

Something that I have been thinking about recently as the museum I work at moves toward a gradual reopening is the impact Covid-19 will have on our accessibility and interactive aspects. I had recently done a walk-through and determined which things will need to be removed or blocked off and was struck by how much this will change the visitor's experience.

For instance, one of our main attractions is a half-scale ship model that visitors can walk around to get a feel for what it was like to live and work on such a vessel. That will have to be closed off. Another main interactive that has to be closed off is a life-sized model of a whale heart that can be crawled around in. We will have to remove all touch-screen kiosks which provide a good deal of information in addition to labels. Accommodations for visitors who may have vision or hearing loss will be affected – no objects to touch or smell, no reusable audio-guides available at the front desk, and no guided tours as it will be a while before our docents are allowed to return or are comfortable doing so.

I'm sure many other museums will be facing similar situations and grappling with how best to handle this and I'd like to hear your experiences with it or what your museum is thinking of doing. It may be the reality that there is little we can do now and will have to wait until the health crisis passes to re-integrate interactive components.