

*Visitors and Non-Visitors
to
Amber: Window to the Past!*

**An Exhibition at the
National Museum of Natural History**

INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES



Smithsonian
Institution

VISITORS AND NON-VISITORS
to
AMBER: WINDOW TO THE PAST
An Exhibition at the
National Museum of Natural History

Zahava D. Doering
Andrew J. Pekarik and Jean M. Kalata

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Institutional Studies Office
Smithsonian Institution
900 Jefferson Drive, S.W.
Washington, DC. 20560
(202) 786-2232/2289

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Abstract

This study considers the impact of admission fees on attendance to *Amber: Window to the Past*, a special exhibition presented at the National Museum of Natural History from June 6 through September 1, 1997. *Amber* was especially popular with local visitors, most of whom came to the museum specifically to see the exhibition. This local audience for *Amber* favored weekends over weekdays. The admission fee had the greatest deterrent effect on non-local visitors who came to the museum as family groups.

The study discusses three factors that deterred both local and non-local visitors from viewing the exhibition on days when an admission fee was required: financial cost, the pressure of predetermined agendas, and lack of interest in the subject matter.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the individuals who worked with us on this study of *Visitors and Non-Visitors to Amber: Window to the Past*, an Exhibition at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH).

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Zahava D. Doering, Director
Institutional Studies Office

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Introduction

The exhibition *Amber: Window to the Past* was hosted by the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) from June 6 through September 1, 1997. *Amber* was developed by the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. In order to recover the costs of this exhibition, the Smithsonian Institution decided to charge a modest admission fee (\$4 for adults, free for children ages 8 and under). To accommodate visitors who might not be able to afford the fee, NMNH waived admission fees every other Tuesday, a total of six days.

This study was conducted to take advantage of a unique opportunity at the Smithsonian: the chance to explore visitor responses and attitudes toward exhibition-specific admission fees.

Background

Amber: Window to the Past displayed the scientific and artistic aspects of Amber. The exhibition covered a 6,000 square-foot gallery on the first floor of NMNH and included 146 fossil specimens, a diorama of a Dominican amber forest, 94 decorative objects and a film explaining the study of fossilized DNA.

On both free and paid days visitors had to obtain same-day tickets at the *Amber* Box Office, located on the lower level of the museum near the Constitution Avenue exit. Tickets were not available at the exhibition entrance on the first floor of the museum. Advance tickets were also available through Ticketmaster.

Amber was publicized throughout the Washington, DC Metropolitan area through opening review articles and television interviews in June and a few advertisements in the *Washington Post*, as well as notices in the *Post's* Weekend Calendar. There was little publicity in advance of the opening. Throughout the showing, a large banner hung over both the Mall and Constitution Avenue entrances to the museum. In addition, the NMNH Office of Exhibits distributed promotional materials within the museum three to four days each week (beginning in August).

We conducted interviews with visitors who saw the *Amber* exhibition, as well as those who did not, on paid admission days as well as free days.¹ Visitors were asked about their decision to visit (or not visit) the exhibition, what factors influenced their decision, and some basic information about themselves and their prior experience with the

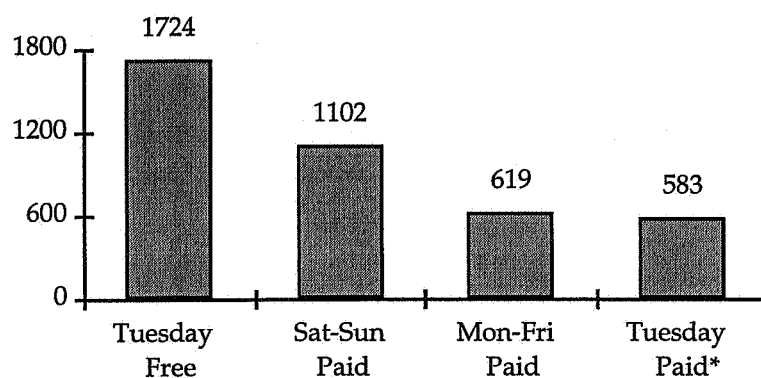
¹ We conducted interviews with visitors exiting the *Amber* exhibition as well as visitors exiting the museum (Mall and Constitution Avenue exits). Interviews were conducted on 12 days: 5 days when admission to *Amber* was free and 7 days on which there was an admission fee. Copies of the questionnaires are in Appendix A.

Smithsonian and NMNH.² Among those who decided not to see *Amber*, we explored their reasons. A total of 1067 visitors (507 at the *Amber* exhibition exit and 560 at the NMNH exits) were interviewed.³

Results

Attendance data from NMNH shows that *Amber* attracted large audiences on free Tuesdays and smaller audiences when the fee admission was charged. The differences in the daily average size of the audiences, on different days, is shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1
Average Daily Attendance at Amber, by Type of Day
 (In Number of Visitors)



*Also included in Mon-Fri: Paid
 Source: Appendix B, Table 1

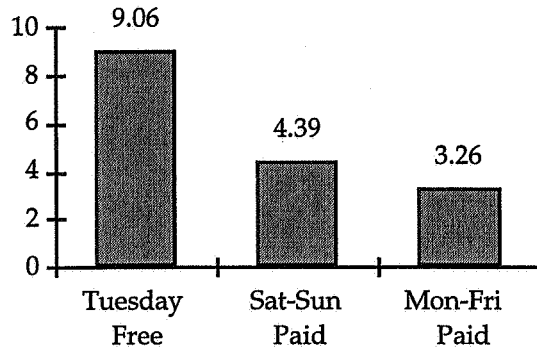
Figure 1 indicates that about three times as many people attended *Amber* on free Tuesdays compared to other (paid) weekdays. It also shows that about twice as many people attended on paid weekends compared to paid weekdays.

However, we also need to consider the overall flow of visitors to NMNH. There are many more visitors in the museum on weekends -- 64% of all visitors to NMNH come on weekends, compared to 36% on weekdays. Figure 2 shows *Amber* visitors as a percentage of NMNH visitors. We see that on free Tuesdays, 9% of visitors saw the exhibition, while on paid days it was 3-4%.

² The American Museum of Natural History in New York conducted a visitor study which primarily focused on the visitor's experience in the exhibition. New York visitors paid admission to the museum and an additional fee for *Amber*.

³ A total of 1386 individuals were intercepted; among the 1299 individuals eligible for the study, a total of 1067 (82%) completed interviews. The study used the general procedures described in Doering, Z. D., Kindlon, A. E., & Bickford, A. (1993). *The Power of Maps: A Study of an Exhibition at the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design* (Report No. 93-5). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution. Study specific details, e.g., interviewing schedule, are available from the Institutional Studies Office.

Figure 2
Percent of NMNH Visitors Attending Amber, by Type of Day



Source: ISO tabulation, on file.

