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# Are cultural institutions „Big data ready“?

Experience and lessons learned from the visitor monitoring project  
„Cultural Monitoring“ in Germany

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# Status quo of visitor studies in Germany

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## Results of a survey among museums in 2007 (n = 568 > 20.000 visitors, FU Berlin):

- 53 % museums said they conducted a least one visitor survey within the last 5 years
- Overall the number of museums conducting visitor surveys increased rapidly between 2002 (24 %) – 2006 (62 %) and the tendency was increasing
- 56 % of the museums conducted these studies on their own, 15 % commissioned market researchers, 16 % universities, 16 % students (degree theses) ( $\emptyset = 1,3$ )

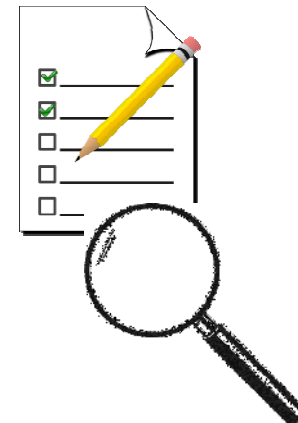
### First impression:



Most of the museums conduct visitor studies on a regular basis...

They know how to do it...

They don't need externals to work with the results...



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Source: Zentrum für Audience Development (2007): Besucherforschung in öffentlichen deutschen Kulturinstitutionen. Berlin.


# Status quo of visitor studies in Germany

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## The truth in 2007 was:

- Only 8 % conducted studies every year
- Only 23 % think they achieved the optimum results (methodological pathway, quality)
- Only 30 % consider the results very much of practical relevance
- Only 10 % utilize the results to the full
- Smaller museums < 25 employees rarely conduct visitor surveys
- Only a very small number of museums have staff specially qualified in visitor studies
- Only a few market researchers/agencies exist who focus on visitor research

 Good news: The value and importance of visitor studies has grown tremendously since 2007 and will further rise in the future

 Bad news: The situation described above has not changed much since 2007

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Source: Zentrum für Audience Development (2007): Besucherforschung in öffentlichen deutschen Kulturinstitutionen. Berlin.

# The visitor monitoring project „Cultural Monitoring“ (KULMON)

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## What exactly is „Cultural Monitoring“ (KULMON)?

- Initiative by Berlins public cultural administration (Senate Department for Culture and Europe) and tourism marketing (visitBerlin) financed from the budget of EU funds
- Aim: To provide the city`s cultural institutions with professional data which is also used for strategic cultural policy and for activities to promote Berlin as a tourist destination
- KULMON was developed together with the Free University of Berlin and the Institute for Museum Research between 2007-2008, it was launchend in 2008
- The project is designed as a professional, comparative longitudinal study
- It started with seven major cultural institutions in Berlin (i.e. museums, theaters, operas) with over 250.000 interviews conducted since then (German + English language)



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Sources: <https://about.visitberlin.de/kulturmonitoring>;  
<https://www.berlin.de/sen/kultur/kulturpolitik/kulturelle-teilhabe/besucherforschung/artikel.32441.php>

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## What exactly is „Cultural Monitoring“ (KULMON)?

- It uses a unified method: The same questionnaire is used in every cultural institution + moduls (e.g. special modules for museums, performing arts, festivals OR special topics)
- Focus of the questionnaires: Cultural interests, information interests, ticket purchasing, reasons for visiting, visitors' home countries, sociodemographics, satisfaction etc.
- The project is currently expanding in new cities (e.g. Halle, Weimar, Ravensburg) and regions (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania), probably also in other countries (e.g. Austria)
- Advancement of the questionnaire: e.g. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania currently tests instruments to evaluate social milieus and visiting motivation types
- Advancement of the data collection method: e.g. in Ravensburg interviews will also be conducted in rather small cultural institutions and at events of regional clubs (e.g. choral society)



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## Who is joining KULMON?

