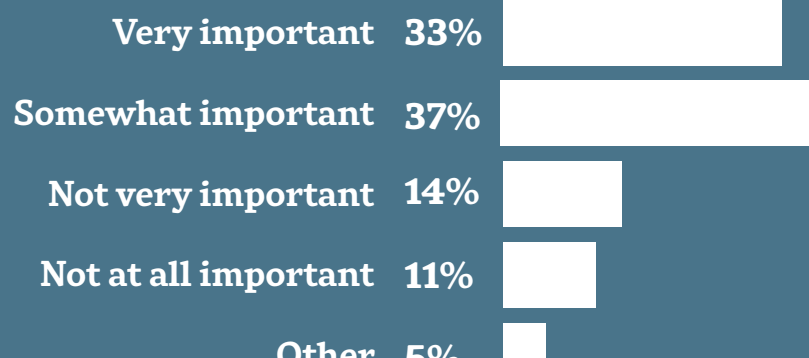


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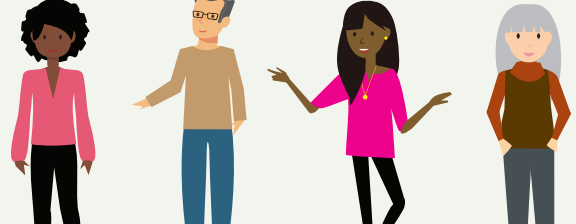
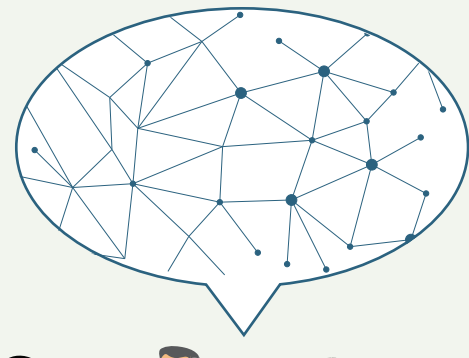
### QUESTION 3: Direct assessment.



The final question puts it bluntly: is this important for museums to do or not? To really force the decision one way or the other, we only gave four choices with no middle-ground answer.



Our goal with this question is to clearly identify those with less inclusive and anti-inclusive viewpoints. The people who are willing to say it isn't important. And this question does that effectively.



There are about 40 different answer paths respondents could take as they answered these three questions. We charted them all and, ultimately, we came up with the following estimate of inclusive attitudes among frequent museum-goers:

### 2021 MUSEUM-GOERS: INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES (ESTIMATE)



But here's the thing: this is the overall average, and it masks big differences. Individual values deeply affect how people respond to these questions, including political values (the strongest predictor of attitudes on this issue). And the 140 museums that participated in the 2021 Annual Survey all received their own custom spectrum of attitudes ... which could vary widely.<sup>1</sup>

This is important because this level of nuance helps all of us then think through how we can all share inclusive content more effectively to our audiences. And as long as all of us are moving forward, towards inclusion, even if it is at different paces, that will all help make our society a more inclusive one as well.



Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:

- 2021 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 53,217; 140 museums participating
- 2021 Broader Population Comparison Sample, n = 1,273
- 2017 - 2020 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers and Broader Population Comparison Sampling

\*Data Stories share research about both frequent museum-goers (typically visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums).

<sup>1</sup>Interested in finding out your museum's audience spectrum? If you join the 2022 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers and choose the inclusion questions as your custom questions, we will develop it for your museum.

Go to [museumgoers.aam-us.org](https://museumgoers.aam-us.org) to learn more.

More Data Stories can be found at [wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories](https://wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories).



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