The survey data sheds light on this phenomenon. Our analysis suggests that local and non-local visitors responded differently to the exhibition both in attendance and in their sensitivity to price:

- Local visitors were more drawn to *Amber* than non-local visitors, i.e., there was a higher percentage of locals in the *Amber* audience than in the NMNH audience as a whole.
- Local visitors who saw *Amber* were more likely to have known about the exhibition before the day of their interview and to have come to NMNH specifically to see it, compared to non-local visitors.
- Non-local visitors, especially family groups, were reluctant to invest time and money in *Amber*.

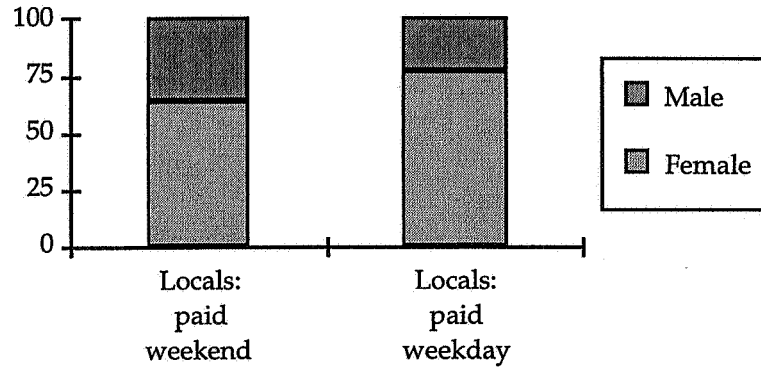
The key results are summarized here:

Attendance: Reasons Unrelated to the Admission Fee

Among local visitors, some sub-groups visited *Amber* more on weekends, compared to weekdays, when admission was charged. These were men, visitors between 45 and 54 years of age, individuals who came to NMNH especially to see *Amber*, and those who heard about the exhibition from family or friends. Their reasons for preferring weekends are related to their lifestyle, and have no relationship with admission fees.

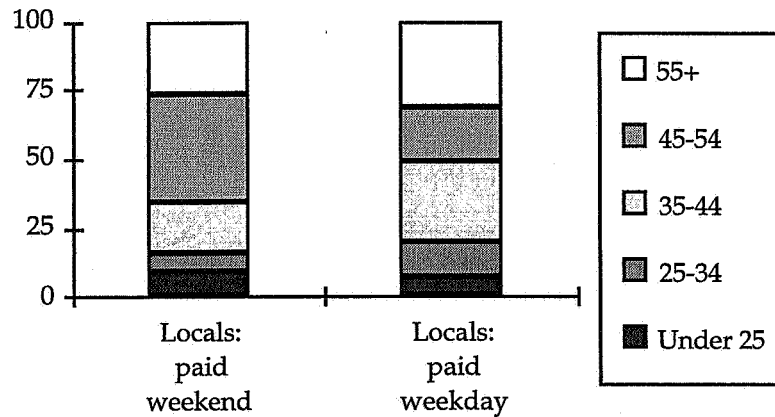
Figure 3 shows the gender difference and Figure 4 the age differences between *Amber* visitation on weekends and paid weekdays. We assume in both cases that the difference is caused by individuals who work during the week and can only visit NMNH on weekends.

Figure 3
Gender of Local Visitors in Amber: Weekend vs. Paid Day
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

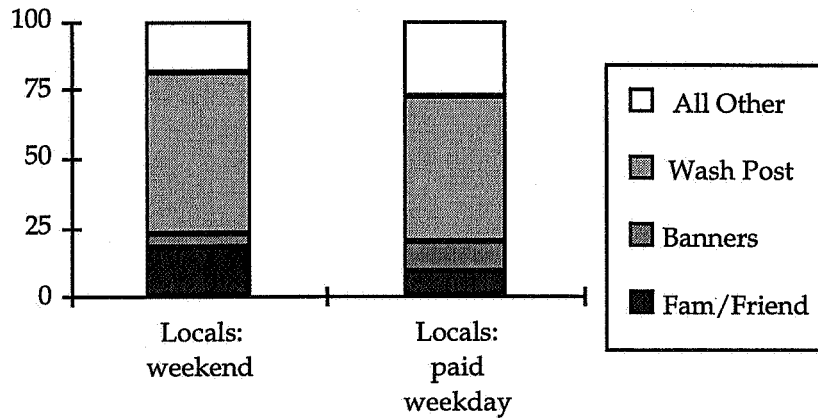
Figure 4
Age of Local Visitors in Amber: Weekend vs. Paid Day
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

Local residents who came to *Amber* on weekends were more likely than those who came on weekdays to know about the exhibition from the *Washington Post* or from the reports of friends and family (Figure 5). We assume that this difference is due to local residents who had looked forward to seeing the exhibition and made it part of their weekend plans.

Figure 5
Information Sources of Local Visitors: Weekend vs. Paid Day
(In Percent)

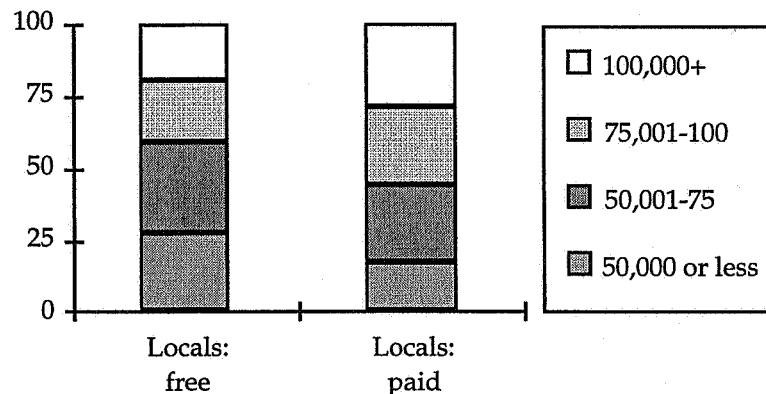


Source: Appendix B, Table 3

Attendance: Reasons Related to the Admission Fee

Some sub-groups were especially drawn to the exhibition on free Tuesdays. They are the groups most sensitive to the admission fee. One reason for such sensitivity is clearly the extent of a visitor's financial resources. As shown in Figure 6, local residents with annual household incomes of \$50,000 or less were 9 percent more likely to attend on a free Tuesday rather than on days when admission was charged. Conversely, local residents with household incomes over \$100,000 were 9 percent more likely to attend on paid days. In general, local residents with household incomes under \$75,000 were more likely to attend on free Tuesdays, while those with incomes over \$75,000 were more likely to attend on paid days.

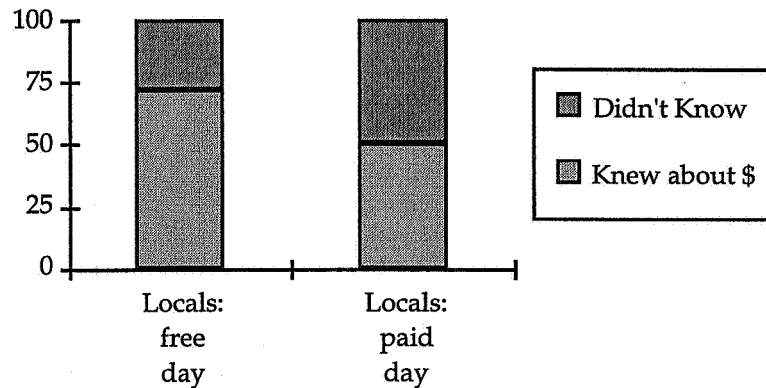
Figure 6
Income of Local Visitors: Free vs. Paid Day
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

When local residents decided whether to visit on a free day or a paid day, they were influenced by their awareness of an admission fee. As shown in Figure 7, the majority of local residents who attended on free Tuesdays knew about the fee, compared to about half on admission fee days. The difference is due to local residents who decided to wait for a free Tuesday in order to visit *Amber*.

