



Investigating the visitor's guestbooks of temporary scientific exhibitions: analysis and prospectives

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This research presents the analysis carried out on the comments left by visitors on guestbooks available during temporary scientific exhibitions performed by the Istituto Nazionale Geofisica e Vulcanologia for the 2017 and 2018 editions of the Festival delle Science di Genova. The goal is to give voice and space to visitors who, through the comment on the guestbook, choose to leave a trace of their visit, to compare and share their experience, in a fast, informal and unstructured way.

Traditionally, visitor surveys performed in museums or during divulgative events have favoured other methodologies. The analysis of guestbook widens the areas already treated and adds another approach to the definition of the visitor's profile, providing an additional methodological instrument to study the impact on visitors of temporary scientific installations. These studies are crucial to avoid self-referential judgments, through a reading as honest as possible of the results.

The analysis of the guestbook content and type of message, have required the definition of objectives, the construction of survey tools, the collection of data and the translation of properties into coded variables to make them investigable through statistical approach. The results help us to better understand the experience from the visitor's point of view and to investigate which kind of visitor is interested in our scientific exhibitions. Moreover, the study conducted on the content of the messages reveals advantages and disadvantages of this type of analysis that are presented and discussed.