



Managing Your NovaMuse Presence

A tip sheet for museums



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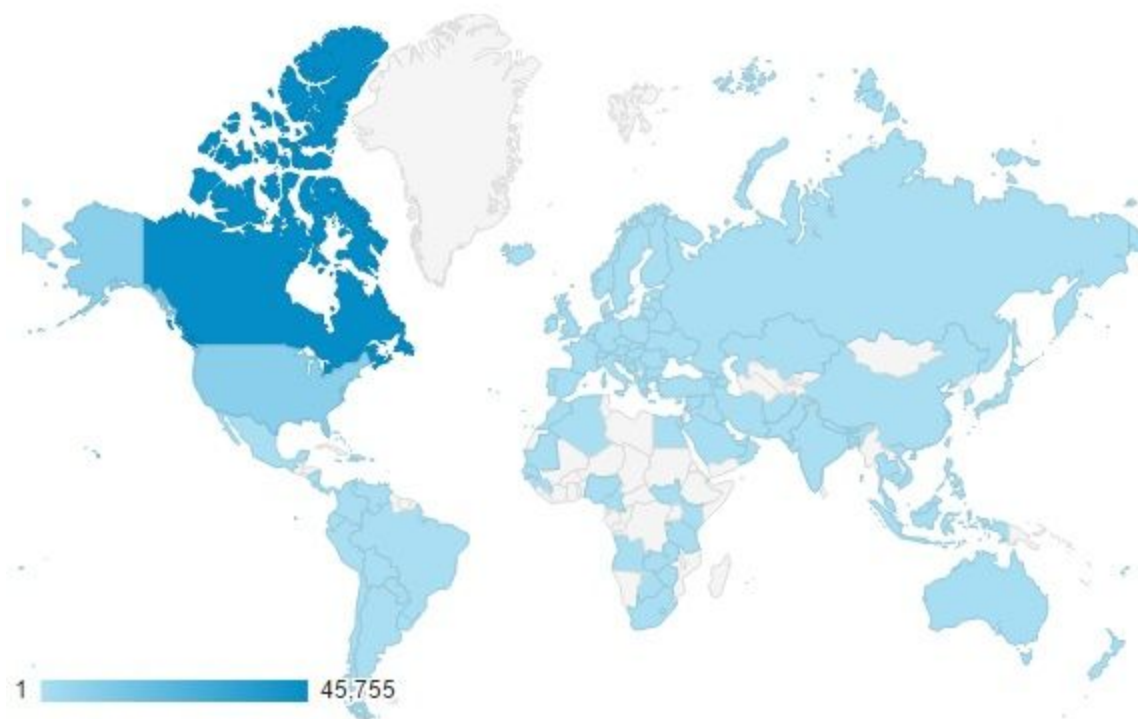
Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Improve your records	3
Promote NovaMuse	4
Use NovaMuse Internally	6
Overcoming Obstacles	7
Why Does it Matter?	8



Introduction

NovaMuse has the capability of providing content to visitors before, during, and after a museum visit, as well as to those who never visit. Visitor access to collections on NovaMuse is not constrained by museum opening hours, seasonal schedules, or ability to visit the physical site. This includes visitors from around the globe.



Where NovaMuse.ca visitors are located

As of May 2017

Sourced from Google Analytics

ANSM's *Statement of Excellence* in regards to Collections Management stipulates that museums "[...] enable access to collection and related documentation in-house and online."¹ In today's digital world, if you do not exist online to many people you do not exist at all. **This tip sheet will help you to maximize your online presence, and increase visitor interaction with your museum's collection.**

¹ Association of Nova Scotia Museums, *Museums Evaluation: Site Evaluation*, 13.



Improve your records

- **Start small**
This work does not happen overnight. When identifying collections records to tackle, it is helpful to look at something you are already working on. For example, if you are doing an exhibit on teacups, take the time to inventory and digitize your teacup collection, as well as enrich the artifact records.
- **Upload good images**
Professional images infinitely improve artifact records. Use our [“Artefact Photography Tips.”](#) Take front and back, as well as detail shots. Only half of survey respondents said they would click on an artifact record if it did not have an image, and almost everyone rated image quality as important to their experience.²



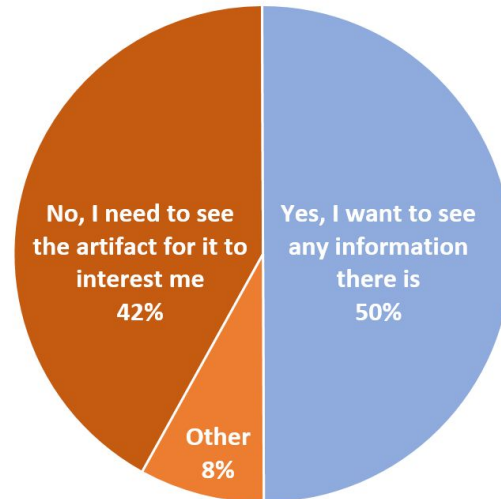
An image to aspire to
DesBrisay Museum, 78.76; 682

² *NovaMuse Public User Survey*, June 2017.