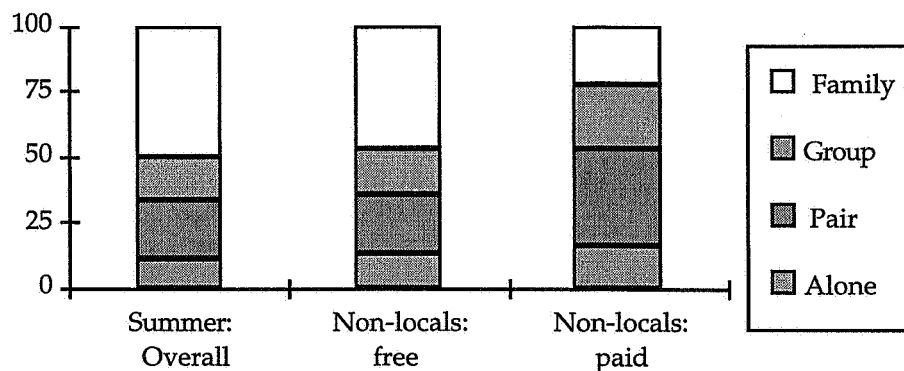
Figure 7
Admission Fee Awareness of Local Visitors: Free vs. Paid Day
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

Very few non-local residents had the option of waiting for a free Tuesday. (About 80% of summer tourists spend less than one week in Washington, DC.) Among non-locals, groups visiting with children seem to have been most sensitive to price. As shown in Figure 8, on free Tuesdays groups with children were represented in *Amber* in the same proportion as their presence in the museum generally. On paid admission days, families are seriously under-represented in *Amber*.

Figure 8
Group Composition of Non-Local Visitors: Free vs. Paid Days
Visitors ages 12 or older
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

Note: Group = Group of three or more adults; Pair = Two adults

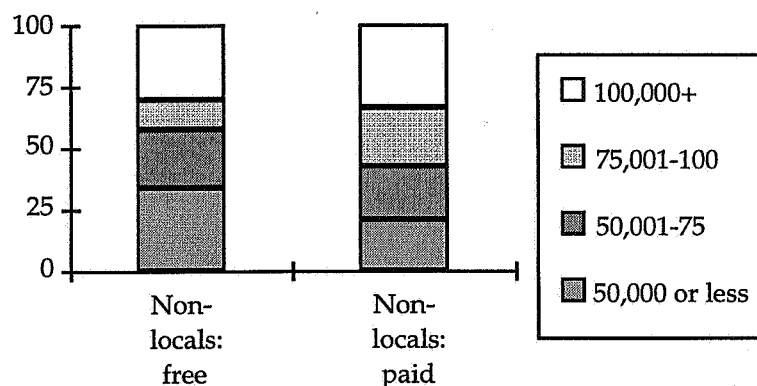
The under-representation of non-local family visitors on paid days had a major impact on overall attendance at *Amber* because this type of visitor is so numerous in the overall NMNH summer audience. NMNH is a family museum. On average, two out of five visitors arrive at NMNH in a social group that includes adults and children. Adults with children reach their peak in the summer months when almost three out of five visitors come in family groups. (Almost two-thirds of these summer groups of adults and children consist of three to five people.)

We believe that the reluctance of non-local families to attend *Amber* is based on two primary reasons, price sensitivity and the time pressure of alternative agendas.

The price sensitivity of non-local visitors, so many of whom arrived at the museum with their families, is not surprising. While the cost for an individual adult or child is relatively low, the total cost for a group of three or four is more substantial.

As with local residents, non-local tourists were more reluctant to pay an admission fee when their annual household income was under \$75,000, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9
Income of Non-local Visitors: Free vs. Paid Day
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

Most visitors arrive at the museum with pre-determined agendas. Local visitors to NMNH are especially attracted to special exhibitions, while non-local visitors are drawn to Dinosaurs and Gems and Minerals.⁴

Our previous 1995 work at NMNH showed that among non-local visitors, one out of three adult summer visitors said they came to NMNH with the intention of seeing or doing something in particular (e.g., the Hope Diamond). About two in five expressed an interest in some general area, such as Dinosaurs or Gems and Minerals. Groups

⁴ In fact, the Gems and Minerals Hall was closed during the summer months and the Hope Diamond was displayed separately in the Rotunda Balcony. However, non-local visitors were not likely to know this before arriving at NMNH.

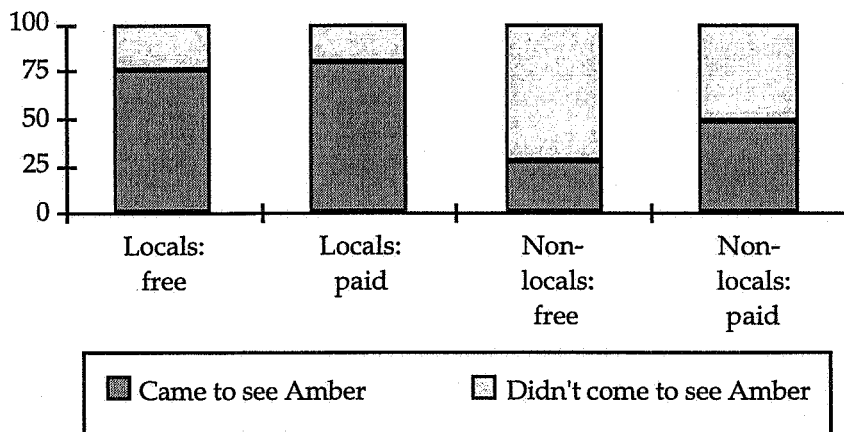
composed of adults and children were especially attracted to Dinosaurs or the Insect Zoo. New visitors, about half of the summer audience, were disproportionately interested in seeing Gems and Minerals and the Hope Diamond.

Visitors to NMNH who did not see *Amber* on paid days gave time as their primary reason for not seeing the exhibition; and non-local visitors cited this reason more than local visitors (61% vs. 44%).⁵

Consistent with this general pattern of visit intentions, most local residents who saw *Amber* had come to the museum specifically for the exhibition, whether there was an admission fee or not (Figure 10).

Half of the non-local residents who saw *Amber* on paid weekdays had come to the museum specifically for that purpose. On free Tuesdays, however, these intentional non-local visitors were greatly outnumbered by non-local residents who had come to the museum for other reasons (Figure 10). This difference suggests that non-local visitors to NMNH were much more willing to work *Amber* into their visit agenda when it was free than when it required an admission fee.

