

A card game about museums and cultural management: TAG MUSEUM®¹

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Abstract: This work explains the card game called TAG MUSEUM®, which is about museums and cultural management. The game is available in Spanish and in English, and is already on sale on internet on Amazon. It is aimed at young people aged 16 and up. It is the result of a transfer knowledge project at the University of Jaén (Spain). ICOFOM reviewed it and gave a very positive opinion. This work focuses on the contents and uses of the game that enable the creation of transversal meaning and to think about museums globally. TAG MUSEUM® is made up of a total of 124 cards and four games that take in different areas and services of museums: archetype, functions, management, services, spaces, products and the public. The results and conclusions contribute some critical observations about how TAG MUSEUM® enables motivation and making meaning.

Keywords: museology, art, cultural management, serious games, gamification

Introduction

What a museum is is one of the main questions that scholars and international experts are currently discussing (Mairesse, 2017). This debate began in 2015, when UNESCO published Recommendations on the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society (UNESCO, 2015). It agrees with four primary functions of museums, as follows: to preserve, investigate, communicate and educate. In addition, it highlights the important role that museums play in society, according to four main issues: globalisation, museum relations with the economy and quality of life, social function and museums, and ICTs.

In 2016, ICOM began the important task of redefining what the museum means in the 21st century. This work is ongoing. Its international committee, ICOFOM, which is specialised in Museology, initiated a democratic, transparent and participatory process. It created an open consultation through an online survey to collect a wide range of opinions (Brulon, Brown and Nazor, 2018). In September 2019, ICOFOM presented a final synthesis of opinions and proposals for deliberation at the 25th ICOM General Conference in Kyoto. There was an intense and thoughtful debate, but

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museums involve complexities and variations, and defining what a museum is in the 21st century still requires more work.

Structural technologies, management, content management, etc., challenge our imaginations and expectations of what museums are. The institutional and structural landscapes of museums have changed (Basso, Lanz & Postiglione, 2013; Anderson, 2004). Now, visiting a museum is not just about going to see a collection, but also enjoying a wide range of services, activities and spaces (Stephen, 2001). Museums have introduced new facilities and services, such as cafes, restaurants, shops, cinemas, auditoriums, etc., as well as a wide and diverse cultural agenda to cater to different audience profiles. All this requires complex management and financing formulas. Museums no longer survive on a single patron, be it public or private. It is necessary to integrate different formulas according to projects, materials, activities, the public, etc. Several possible management formulas can be found in the same museum, and reconciling all of them is a challenge for museums in the 21st century.

1 Objectives

This work presents the product TAG MUSEUM[®], which is an original card game about museums and cultural management. This game offers a solution on how to think about museums globally and how they work. Throughout this work we will explore what this product is and how it contributes to a wide audience. Young people and adults alike get a better understanding of what museums are and how they work today by expanding the imaginary of what we can find in museums, and also expanding our expectations and understanding of these institutions, which are complex.

2 TAG MUSEUM[®]

TAG MUSEUM[®] is a card game about museums and cultural management, as we said. It is comprised of 124 cards. These correspond to seven thematic categories: Archetype, Functions, Services, Management, Products, Spaces and Public. The set of cards brings together the elements that are most common in museums today. The category Archetype (cyan) refers to the basic elements of museums, and it comprises four cards/elements: branding, headquarters-architecture, website and collection. The category Functions (yellow) refers to the functions of museums, and it comprises four cards: acquisition, conservation, research and dissemination (Alexander, Alexander & Decker, 2008).

The category Services (orange) refers to the work areas of the museums, and in some cases it may coincide with the structural organisation of the institution according to the departments: collections management, inventory & documentation, care & preservation of collections, educational programmes, cultural programmes, publishing, customer service, inquiries to the museum storage,

and space rental (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010). The category Management (purple) covers several dozen cards/elements, and they are divided into subcategories. In order not to make it difficult to read the work, we will only cite the subcategories, which will also give a clear idea about the rest of the contents: ownership, legislation, management models, governing bodies, employee status, legal management figures, financing and security (Lord & Lord, 2009; Bonet, Castañer & Font, 2009; ICOM, 2004).