NovaMuse visitors on viewing records without images

When asked if they would intentionally view a record without an image



From NovaMuse Public Survey
2017

- **Talk to local subject matter experts (SME's)**
Harness the knowledge of local experts to help identify objects and enrich artifact records. Use our tip sheet on working with SME's to get familiar with the process. This will engage knowledgeable community members, and give them a venue to share their knowledge with the general public. Visitors have been asking for stories about your artifacts. This is your chance to learn and share them!
- **Train your cataloguers**
In the world of artifact cataloguing, consistency is your friend. Ensure that cataloguers are given resources, and are confident using CollectiveAccess.

Remember: the  is always there to help you in case you forget what goes in a field. This information is constantly updated to provide current information.

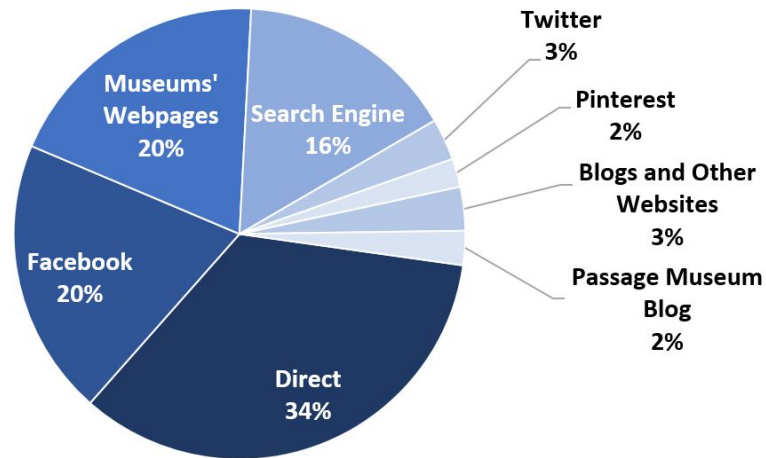
Promote NovaMuse

- **Include a prominent link to NovaMuse on your website**
20% of NovaMuse web traffic is directed to the site from museums' webpages.³ By including a link in a prominent place such as the home page, more visitors to your site will view your online collection. NovaMuse will also grow in popularity, which benefits everyone.

³ *April 2017 Visitor Statistics.* Google Analytics.



How visitors arrive at NovaMuse



Stats for April 2017
Sourced from Google Analytics

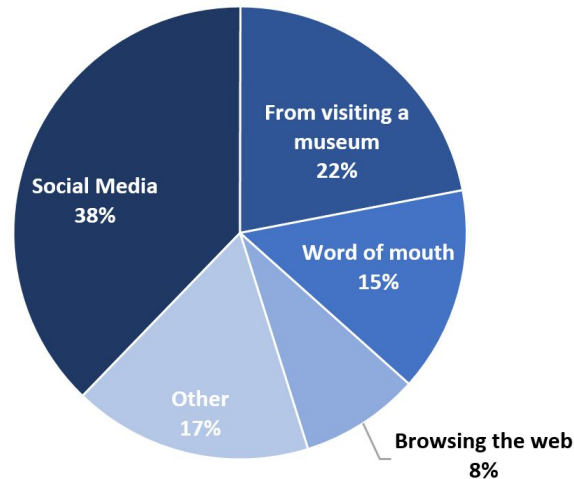
- **Advertise NovaMuse on your social media accounts**
20% of all NovaMuse visitors are directed to the site from facebook.⁴ 38% of survey respondents found out about NovaMuse from social medial.⁵ Boost this number by reminding people of the awesome things they can find! If you are talking about a specific artifact, be sure to include its NovaMuse link in your post. Use artifacts that speak to local events and museum exhibits. Use popular museum hashtags such as #WhoAmI, and #onthisday to promote your collection.
- **Tell your visitors about NovaMuse**
Let your physical visitors know that they can access your collection from home. Ways of doing this include talking to people about NovaMuse, putting up posters up at your site, and handing out promotional materials as visitors leave. Use our templates for NovaMuse posters and business cards.

⁴ *April 2017 Visitor Statistics*. Google Analytics.

⁵ *NovaMuse Public User Survey*, June 2017.



How visitors found out about NovaMuse



From NovaMuse Public Survey
2017

- **In newsletters or other materials circulated to your members and the public**
If you are already talking about something in the collection, this is a great time to remind people to go check it out!

Use NovaMuse Internally

- **Look at other records for inspiration**
Use the records available to you to inspire better records of your own, be it how to photograph something, or write a better description.
- **Exhibition Development**
Exploring your own collection in NovaMuse can spark exhibit ideas. Browsing by theme can bring up artifacts you had not previously considered.
- **Finding artifacts to borrow from other museums**
Need an artifact to compliment your next exhibit? Use NovaMuse to see what your fellow Nova Scotia museums have in their collections. Instead of sending out an inquiry on the listserv, you can see for yourself what there is in your desired subject area or time period. Contacting your colleagues to borrow an artifact is so much easier when you already know the artifact you want, its accession number, and its story.
- **Networking**
Becoming familiar with other museums' collections can be a great networking opportunity. If you see an artifact of interest, or want to know how someone took such a great photograph, ask your colleagues at that institution.