### For example in Berlin:

- Alte Nationalgalerie (Old National Gallery)
- Berliner Festspiele (Berlin Festival)
- Deutsche Oper (German Opera)
- Deutsches Theater (German Theatre)
- Neues Museum (New Museum)
- Gedenkstätte Berliner Mauer (Berlin Wall Memorial)
- Deutsches Historisches Museum (German Historical Museum)



### For example in Mecklenburg- Western Pomerania:

- Staatliches Museum Schwerin (State Museum Schwerin)
- Meeresmuseum Stralsund (Marine Museum Stralsund)
- Mecklenburisches Staatstheater (Mecklenburg State Theatre)
- Schloss Ludwigslust (Ludwigslust Castle)



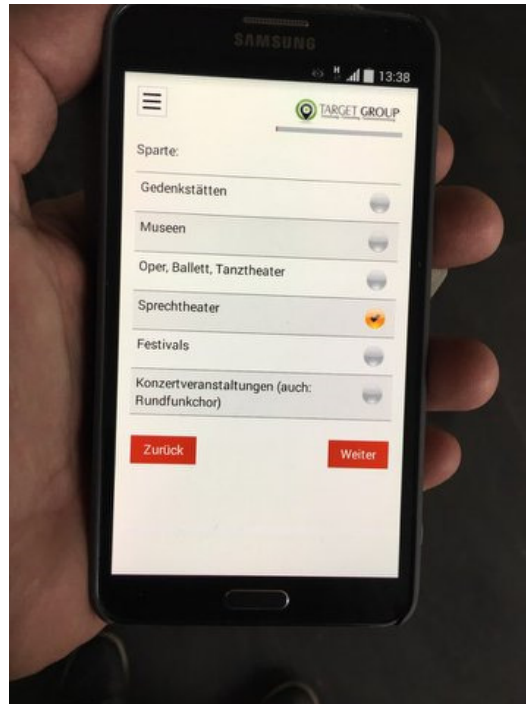
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Sources: <https://about.visitberlin.de/kulturmonitoring>; <http://www.konferenz-kultur.de/presse/bund-foerdert-pilotprojekt-audience-development.php>

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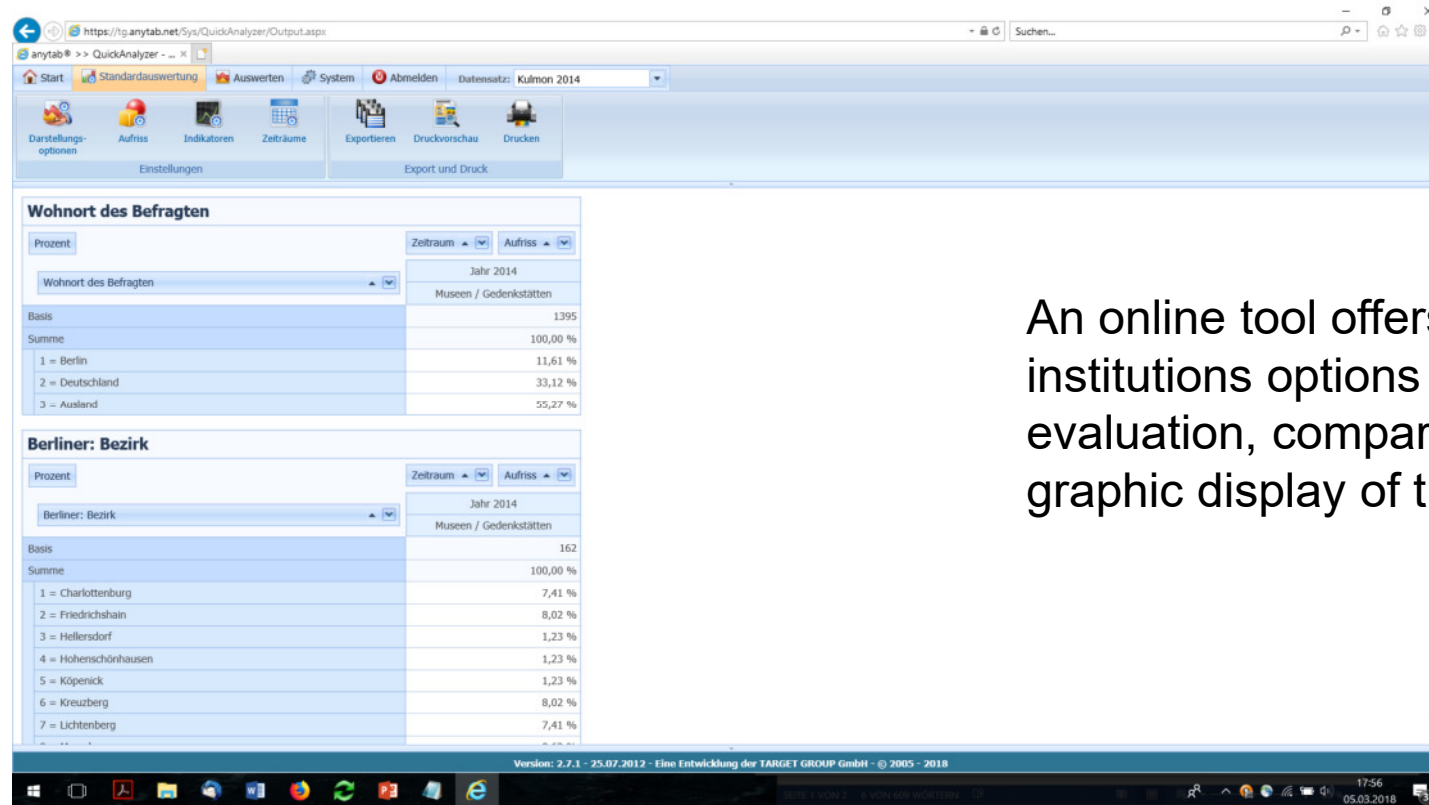
## How does KULMON work?