The category Spaces (blue) also includes several dozen cards/elements; It is arranged in four subcategories: public areas that are not part of the collection (like shop, cloakroom, library, auditorium, information desk, and others); public areas that are part of the collection (permanent rooms, temporary rooms and research rooms); internal areas that are part of the collection (storage & archives, and laboratories); internal areas that are not part of the collection (offices). The category Products (green) refers to what museums offer and their publications. Again, this is a broad category that spans several dozen cards/elements and is divided into three subcategories: cultural products (like permanent exhibitions, temporary exhibitions, guided tours, performances, film series, private events, etc.); publishing products (like digital collection, catalogue & specialist publications, merchandise, etc.); and educational products (like courses & master's degrees, learning resources, teacher training, etc.).

Finally, the category Public (magenta) refers to the diversity of public profiles that currently determine the services and agenda of museums. It is divided into four subcategories: provenance (like foreign visitors, national visitors and local visitors); age (kids, juniors, adults and seniors); prior knowledge (elementary knowledge, general knowledge and expert knowledge); socioeconomic group (high class, middle class, low class and those at risk of social exclusion); finally, type of visit (like individual, group, family, schools, accessible and inclusive).

TAG MUSEUM® is adapted to three levels of difficulty: basic, medium and advanced. It is aimed at a wide audience. It is ideal for both young people and adults interested in the world of culture, art and museums, as well as for those who already dedicate themselves professionally to these fields and can find in TAG MUSEUM® a tool to renew and guide the design of cultural projects. The game is recommended for people aged 16 and up (although it has also been tested with 12- and 14-year-olds and the results were very good). The different levels of difficulty of the game offer a selection of cards, so that the most basic level includes contents of functions, spaces, products and museum publics, and the advanced level includes, in addition to the above, contents of management and services of museums, among others. It can be used both in groups and individually.

This work is the result of the Research Results Transfer Project "Protection and Promotion of Research Results and Prototype Elaboration", funded by the University of Jaén² (Spain), and of which I am the Principal Investigator of the project. The objective of this project was to develop the TAG MUSEUM[®] prototype and its final industrial manufacture by an external company in conjunction with the University. TAG MUSEUM[®] was registered in February 2019, contracted for manufacture by the board-game company Pinbro Games³ (Málaga, Spain) in September 2019, and sales of the game started in December 2019. Points of sale have continued to grow since then and now it can also be found on Amazon⁴ (international online sales).

2.1 The four games of TAG MUSEUM[®]

There are four games or forms of use of TAG MUSEUM[®] that we have called as follows: Labels, Crossovers, Vocabulary and My Cultural Project. The TAG MUSEUM[®] cards function as manipulative elements that players can classify, relate and discover and, in this way, develop their own ideas and concepts about museums and how they work. Let's get to know each of the games.

Labels

This consists in classifying the cards according to different options offered by TAG MUSEUM[®]. It lets players explore the cards of the game as a whole. Thus, it also involves reviewing what the main elements of museums are. We play according to the colours of the cards. We choose one colour to play and place it in the centre, where every player can see it. Then, we also place in the centre the different subcategories, in order to classify the cards. For example, if we play Products, there are three subcategories, according to Cultural Products, Editorial Products and Educational Products. We place these three cards in the centre and distribute the rest of the cards to the players. In turn, each player must place a card in the centre and classify it in the place they consider most appropriate. Once all the players have run out of cards, the score is reviewed, and the player with the most cards wins.

Fig. 1. Playing Labels game of TAG MUSEUM[®]. Classify the cards and explore the museums' units

Crossovers

² Official website of the University of Jaén: <https://www.ujaen.es/>

³ Official online page of TAG MUSEUM[®] on the Pinbro Games website: <https://www.pinbrogames.com/tag-museum/>

⁴ Official website for the sale of TAG MUSEUM[®] on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.es/Pinbro-Games-Tag-Museum/dp/B082VGLQN9>

Regarding the game of *Crossovers*, this consists of relating cards to each other freely. It allows the creation of relationships between cards of different categories and colours in TAG MUSEUM®. Thus, it means thinking about the museum in a global sense and understanding that for the museum and its cultural projects to be successful, there must be good internal coordination between the different areas and services. Therefore, the main movements of the game are summarised as follows: select cards from different categories and colours of the game and establish what relationships exist between them for the success of the cultural management of the museum and its projects. Thus, for example: "Temporary Exhibitions" (from the category Products, in green colour) + "Educational programming" (from the category Services, in orange colour) + "In Family" (from the category Public, in magenta colour).

