



4.2 Participation level: interactive

An institution that announces a “discussion” rather than a “tour” at an exhibition is soliciting interaction with the audience. Exhibition-goers are being asked to take part in the discussion by asking questions and contributing their own views and information, rather than simply listen. Formats of this kind frequently involve multiple cultural mediation providers; experts or everyday witnesses are also invited to enter into a dialogue with the exhibitors or mediators. This type of discussion creates a broader context for exhibition tours, which often takes the form of a monologue. The extent to which the audience genuinely engages in the discussion depends on the specific situation, the moderator’s skills, how provocative the topic is and the makeup of the group. There are also projects whose formats require interaction in order to take place at all: exhibitions with elements in which people are expected to try things themselves or set something in motion, or family tours in musical theatres in which instruments are put out for people to try to play, or costumes available for them to put on.

Usually, interactive formats in cultural mediation are intended to allow people to engage with an object for the first time. Increasingly though, they are also being used to give people the opportunity to engage with something at greater depth: one example of this is → [Hands-on Deck](http://en.nai.nl/content/988437/hands-on_deck) at the Netherlands Architecture Institute, where people play planning games exploring urban planning and architectural issues. Cultural mediation providers offering projects with interactive participation levels plan opportunities for and forms of participation in advance and the level of control exerted is high.

Digital media and the Internet have encouraged the proliferation of interactive formats in recent years. For instance, the → [Bavarian State Opera](http://www.bayerische.staatsoper.de/data/kinder_flash/index.html) runs a website where children can learn about the various activities and rooms in an opera house by playing simple games, guided by an animated conductor. In programmes like this, the cultural mediation remains largely → [affirmative](#).

→ [Hands-on Deck](http://en.nai.nl/content/988437/hands-on_deck) http://en.nai.nl/content/988437/hands-on_deck [30.4.2012]

→ [Bavarian State Opera](http://www.bayerische.staatsoper.de/data/kinder_flash/index.html) http://www.bayerische.staatsoper.de/data/kinder_flash/index.html [2.3.2012]

→ [affirmative](#) see Text 5.1