Figure 10
Reason for Visit: Locals and Non-Locals
Free and Paid Days
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

From the perspective of a family from out-of-town with multiple pre-determined agendas for their visit to the Smithsonian and to NMNH, an unplanned visit to *Amber* required an investment of money and time. In view of the many free alternatives around them, the relative lack of prior information about the contents of the exhibition, and, in some cases, a lack of interest in the topic, the cost and time investment seemed high for most non-local visitors.

⁵ Although 44 percent of local visitors who didn't see *Amber* cited time as a reason, a number of these time-pressed visitors also said that they would see it later. If we exclude those who said they would see the exhibition later, the 44 percent is reduced to 37 percent.

Attendance: People Who Preferred to Pay

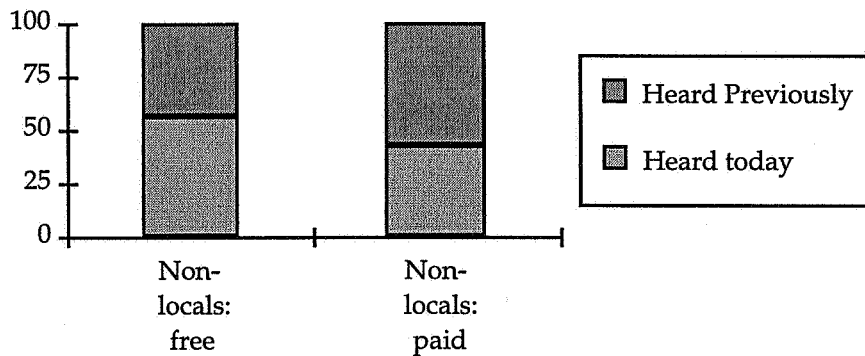
There were several sub-groups who had a negative cost-barrier, i.e. they preferred to attend on a paid day, rather than wait for a free Tuesday because paid days were more convenient or less crowded. The high attendance on free Tuesdays clearly deterred some visitors. On free Tuesdays, 14 percent of non-local residents (and 6% of local residents) who had come to the museum specifically to see *Amber* did not visit the exhibition. On paid days, virtually everyone who came to the museum to see the exhibition was able to visit *Amber*. (See Table 2.)

Among local visitors, individuals with advanced education and those with annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more preferred to attend on paid days. [See Figure 5 above for income.]

Attendance: People for Whom Cost Did Not Matter

Local residents who came to NMNH with the intention of seeing *Amber* appeared to have had no difficulty with the admission fee (See Figure 10 above). A similar pattern is seen among non-local visitors to *Amber* who had heard about the exhibition before the day of their interview (Figure 11).

Figure 11
Awareness of Exhibition among Non-Local Visitors: Free vs. Paid Day
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix B, Table 3

This suggests that the price was right for those who had a prior interest in the exhibition. Conversely, lack of interest was a deterrent for some visitors. Among non-local visitors who did not see *Amber*, nearly one in five (18%) cited the subject matter as a reason for not attending the exhibition.

Discussion

Before *Amber*, the Smithsonian experience with admission fees was limited to the IMAX theater at NASM and *Dinamation* at NMNH (April - September, 1990). Based on those experiences and the behavior of visitors to the Smithsonian, the challenge for any fee exhibition is to present itself as a "must see" event among local visitors and to powerfully capture the interest of non-locals who will have limited information before arriving at the museum. It is competing, after all, with the free exhibitions and icons that most out-of-town tourists associate with the Smithsonian and have come long distances to see.

In the case of *Amber*, attendance at NMNH during the Summer 1997 was certainly high enough to have filled the exhibition to capacity. Visitors who had enough money, time, and interest, and made the investment in seeing the exhibition enjoyed it. We know, for example, that they spent considerable time in the exhibition (over an hour on average) and that almost all (94%) of those who paid to see *Amber* were willing to pay for another exhibition like *Amber*.

The study suggests that attendance at *Amber* was influenced by a willingness (or ability) to make the financial investment, by the attraction of the free alternatives available in the museum (especially for non-local tourists), and by interest in the subject matter of the exhibition.

The relationship between cost and time is complex. Admission fees create a cost barrier, but part of that cost is the value of time. Visitors, especially tourists with families, are constantly making decisions of how they want to allocate their limited Smithsonian time, as well as their money. If they purchase a ticket, they are making a time investment as well as a financial investment, since they will want to stay in the exhibition long enough to get their money's worth. The decision has an impact on their whole schedule. On admission fee days, visitors who encountered *Amber* on the first floor of NMNH had to make an additional time investment and find their way to the ticket counter on the ground level and then return. We cannot estimate the extent to which the ticketing location was a deterrent; certainly "impulse buying" was not an option. On free Tuesdays, many more people were willing to make an initial investment to walk in, as in any other exhibition, since if it was not interesting they could walk out! The average length of a visit on a free day was 20 percent shorter than on a paid day (58 minutes vs. 72 minutes).

Psychological factors may also have influenced the high attendance on free Tuesdays. The willingness to "try out" the exhibition on those days was probably heightened by the aura of restricted access. Non-local visitors in the museum on a free Tuesday may have been more curious about the exhibition because they saw it as something special that was being given away for free on that day only.

Summer 1996 Amber Exhibition Study: NMNH Exit

1. Is today your first visit to this Natural History Museum? Yes [goto Q2] No

1a. How many times have you been here before today? 1 to 3 4 to 9 10+

2. Before today, have you visited other Smithsonian museums? Yes No

3. Did you come to the Mall only to visit Natural History, or as part of general visit to the Smithsonian?

- NMNH only
- NMNH and others if time
- Smithsonian
- Amber (volunteered)

3a. Did you see Amber?
 Yes [goto Q14] No [goto Q6]

4. What led to your decision to visit this museum? **MARK ALL**

- Amber
- Recommendation
- Brought out-of-town guests
- Brought children
- Came with fam./friends
- General nat. hist. interest
- Attend public program
- Castle/SI info
- Repeat visit
- Wandered by
- Reputation
- Tour
- SI mag.
- Shop/eat
- Other _____
- Specific NMNH exhibit

Q4other

5. Do you know that an exhibition about Amber is now open in this museum? Yes [Ask Q5a] No [goto Q14]

5a. Did you see it? Yes [goto Q14] No

6. Did you first hear about the Amber exhibition today or before today? Today Before today

7. Where did you hear about the Amber exhibition? **MARK ALL**

- Fam./friend
- Banners/sign
- Wash. Post
- USA Today
- Washingtonian Mag.
- SI Mag.
- Other newsp./mag.
- Internet/www
- TV
- NMNH info desk
- Castle/SI info
- Hotel info
- Other _____

Q7other

8. When you heard about this exhibition, did you know there was a ticket charge? Yes No

9. Did you know about free admission days? Yes No

10. Here are reasons other visitors have given for NOT seeing Amber. Which come closest to your reasons?

SHOW CARD AND MARK ALL

- a. The subject matter.
- b. Not enough time.
- c. Cost seemed high.
- d. Couldn't leave group.
- e. SI shouldn't charge.
- f. Plan to see another time.
- g. Not for children
- h. Sold out
- i. Other _____

Q10other

Now I just have a few questions about you...