Fig. 2. Playing Crossovers game of TAG MUSEUM®. Associate cards of different categories and colours

Vocabulary

Regarding the game of *Vocabulary*, this consists of guessing the correct card, according to concepts and definitions. It allows you to review specific vocabulary about museums and cultural management, and identify particular difference between one term from another. It is played with two of the game categories: Management, in purple colour; and Functions, in yellow colour. To play, firstly, all the cards of the same category and colour are laid out on a flat surface, where all the players can see them at the same time. Next, someone reads a definition from the appendix. The player who is the fastest at guessing it must pick up the correct card and thus wins it. Therefore, the main movements of the game are summarised as follows: put down all the cards of the same colour at the same time, and take one of the cards.

Fig. 3. Playing Vocabulary game of TAG MUSEUM®. Guess the correct card, according to definitions

My Cultural Project

Regarding the game of *My Cultural Project*, this also consists of relating cards of different categories and colours of the game but, in this case, it comprises total categories that TAG MUSEUM® has. Thus, the game's seven categories constitute the areas and services that are currently used in 21st-century

museums. It allows the game to simulate the design of cultural projects (inside and outside) of museums. Thus, TAG MUSEUM® becomes a very useful tool to use in the script for the ideation and design of cultural projects, since it facilitates the relationship of aspects and elements that must be considered for the success of the project. Therefore, the game's movements are very similar to those of the Crossovers game, but, unlike the latter, it comprises all the cards of the game and, in addition, it includes the game's seven categories of cards.

Fig. 4. Playing My Cultural Project game of TAG MUSEUM®. Choosing the best cards from each category and colour of the game for the success of the project

3 Reflections & Conclusions

Looking at the four games of TAG MUSEUM® described above (Labels, Crossovers, Vocabulary and My Cultural Project) and the ways of playing them, it can be seen that the game encourages processes of meaning-making, active participation and the exchange of ideas between people. Playing TAG MUSEUM® in groups requires a player to justify why they choose a card and, then, to talk about what each player thinks and knows about it. In this sense, players acquire an active role in the game, think what museums are and how they can be improved.

We tested TAG MUSEUM® with various groups and in different contexts in Spain: students of the Master's Degree in Research in Arts and Aesthetic Education: Arts, Music and Design at the University of Jaén, students of the Master's Degree of Education in Museums of the University of Zaragoza, families with 13-year-old children, and experts in museology and education, like ICOFOM.

Firstly, we tested the prototype of TAG MUSEUM® and its functions in order to detect flaws and possible adjustments. One of the test groups were students of the Master's Degree in Research in Arts and Aesthetic Education: Arts, Music and Design at the University of Jaén (Spain). Master's groups comprise people of different ages. In the same class there are young people who have just earned a Bachelor's degree (21 or 22 years old) and aim to obtain a higher level of specialisation with the Master's Degree, and also adults who already have good professional experience (between 30 and 40 years old) and take a Master's Degree to stay up to date or gain professional renewal. This type of student profile has a general and sometimes advanced knowledge of museums and cultural management. Before playing the game they already knew most of the words and concepts used in TAG MUSEUM®, except for some of the more specific ones, such as some Management letters (for financing, like patronage, sponsorship, grants and the museum's own activity, and others). The test

results were very positive. The group did not find it difficult to understand how the game worked. They valued very positively the possibilities of free movement and creation that the Crossovers and My Cultural Project games allow and got really involved with them.

Fig. 5. Postgraduate students playing TAG MUSEUM® at the University of Jaén, Spain (2020).

In February 2020, and after the sale of TAG MUSEUM® began, it was used with a group of students taking the Master's Degree in Museum Education at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). On this occasion, the group of students was more homogeneous: they were all young, around 22 and 25 years old. They had a background in Humanities and knew most of the words and concepts used in TAG MUSEUM®. Again, the results were very positive. On this occasion, they also showed great interest in the Vocabulary game (discovering the correct definition of each letter). This game is also like a small competition as whoever guesses the card first wins it; this led to greater motivation among the participants of the groups.

Fig. 6. Postgraduate students playing TAG MUSEUM® at the University of Zaragoza, Spain (2020).

Thus, in order to improve the role of museums into societies, people should better know and understand how museums work. Questions of museology and cultural management and museums' practices can be transferred into new supports and products, in order to disseminate it to wider public. Traditionally, books and texts constitute the unique support to disseminate this type of information (Gob & Drouguet, 2014). These are usually for experts, professionals and students, but for interested people as well. In this sense, TAG MUSEUM® contributes an introduction to those complex questions in a new support and product. Playing TAG MUSEUM®, people acquire an active role in exploring what museums have. That motivates people very much, because they feel engage with the ideas and challenges of museum and culture sectors.

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The paper and its more coherent passages have not been published and have not been submitted for publication in another journal, proceeding or monograph.

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