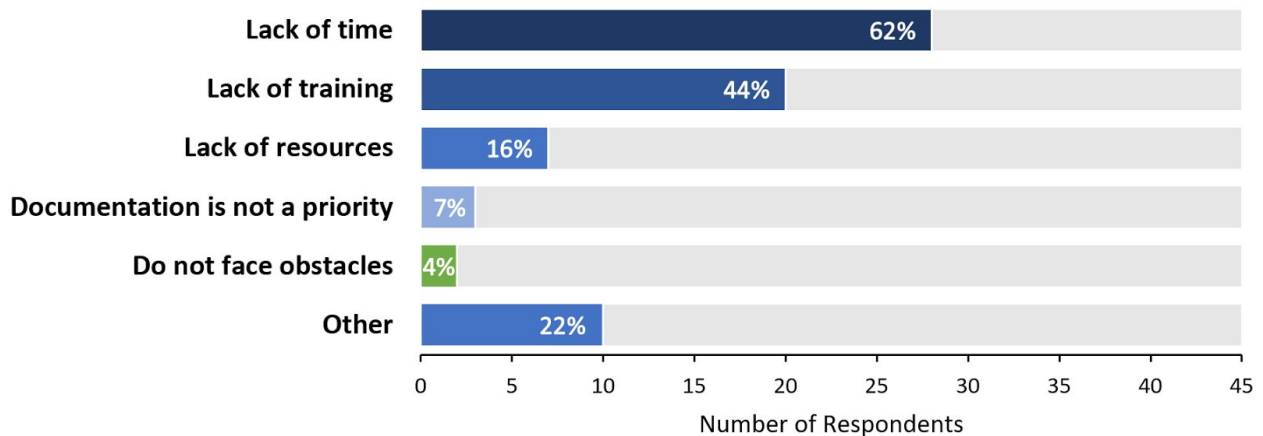


- **Marketing and fundraising**
NovaMuse is an amazing marketing tool for your collection. Use your published collection to drum up interest in artifacts or subjects.
- **Artifact identification and comparison**
Not sure what something you are cataloguing is? Search NovaMuse to find similar items from other museums. You can also use comparison of your artifacts to similar ones on NovaMuse as a form of artifact research, to see if you can find out more about them.

Overcoming Obstacles

Almost everyone faces obstacles, and that is okay. As seen below, a lack of time dedicated to cataloguing and collections work is the leader across the province. Here are some strategies to overcome the things standing in your way.

Obstacles Identified by NovaMuse Contributors



From NovaMuse Contributor Survey 2017

- **Time**
Following a gameplan will let you focus on priority areas first. Make sure to document where you left off so that you can jump right in the next time. Try dedicating a certain amount of time on a particular day of the week to collections work. No matter how short, any bit helps. You can also take advantage of various programs to pre-schedule social media posts.
- **Training**
Consult the resources at your disposal including YouTube tutorials. Contact ANSM for further training opportunities.



- **Resources**
Maintain clear and relevant policies and procedure for collections management. Make an institutional pact to improve your collections documentation. Build records improvement work into other special projects.
- **Priorities**
While the laundry list of things to do always seems to get in the way, how your collections are presented online is crucially important to the image and function of your institution. Make this clear to everyone involved with the museum.
- **Do not be afraid to ask for help**
Whether it is that you cannot figure out how to do something in CollectiveAccess, or your records are not appearing on NovaMuse, do not hesitate to contact ANSM. There is often a simple solution.

Why Does it Matter?

- **Showing donors, and potential donors you care**
People who are donating objects, time, or resources to your collection want to know that you are making the best use of them. By having professional object records and photos, you are proving that your institution is worth their investment. As said by one expert, “No donor will pay you money before they pay you attention. There is no denying that awareness is the absolute first step in all fundraising activity.”⁶
- **Your duty as a museum**
As a museum you are accountable to the public, and owe it to them to show what you have.
- **Education**
NovaMuse gives students of all levels a different way of interacting with historical content, inspiring a love of history.
- **Easy marketing**
It is something you are doing already, and it increases interest in your museum.
- **Accessibility**
Although physical access to museums is becoming easier for people of various abilities, there are some people who cannot visit your museum at all. Your NovaMuse collection lets you reach out to all these people.
- **Because the public wants to see it!**
During the Touchstones Canada 150 campaign, 25 000 votes were cast in 60 days for people's' favourite artifacts.

⁶ Amy Stark in Kara Edie, “Start Spreading the News: Marketing and Communication,” *Small Museum Toolkit: 4 Reaching and Responding to the Audience*, Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko and Stacy Klingler ed. (Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2012), 1.