*14. Who are you here in the museum with today?

- Alone
- One other adult
- Several adults
- Child(ren)
- Adult w/children
- Adults w/children
- Group of teens
- Tour group
- School group

statecity

*17. Where do you live?

- Washington, DC
- MD/VA suburbs
- Other US _____
- Foreign _____

*18. What is your age? _____ age

19. What kind of work do you do?

occup

20. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- HS grad or less
- Assoc./Jr/Tech
- Some college
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate study
- MA/Ph.D/Profess.

*21. What is your cultural/racial/ethnic identity?

- African American/Black
- Asian/Pac. Islander
- Caucasian/White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Am./AK Native
- Other _____

22. Which of these categories is the best estimate of your household income? **SHOW CARD**

- a. 25,000 or less
- b. 25,001 - 50,000
- c. 50,001 - 75,000
- d. 75,001 - 100,000
- e. 100,001 - 250,000
- f. 250,001 or more
- g. Not applicable
- refused

*23. Mark gender: Female Male

ADMIN:	location	type	segment	session	status
	<input type="radio"/> Const.	<input type="radio"/> Paid	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/> Interview
	<input type="radio"/> Mall	<input type="radio"/> Free	<input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 4		<input type="radio"/> SI staff
	<input type="radio"/> Amber				<input type="radio"/> Inelig.
					<input type="radio"/> Ref: lang
					<input type="radio"/> Ref. other

Summer 1996 Amber Exhibition Study: Amber Exit

1. Is today your first visit to this Natural History Museum? [] Yes [goto Q2] [] No
1a. How many times have you been here before today? [] 1 to 3 [] 4 to 9 [] 10+

q13time

[] [] [] []

2. Before today, have you visited other Smithsonian museums? [] Yes [] No

3. Did you come to the Mall only to visit Natural History, or as part of general visit to the Smithsonian?

- [] NMNH only [] Smithsonian
[] NMNH and others if time [] Amber (volunteered) [goto Q6]

4. What led to your decision to visit this museum? [MARK ALL]

- [] Amber [] Repeat visit
[] Recommendation [] Wandered by
[] Brought out-of-town guests [] Reputation
[] Brought children [] Tour
[] Came with fam./friends [] SI mag
[] General nat. hist. interest [] Shop/eat
[] Attend public program [] Other
[] Castle/SI info [] Specific NMNH exhibit

q16aoth

[] []

Q4other

[] []

6. Did you first hear about the Amber exhibition today or before today? [] Today [] Before today

7. Where did you hear about the Amber exhibition? [MARK ALL]

- [] Fam./friend [] Internet/www
[] Banners/sign [] TV
[] Wash. Post [] NMNH info desk
[] USA Today [] Castle/SI info
[] Washingtonian Mag. [] Hotel info
[] SI Mag. [] Other
[] Other newsp./mag.

stately

[] [] []

Q7other

[] []

8. When you heard about this exhibition, did you know there was a ticket charge? [] Yes [] No

Paid Days

9. Did you know about free admission days?

- [] Yes [] No [goto Q11]
9a. Any special reason you came today?
[] No [] Only day I/we could come
[] Worried about crowds [] Other

Free Days

9. Did you know before you got your ticket that admission was free today? [] Yes [] No

q12enter

11. Where did you get tickets for the exhibition?

- [] At the museum [] Ticketmaster

[] [] [] []

12. What time did you enter the exhibition?

location type segment session status
[] Const. [] Paid [] 1 [] 3 [] Interview [] Ref: lang
[] Mall [] Free [] 2 [] 4 [] SI staff [] Ref: other
[] Amber [] Inelig.

ADMIN:

13. Did you have to wait at the exhibition entrance?

- [] Yes [] No [goto Q14]

13a. What time was your ticket for? _____

Now I just have a few questions about you...

*14. Who are you here in the museum with today?

- [] Alone [goto Q16] [] Adults w/children
[] One other adult [] Group of teens
[] Several adults [] Tour group
[] Child(ren) [] School group
[] Adult w/children

15. Did all/both of you see Amber? [] Yes [] No

16. Would you be willing to pay the admission fee (\$4 adults) for another special exhibition like Amber at the Smithsonian? [] Yes [Ask Q16a] [] No [Ask Q16b]

16a. What is the most you would be willing to pay?

- [] \$4 [] \$5 [] \$6 [] \$10
[] Other [] Anything [] Depends

16b. Why not? (Also use for Additional Comments)

- [] Others can't afford [] Well worth it [] Too much free
[] SI shouldn't charge [] Senior discount

Paid Day: Ask if price was not mentioned.

16c. Was the ticket price a factor in your decision?

- [] Yes [] No

*17. Where do you live?

- [] Washington, DC [] Other US
[] MD/VA suburbs [] Foreign

*18. What is your age? _____ age [] []

19. What kind of work do you do? _____ occup [] []

20. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- [] HS grad or less [] Bachelor's degree
[] Assoc/Jr/Tech [] Some graduate study
[] Some college [] MA/Ph.D/Profess.

*21. What is your cultural/racial/ethnic identity?

- [] African American/Black [] Hispanic/Latino
[] Asian/Pac. Islander [] Native Am./AK Native
[] Caucasion/White [] Other

22. Which of these categories is the best estimate of your household income? SHOW CARD

- [] a. 25,000 or less [] e. 100,001 - 250,000
[] b. 25,001 - 50,000 [] f. 250,001 or more
[] c. 50,001 - 75,000 [] g. Not applicable
[] d. 75,001 - 100,000 [] refused

*23. Mark gender:

- [] Female [] Male



Appendix B. Tables

Table 1

Attendance to Amber

(Based on Ticket Counter Receipts and Door Counts)

Summary:

<u>Type</u>		<u>Average</u>	<u>Total</u>
		People	People
Mon-Fri	Paid	619	34,658
Sat-Sun	Paid	1102	28,661
Tuesday	Free	1724	10,344
Tuesday	Paid	583	3,495*
*Included in M-F Total			73,663

Details:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>People</u>
6-Jun	Fri	725	1-Jul	Tue: FREE	1750
7-Jun	Sat	1252	2-Jul	Wed	590
8-Jun	Sun	1272	3-Jul	Thu	689
9-Jun	Mon	687	4-Jul	Fri	1183
10-Jun	Tues	645	5-Jul	Sat	1191
11-Jun	Wed	631	6-Jul	Sun	935
12-Jun	Thur	664	7-Jul	Mon	511
13-Jun	Fri	744	8-Jul	Tue	564
14-Jun	Sat	1326	9-Jul	Wed	450
15-Jun	Sun	1087	10-Jul	Thu	494
16-Jun	Mon	654	11-Jul	Fri	515
17-Jun	Tue: FREE	1677	12-Jul	Sat	916
18-Jun	Wed	683	13-Jul	Sun	901
19-Jun	Thu	686	14-Jul	Mon	413
20-Jun	Fri	750	15-Jul	Tue:FREE	1966
21-Jun	Sat	1089	16-Jul	Wed	458
22-Jun	Sun	1017	17-Jul	Thu	489
23-Jun	Mon	640	18-Jul	Fri	536
24-Jun	Tue	554	19-Jul	Sat	936
25-Jun	Wed	601	20-Jul	Sun	969
26-Jun	Thu	430	21-Jul	Mon	417
27-Jun	Fri	689	22-Jul	Tue	548
28-Jun	Sat	1173	23-Jul	Wed	535
29-Jun	Sun	962	24-Jul	Thu	494
30-Jun	Mon	539	25-Jul	Fri*	589
			26-Jul	Sat*	1020
			27-Jul	Sun	1045
			28-Jul	Mon	600
			29-Jul	Tue:FREE	1497

(cont.)

