

Science Museum Research Summary: What teachers want from museum websites

This document is based on key findings from a Science Museum Talk Science Research Report covering 18 months of work with teachers. Please contact us on learning@sciencemuseum.org.uk if you would like more details.

What do teachers use websites for?

Websites are used when preparing lessons, preparing school trips or during classroom teaching. Teachers return to websites they trust and find useful.

What do they need to know first?

As their time is short, teachers want to find out quickly what a website offers them, how they can use it in their teaching and how its content or resources link to the National Curriculum. So it's important that sites have clear routes to important information and an effective search function, and they are kept up-to-date.

What kind of resources are teachers looking for?

Teachers want multiple formats of information available from a single source, not several scattered sources. Preparation of multimedia lessons which draw on all of the capabilities of whiteboards can be time-consuming if teachers have to find and coordinate information from several different websites, PowerPoint presentations, videos and so on – so try and keep everything in one place. If possible, set up a website purely for teachers.

What are the pitfalls?

Teachers don't like small typefaces or too much text, especially as this makes whiteboard use difficult for students at the back of the class. They'll also ignore websites that require payment, sites that are simply an online version of a book and content that needs downloading before they can view it. Teachers are unlikely to contribute to online forums – and it's worth considering that many schools have software that's a few years old and may not be compatible with your latest whizzy graphics.

Should teachers have to register with our site?

Some teachers referred to the lack of time and forgetting usernames and passwords as barriers to logging in to sites. However, if extra benefits were to be gained by logging in, the majority of the teachers said they would do so. Some like the idea of logging in because it makes them feel part of a

club. Teachers often say that they are likely to lose or forget a password, but for some this did not appear to be a problem, as long as the password had been emailed to them. Many are often signed up to a number of educational websites and have a number of codes and passwords to remember already, leading some to suggest that they should be able to select their own password.

Further resources:

Find out about developing classroom resources by consulting a further summary of Science Museum Research:

- Science Museum Research Summary: What teachers want from classroom resources

See the range of resources available on the Science Museum website by visiting:

www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/educators/classroom_and_homework_resources.aspx