- Face-to-face interviews are carried out by a market research institute (CAMI), data is entered into an online app
- Raw data is available the following day
- Data ready for evaluation is provided on a two-monthly basis

# The visitor monitoring project „Cultural Monitoring“ (KULMON)

## How does KULMON work?



An online tool offers cultural institutions options for evaluation, comparison and graphic display of the findings




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## Opportunities:

- Continuous surveys show visitor developments through time
- The Data helps the institutions to address existing or potential target groups
- The institutions involved can network and exchange data / experiences
- They can achieve more participation of the population in culture through collaboration
- “Crowd intelligence“ continually helps to develop a pool of relevant questions
- KULMON does the majority of work necessary
- The system is designed to provide high quality up to date data

 In theory: Cultural institutions are supposed to have the ideal package to conduct visitor research and work with the data as quickly and as simply as possible ...  
.... but do theory and practice meet?

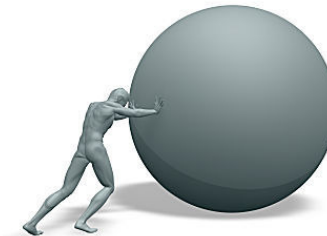
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## What skills are needed to implement it?

- The institutions need to be able to articulate what they want to know
- They need to help with information on times/places when/where interviews can be conducted
- They need to know which evaluations would answer their questions about visitors
- They need an affinity towards online evaluation
- They need to know how to carry out the evaluations
- They need to know how to read statistics / tables
- They need to know how to work with the results



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➔ Major challenge: A lot of institutions don't fulfil all of those criteria, some use the data extensively, some don't use the data much / at all...

# The visitor monitoring project „Cultural Monitoring“ (KULMON)

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## Lessons learned:

- Training courses on how to use the online tool are needed but they are not sufficient
  - More market researches/agencies are needed in Germany to help institutions to find out what they want to know, to read statistics / tables and to work with the results
  - A permanent committee of experts will be installed (cultural institutions, scientists, market research) who makes suggestions for relevant questions / response options
  - Workshops for cultural institutions will be offered to show them which evaluations would answer their questions about visitors and how to carry out the evaluations
  - A visually appealing dashboard as well as a monthly newsletter with key results for each cultural institution are being designed
  - A website for more information on KULMON for different stakeholders is under construction
  - The system wants to expand in new cities/regions and to collaborate with systems in other countries for even more “crowd intelligence“
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