Table 1 (cont.)
Attendance to Amber
 (Based on Ticket Counter Receipts and Door Counts)

Details:

Date	Day	People	Date	Day	People
30-Jul	Wed	634	16-Aug	Sat	1082
31-Jul	Thu	565	17-Aug	Sun	1018
1-Aug	Fri	652	18-Aug	Mon	542
2-Aug	Sat	974	19-Aug	Tue	660
3-Aug	Sun	982	20-Aug	Wed	525
4-Aug	Mon	628	21-Aug	Thu	607
5-Aug	Tue	524	22-Aug	Fri	677
6-Aug	Wed	625	23-Aug	Sat	1118
7-Aug	Thu	520	24-Aug	Sun	1033
8-Aug	Fri	723	25-Aug	Mon	573
9-Aug	Sat	1120	26-Aug	Tue:FREE	1719
10-Aug	Sun	1090	27-Aug	Wed	618
11-Aug	Mon	542	28-Aug	Thu	567
12-Aug	Tue:FREE	1735	29-Aug	Fri	893
13-Aug	Wed	613	30-Aug	Sat	1485
14-Aug	Thu*	679	31-Aug	Sun	1668
15-Aug	Fri*	620	1-Sep	Mon	1274

*Special program days: "Identify Amber".

Table 2
Visitors at NMNH Who Did Not See the Amber Exhibition
Type of Day, Local and Non Local
(In Percent)

	Free Tuesdays		Paid: Weekend		Paid: Weekday		Paid: Anytime		Did Not See		Overall	
	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	Total
Gender												
Female	61	55	91	51	54	62	68	58	65	57	59	59
Male	39	45	9	49	46	38	32	42	35	43	41	41
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Age												
Under 25	9	15	18	19	15	16	16	17	13	16	16	16
25-34	18	17	40	16	28	15	33	16	27	16	18	18
35-44	28	31	16	33	34	33	27	33	28	32	31	31
45-54	34	31	10	24	18	29	15	27	23	29	27	27
55+	11	6	16	8	6	7	10	7	10	7	7	7
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Education												
BA+	88	65	69	58	70	60	70	49	76	62	64	64
Less than BA	12	35	31	42	30	40	30	33	24	38	36	36
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Who With												
Alone	22	18	26	12	19	13	22	13	22	14	16	16
Pair	0	24	17	26	24	19	21	21	13	22	20	20
Group	16	9	16	15	2	12	8	13	11	12	12	12
Family	62	50	41	48	55	55	49	53	54	52	52	52
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(cont.)

Table 2 (cont.)

	Free Tuesdays		Paid: Weekend		Paid: Weekday		Paid: Anytime		Did Not See		Overall Total	
	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc		
Income												
50,000 or less	15	27	24	46	20	26	22	34	32	29	24	28
50,001-75,000	27	41	37	9	40	33	41	29	28	32	27	33
75,001-100,000	34	9	17	39	7	14	31	19	34	15	34	18
100,000+	23	22	22	6	33	27	6	19	6	23	14	21
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
First Visit												
Yes	8	51	41	10	47	39	29	52	22	51	16	44
No	92	49	59	90	53	61	71	48	78	49	84	56
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Repeat Visitors: # of Previous Visits												
1 to 3	8	60	41	0	44	30	25	69	14	61	11	46
4 to 9	40	32	35	21	23	23	32	23	27	23	32	28
10+	52	7	24	79	32	48	44	7	60	16	56	26
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Familiar with SI												
No	4	29	23	10	26	22	11	17	11	20	8	20
Yes	96	71	77	90	74	78	89	83	89	80	92	80
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Came Specifically to see Amber												
Yes	14	6	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	6	3
No	86	94	92	100	100	100	100	99	100	99	94	97
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(cont.)

Table 2 (cont.)

	<u>Free Tuesdays</u>			<u>Paid: Weekend</u>			<u>Paid: Weekday</u>			<u>Paid: Anytime</u>			<u>Did Not See</u>		<u>Overall</u>
	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total
When Heard															
Today	44	70	64	53	80	74	74	86	84	66	84	81	57	80	75
Before	56	30	36	47	20	26	26	14	16	34	16	19	43	20	25
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Know Charge?															
Yes	48	42	43	82	38	48	58	51	52	67	47	50	60	45	48
No	52	58	57	18	62	52	42	49	48	33	53	50	40	55	52
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Know Free?															
Yes	29	12	16	19	5	8	14	5	7	16	5	7	21	7	10
No	71	88	84	81	95	92	86	95	93	84	95	93	79	93	90
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
How Heard?															
Fam/Friend	5	2	3	12	6	7	14	6	7	13	6	7	10	5	6
Banners	40	75	67	53	80	74	57	87	82	56	85	80	50	82	75
Wash Post	33	3	10	19	0	4	7	1	2	11	1	3	20	2	5
All Other	22	20	20	17	14	14	22	6	8	20	8	10	20	12	14
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Cases	33	76	138	19	66	85	30	153	183	49	219	268	82	324	406

Table 3
Visitors at NMNH Who Saw the Amber Exhibition
Type of Day, Local and Non Local (In Percent)
(In Percent)

	<u>Free Tuesdays</u>			<u>Paid: Weekend</u>			<u>Paid: Weekday</u>			<u>Paid: Anytime</u>			<u>Did Not See</u>		<u>Overall</u>
	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total
Gender															
Female	63	57	61	64	63	63	77	66	70	70	65	67	66	61	63
Male	37	43	39	36	37	37	23	34	30	30	35	33	34	39	37
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Age															
Under 25	7	18	14	9	12	11	7	19	14	8	16	12	8	17	13
25-34	8	12	10	6	14	10	13	8	10	9	10	10	9	11	10
35-44	18	28	24	19	25	22	29	27	28	24	26	25	21	27	25
45-54	17	21	19	39	22	31	19	25	23	30	24	27	23	22	23
55+	49	22	32	27	27	27	32	22	25	29	24	26	40	23	29
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Education															
BA+	64	55	59	68	62	65	69	61	64	68	61	64	66	58	61
Less than BA	36	45	41	32	38	35	31	39	36	32	39	36	34	42	39
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Who With															
Alone	24	13	18	8	8	8	18	21	20	12	16	14	19	15	16
Pair	38	22	27	43	32	37	31	40	37	37	37	37	38	28	32
Group	14	18	17	26	40	33	14	14	14	20	24	23	17	21	19
Family	23	47	38	24	20	22	38	25	29	30	23	26	27	36	33
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(cont.)

