

National Association for Interpretation
Media Awards Competition

Judging Criteria and Guidelines for Trail Guide Category

INTERPRETATION

Does the entry focus on themes and larger ideas rather than facts and details?

- Individual stops are linked into a coherent story
- Experience as a whole conveys a central theme
- Links tangibles to meaningful intangibles and relates them to universal concepts
- When facts and details are used, they illustrate larger concepts

Have the developers taken care to make the message(s) relevant?

- Intended audience(s) have been clearly identified and defined
- Topics and themes are likely to appeal to audience interests
- Messages relate to what's actually seen/heard/experienced at each stop
- Employs appropriate techniques such as metaphor, comparison, etc.
- Develops an appreciation for the resource
- Messages are likely to resonate with users long after visit is over
- Messages are likely to spark deepened interest, involvement, and/or action

Does the entry serve a clear purpose?

- Goal(s) for entry are clearly defined
- Likely to provoke thought, spark imagination, encourage further exploration, and/or inspire user action
- Serves the resource, site, and/or parent organization/agency
- Serves the interests of the visitor
- Entry meets its stated goal(s)
- Offers contact information and/or avenues for further exploration

PLANNING AND DESIGN/COMPOSITION

Does the composition/design of the entry catch and retain interest?

- Visually attractive and stimulating
- Stylistically and typographically consistent
- Neither too short nor too long
- Employs images, colors, textures, other non-verbal features wherever possible
- Offers hands-on or other opportunities to interact or engage with the resource
- Offers an effective balance of verbal and non-verbal elements

How effectively do graphic and design elements communicate the message without distracting from it?

- Graphic elements are appropriate to story
- Graphic elements are of good quality
- Graphic elements are stylistically consistent
- Typefaces and styles are compatible with/help to convey the story
- Design elements as a whole are appropriate to the message, site, audiences, and agency/organization

Does the design/composition make the entry easy to use, understand, and navigate?

- Typefaces and their styles and sizes make text easy to read
- Letter spacing, word spacing, and leading make text easy to read
- Text blocking and layout is uncluttered and simple
- Negative space and background are used effectively
- Accommodates natural patterns of eye movement
- Colors, textures, and backgrounds reduce eyestrain and glare
- Visual sequences enhance the message
- Offers multiple message levels
- Information is organized into a message hierarchy
- (If applicable) Wayfinding aids employ clear maps, universal icons, color coding, etc.
- Convenient size to carry around
- Easy to re-fold

Were reasonable efforts made to make the product universally accessible?

- Language/literacy barriers
- Offers visual and/or experiential alternatives to text
- Written in the dominant language(s) of target audience(s)
- Visually impaired visitors
- Typeface size; legible colors; tactile features; texture-enhanced maps and handouts; audio features or audio alternatives
- Multiple learning styles are accommodated

WRITING, EDITING, CONTINUITY

Does the entry tell an enjoyable and/or compelling story?

- Writing engages and retains interest
- Employs active verbs, concrete nouns, and personal language
- Content is geared to what is actually experienced at each stop
- Story is likely to remain current over expected lifespan of product
- Content addresses the obvious questions that may arise at each stop

Is the writing suitable for the intended audience(s)?

- Appropriate reading level
- Appropriate tone/narrative style
- Appropriate length
- Avoids jargon and technical terms; unavoidable terms are defined
- Avoids pop-culture references likely to become outdated during the expected lifespan of the entry
- Writing is stylistically consistent

Is the product free of flaws?

- Overall attention to detail reflects well on parent organization/agency
- Avoids errors of spelling, punctuation, facts, pronunciation, and printing

MATERIALS/ENVIRONMENT/IMPLEMENTATION

Have the developers taken care to ensure materials are suited to their application and environment, reasonably maintenance-free, and/or reusable/recyclable?

- Materials are appropriate to the message
- Materials are appropriate to the design
- Materials are sturdy enough for re-use (or for use as a visitor memento, if applicable)
- Materials and printing process are consistent with the messages and mission of site/agency/organization

Regardless of the size of the budget, how well did the developers apply their creativity to produce a quality visitor experience?

- Entry takes an original and creative approach to interpretation
- Developers made the best use of the available budget to produce a memorable and meaningful visitor experience
- Entry facilitates a meaningful connection between the audience and the resource
- Overall, the experience creates a favorable balance between the effort required to use the product and the reward gained from using it