

Conservator Hack for April 30, 2020

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I hope that everyone is staying safe and keeping healthy in these difficult times. There are discussions on return to normal but it is quite possible that a full return to normal will not be possible until a vaccine is available, currently estimated at 12-18 months. This means that we are looking at several stages of progressively relaxed restrictions, based on the incidence and frequency of reported cases. Any plans made for recovery should take this into account.

Many of you are already working together to develop procedures for the return to normal. Questions to ask yourself could include whether to open all facilities, allow all previous activities, and adjust hours and days of opening. The same staff and volunteers may not be available. Extra procedures may be required, such as phasing in increases in the number of visitors per tour, restricting visitor interaction with artifacts (e.g. no touching), and providing sanitization and PPE for visitors and staff. If you plan to introduce a new method of visitor experience, test it out first using staff/volunteers so you can work the bugs out before the public arrives!

Suggestions for mitigating the effects of the pandemic on museums have already been provided by the [Alberta Museums Association](#) and the [Canadian Conservation Institute](#). Here are a few more suggestions to assist you in doing this. Please contact me directly if you have specific questions or would like any assistance.

Do you need a framework to help organize your plan? Continuity Innovations is offering a free downloadable plan to facilitate your workflow and resources:

<https://continuityinnovations.com/pandemicplanningtool/>. Although it is called a **Pandemic Response Plan**, it is suitable for organizing critical functions, key staff, resources and action items for all types of disaster events.

The document [COVID-19 Recovery: Preparing Your Organization and Volunteer Program](#) by Galaxy Digital is an excellent resource that covers the different steps that a non-profit, volunteer-supported organization needs to take in order to return to operational status following the Pandemic. There are sections on financial recovery, re-engaging volunteers and logistics.

Dexibit sells software for visitor analytics that has an excellent COVID-19 information section offering free webcasts, downloads and resources. In particular, they are offering a free download of a Scenario Simulation that aligns visitor prediction, costs and operations to come up with best and worst case situations: <https://dexibit.com/home/tour/tour-simulation/>

If your museum is closed, are you interested in a cellphone/tablet app that could provide a historic walking tour of your site, town or city, thereby combining virtual engagement and social distancing? Canadian company [On This Spot](#) combines modern and historical photographs with a storyline to create self-guided historic walking tours for visitors. Content is accessible

from anywhere, so visitors can take virtual walking tours of your town or site without leaving home.

You may need to have maintenance technicians come in to service HVAC equipment, plumbing systems, etc. Larger museums may want to obtain confirmation that staff have not been ill or recently exposed to infection. Let maintenance technicians know in advance if you will provide PPE and hand sanitizer, or if they must bring their own.

Drains in buildings that are no longer in regular use may run dry. Ask staff/volunteers to check and flush the toilets and run the taps during their regular weekly or daily visits. Since unused buildings can experience an increase in pest activity, ask staff/volunteers to check the bathrooms for insect activity. Remove all foodstuffs and snacks from the building or store them in securely closed, hard-bodied containers. The CSP can provide sticky pest traps for any museum that wants to increase monitoring.

Are you in need of a pleasant, museum-related diversion? The online educational provider EdX is currently offering a free course that will help you “gain an understanding of history, museum studies, and curation by looking at, organizing, and interpreting art, artifacts, scientific curiosities, and the stuff of everyday life”: [Tangible Things: Discovering History Through Artworks, Artifacts, Scientific Specimens, and the Stuff Around You](#)