Table 3 (cont.)

	<u>Free Tuesdays</u>			<u>Paid: Weekend</u>			<u>Paid: Weekday</u>			<u>Paid: Anytime</u>			<u>Did Not See</u>		<u>Overall</u>
	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total
Income															
50,000 or less	27	33	31	15	20	17	21	21	21	18	21	19	23	28	26
50,001-75,000	31	24	27	27	20	24	27	23	24	27	22	24	29	23	26
75,001-100,000	22	12	16	25	22	24	28	25	26	27	24	25	24	17	20
100,000+	20	31	26	33	38	35	24	31	28	29	34	32	24	32	29
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
First Visit															
Yes	11	51	35	7	35	21	5	39	27	6	37	24	9	45	30
No	89	49	65	93	65	79	95	61	73	94	63	76	91	55	70
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Repeat Visitors: # of Previous Visits															
1 to 3	7	42	24	5	50	24	12	39	26	8	44	25	8	43	24
4 to 9	22	23	23	24	13	19	21	31	26	22	23	23	22	23	23
10+	71	35	54	71	37	57	68	31	48	69	33	52	70	34	53
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Familiar with SI															
No	3	22	15	0	25	13	1	21	14	0	23	13	2	23	14
Yes	97	78	85	100	75	87	99	79	86	100	77	87	98	77	86
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Came Specifically to see Amber															
Yes	76	27	44	90	49	69	69	49	56	80	49	62	78	36	52
No	24	73	56	10	51	31	31	51	44	20	51	38	22	64	48
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(cont.)

Table 3 (cont.)

	Free Tuesdays		Paid: Weekend		Paid: Weekday		Paid: Anytime		Did Not See		Overall Total
	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	Local	NotLoc	
When Heard											
Today	10	56	11	47	14	40	13	43	11	50	34
Before	90	44	89	53	86	60	87	57	89	50	66
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Know Charge?											
Yes	72	41	47	37	59	47	51	43	62	42	50
No	28	59	56	63	41	53	49	57	38	58	50
	100	100	103	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Know Free?											
Yes	0	0	36	13	35	14	35	14	35	14	23
No			64	87	65	86	65	86	65	86	77
			100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
How Heard?											
Fam/Friend	15	16	18	18	9	23	14	21	15	18	17
Banners	15	45	5	49	10	39	7	43	11	44	31
Wash Post	60	12	58	7	53	11	56	10	58	11	30
All Other	10	27	19	25	28	26	23	26	16	27	22
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Cases	69	116	33	33	29	50	61	84	131	200	331

Appendix C Supplementary Notes

The Visitors to NMNH - Summer 1997

Visitors to NMNH during the *Amber* exhibition did not differ from visitors interviewed during a similar period, as part of a year-long study, in 1995.¹ As shown in C.1, the NMNH summer visitorship consists primarily of groups of adults and children (50% in 1997 and 49% in 1995) and is characterized mostly by non-local American visitors (68% in 1995 and 74% in 1997). The gender, age and racial/ethnic make-up of visitors was similar between the two studies, with some slight differences in educational attainment; visitors to NMNH in 1997 included slightly more college graduates (45% compared to 31% in 1995) and fewer high school (or less) graduates (9% compared to 18% in 1997).

Self Selection: Amber Visitors/Non-Visitors

As we know from other studies, there is self selection among Smithsonian visitors in deciding which museum to attend. However, in the course of one or two trips, almost all visitors (especially those from outside the area) visit NMNH, the National Air and Space Museum, and the National Museum of American History. Within a museum, there is also self selection, with local residents more likely to attend new exhibitions and tourists, especially on a first visit, more likely to see national icons. Thus, it is not surprising that, overall, *Amber* visitors were disproportionately local (almost 40% from the metropolitan area) in comparison to non-visitors (about 20% from the metropolitan area).

Time in Exhibition

Our data allows us to estimate the amount of time people spent in *Amber*.² The most striking difference is that people who paid for admission to *Amber* spent significantly more time in the exhibition (72.2 minutes on average) than those who did not pay (58 minutes on average). This can be accounted for in two ways. First of all, visitors who pay for admission have more invested in the visit and thus want to get their money's worth. Secondly, as shown in Table 1 (App. B), attendance to *Amber* on free days was much higher than on other days. Thus, larger crowds may have influenced visitors to spend less time in the exhibition.

¹ See Bielick, S., Pekarik, A. J., & Doering, Z. D. (1995). *Beyond the Elephant: A Report Based on the 1994-1995 National Museum of Natural History Visitor Survey* (Report No. 95-6B). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

² As part of our survey, we asked *Amber* visitors when they entered the exhibition. Respondents could easily remember entrance times since all tickets had timed entry. By subtracting entrance times from the time of the interview, we calculated time spent in the exhibition.

When time in the exhibition is examined more closely, we find that it supports some of our earlier observations. First-time visitors to the museum, who were most likely to have alternative agendas for their visit, spent less time in Amber on average, compared to those who had previously visited the museum (54.3 minutes vs. 68.2 minutes). Those who had read about the exhibition in the *Washington Post* and those who came to the museum specifically to see it (these are both primarily local residents) spent longer in the exhibition than those who did not, as shown in Table C.3.

Paying for Another Exhibition.

Visitors who saw *Amber* were asked if they would be willing to pay for another similar exhibition. The results should be viewed with caution. Unless an experience is genuinely unpleasant, individuals are not likely to admit that they made a poor investment (either time or money). Overall, 86% indicated a willingness to pay again. Not surprisingly, visitors on paid days, were more willing (94%) than visitors on free days (80%) (see Table C.4). The amounts of money the two groups would be willing to pay, however, were similar. Just over half of all visitors would be willing to pay \$4 or \$5 for another similar exhibition. Some visitors (14%) would be willing to pay more while others said the amount they would be willing to pay depended on the subject of the exhibition (17%).

The most common response given by those who saw *Amber*, but who indicated that they would not be willing to pay for another exhibition, expressed a belief that the Smithsonian should not charge for exhibitions (see Table C.4). Of all those who saw Amber, 5% felt that the Smithsonian should not charge. This feeling was expressed more often on free days (7% of all visitors) than on paid days (3%). Another reason given for an unwillingness to pay for an exhibition was that "too much else at the Smithsonian is free." This was almost exclusively stated by free day visitors. Obviously, those who had paid had made an investment.

The greatest time difference between sub-groups in this study was the difference between those who were willing to pay for another exhibition like *Amber* and those who weren't. Those willing to pay spent twice as long in the exhibition as those not willing to pay again (65.6 minutes vs. 32.7 minutes). It seems that this latter group was the least interested in or the least satisfied by the exhibition.

Reasons for Not Attending Amber

We asked NMNH visitors who chose not to see *Amber* to identify (from a list) their reasons for not attending the exhibition.³ Similar to responses given at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, time was the most common reason for not seeing the *Amber* exhibition (see Table C.5). Other visitors responded that the subject matter did not interest them, they plan to see the exhibition another time, or that the Smithsonian should not charge.

³ The list shown to visitors included: the subject matter, not enough time, cost seemed high, couldn't leave group, SI shouldn't charge, plan to see another time, not for children, sold out, and other.

Table C.1
Comparison of Visitors to NMNH Based on the
NMNH Study (Summer) and the 1997 Amber Study
People 12 Years of Age or Older
(In Percent)

	1995 NMNH Study (Summer)	1997 NMNH Exits*
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	50.4	53.7
Male	<u>49.6</u>	<u>46.3</u>
	100.0	100.0
<u>Age</u>		
12 to 19	15.1	13.0
20-24	9.1	4.6
25-34	17.1	17.2
35-44	28.9	29.8
45-54	18.2	25.0
55-64	6.6	6.0
65 or older	<u>5.1</u>	<u>4.5</u>
	100.1	100.0
<u>Racial/Ethnic Identity (U.S. only)</u>		
African American/Black	6.6	6.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.5	7.3
Caucasian	82.1	79.8
Hispanic/Nat. Amer./Multiple	<u>4.8</u>	<u>6.8</u>
	100.0	100.0
<u>Residence</u>		
Washington, D.C.	3.1	4.6
MD/VA Suburbs	12.5	15.6
Other U.S.	72.8	67.5
Foreign	<u>11.6</u>	<u>12.3</u>
	100.0	100.0
<u>Visit Group</u>		
Alone	11.3	15.1
Couple	22.0	20.4
Group of adults	16.8	15.6
Group of Adults and Children	<u>49.9</u>	<u>48.9</u>
	100.0	100.0
*Includes refusals; may differ slightly from other tables		

Table C.1A
Additional Demographic Characteristics
1995 NMNH Study (Summer) and 1997 Amber Study

	1995 NMNH Study (Summer)	1997 NMNH Exits
<u>Educational Attainment: Over age 25</u>		
High School Graduate or Less	17.9	9.2
AA/Tech/Some College	20.5	16.4
Bachelors/Some Grad	30.8	45.1
MA/PhD/Prof. Degree	<u>30.8</u>	<u>29.2</u>
	100.0	100.0
<u>Age: Total Population</u>		
Under 12	18.1	*
12 to 19	15.0	
20-24	7.1	
25-34	13.4	
35-44	22.8	
45-54	14.4	
55-64	5.2	
65 or older	<u>4.0</u>	
	100.0	
<u>Visit Group: Total Population</u>		
Alone	8.9	*
Couple	17.7	
Group of Adults	16.4	
Group of Adults and Children	<u>57.0</u>	
	100.0	

*1997 Study limited to respondents 12 years or older

Table C.2
Comparison of Visitors: Demographic Characteristics
(In Percent)

	Didn't See Amber				Total
	Free Day	Paid Day		Total	
		Weekend	Weekday		
<u>Residence</u>					
Washington, D.C.	7	6	4	5	6
MD/VA Suburbs	17	16	12	13	15
Other U.S.	69	71	70	70	70
Foreign	2	2	14	12	10
	100	100	100	100	100

	Saw Amber				Total
	Free Day	Paid Day		Total	
		Weekend	Weekday		
<u>Residence</u>					
Washington, D.C.	8	10	7	9	8
MD/VA Suburbs	30	39	29	34	32
Other U.S.	54	45	58	52	53
Foreign	8	5	6	5	7
	100	100	100	100	100

Table C.3
Significant Associations Between Time in the Amber Exhibition
and Other Study Variables
(In Percent)

	<u>Time Category (In Minutes)</u>					Avg.	S.D.
	0-39	40-64	65-91	91 +	Total		
<u>Interest in Amber</u>							
Came specifically to see Amber	21	23	32	24	100	71.0	28.3
Did not mention Amber as visit purpose	38	23	31	8	100	55.5	27.0
<u>Heard about Amber from the Washington Post</u>							
Yes	20	24	30	26	100	61.6	29.5
No	32	23	32	13	100	70.7	24.8
<u>First Visit to NMNH</u>							
Yes	36	30	25	9	100	54.3	22.5
No	25	21	34	20	100	68.2	28.9
<u>Paid an Admission Fee for Amber</u>							
Yes	18	21	40	21	100	72.2	25.4
No, came on a free Tuesday	37	25	24	14	100	58.0	31.2
<u>Willing to Pay Admission in Future</u>							
Yes	25	24	32	19	100	65.6	25.3
No	46	21	26	7	100	54.0	32.7
All Visitors (N=299)	28	24	31	17	100	64.8	34.6

Table C.4
Willing to Pay for Another Exhibition
Visitors at NMNH Who Saw the Amber Exhibition
Type of Day, Local and Non Local
(In Percent)

Willing to pay again?	Free Tuesdays			Paid: Weekend			Paid: Weekday			Paid: Anytime			Saw		Overall
	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total	Local	NotLoc	Total
Yes	86	76	80	95	91	93	92	95	94	93	94	94	90	84	86
Amount:															
\$4	23	19	21	28	25	27	19	18	19	24	21	23	24	20	22
\$5	32	28	30	40	24	32	36	30	32	38	27	32	35	28	31
\$6	2	7	5	0	7	4	3	4	4	1	5	4	2	6	4
\$10	9	8	8	7	19	13	6	12	10	7	15	12	8	11	10
Other/No Ans/anything	3	2	2	1	8	5	5	4	4	3	6	5	3	3	3
Depends	18	13	15	18	7	12	22	27	25	20	19	19	19	16	17
No	14	24	20	5	9	7	8	5	6	7	6	7	10	16	14
Reasons:															
Others can't afford	0	3	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	1
SI shouldn't charge	6	8	7	2	1	1	5	3	4	3	2	3	5	6	5
Other/no answer	3	5	4	4	6	5	1	1	1	2	3	3	3	4	4
Too much else free	5	7	6	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	3	4	4
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table C.5
Reason for Not Attending Amber*
Visitors at NMNH Who Did Not See the Amber Exhibition
Type of Day, Local and Non Local
(In Percent)

Subject	Free Tuesdays		Paid Anytime		Local Non-Local Overall		
	Local	Non-local	Local	Non-local	Total	Total	Total
Subject	16	18	7	18	16	11	16
Time	57	57	44	61	58	49	56
Cost too high	8	9	24	13	15	18	13
Stay in group	0	3	8	2	3	5	3
SI not charge	4	9	11	14	13	8	12
See later	41	12	34	12	16	37	16
Not for kids	7	5	10	3	5	9	5
Sold out	0	5	0	0	0	0	2
Other	0	4	0	2	2	0	2
	132	123	139	124	127	136	124

*Totals equal more than 100% because some visitors gave more than one answer.