

## **Catherine Bunting, Director of Research, Arts Council England** ***Understanding arts audiences – a segmentation of the population***

Catherine Bunting is director of research at Arts Council England (ACE), where she leads a team of researchers to explore the role of arts in national life and the opportunities and challenges for public funding in the arts. She led ACE's *Arts Debate* and is an active member of the *Taking Part* project group. Prior to joining ACE she established the research department at Arts and Business and spent a number of years overseas as a researcher for the Australia Business Arts Foundation.

ACE has recently completed a major new segmentation of arts audiences in England, in partnership with Henley Centre HeadlightVision and British Market Research Bureau (BMRB). This research breaks down the entire adult population into distinct segments based on whether and how often people attend and participate in the arts and their motivations and barriers to engagement. This seminar outlined how this works, showing how the segments differ in terms of demographics, attitudes, behaviour, lifestyles and aspirations and the ways in which the arts industry can benefit.

### **Understanding Arts Audiences**

For the last few years Arts Council England (ACE) has been running a programme of quantitative and qualitative research on how people engage with the arts. This has enabled it to build up a body of knowledge about broad population trends and the way that people think and feel about the arts across a wide range of artforms and experiences

Today's session is about audience segmentation – ACE has taken the adult population in England and grouped people into a number of distinct segments according to their engagement with and attitudes to the arts. It's taught us a great deal about why and how different kinds of people engage – or don't engage - with the arts. It's a new piece of work and the initial findings have only just been published [July 2008]. So, this is a great opportunity to share some of the things that have been discovered and to obtain feedback and insights from practitioners and to discuss how this kind of research could be used, both by arts organisations and by local and national policy makers.

The session would follow these lines:

- background and methodology
- the overall segmentation
- three segments up close
- some initial reflections from a policy perspective
- finding out more
- group discussion: in small groups exploring how the segmentation could be put to further use, followed by
- feedback from the groups and general discussion

This session would look at some of the same issues covered in Alan Brown's presentations but is based on the particular ACE segmentation process.

## 1. Background and Methodology

Segmentation is a technique that enables an organisation to divide up its market into distinct consumer types. It works by analysing data about a group of people, looking for patterns such as the way that they are similar and the way that they are different, particularly as it relates to our products and services.

Each segment will be different, but the people within a particular segment are likely to have similar needs, attitudes and motivations and should respond in a similar way to any given marketing strategy. So segmentation helps us to understand and target audiences more effectively. You can choose which segment you want to focus on and design a marketing mix especially for that segment.

Segmentation could be applied to an existing audience – your box office data for example. You could segment your local community if you had information about people living within a particular geographic area. You could look at a particular ‘field’ such as conducting a segmentation of all music lovers in the North East.

And you can apply segmentation to the entire population of a country or group of countries which is what ACE has done in this project.

The entire adult population in England has been segmented according to their engagement with and attitudes to the arts. The main data source was the Taking Part survey which was a substantial population survey of cultural participation that ACE runs in partnership with DCMS.

Taking Part provides a huge amount of data on how people attend and participate in the arts and headline figures have been presented in the past. However, this is an attempt to take it on a stage to see if the data could be turned into distinct arts consumer types in England today – segments of the population who have different relationships with the arts, who engage in different ways, have different attitudes, motivations and barriers.

This would enable ACE to analyse how the current arts provision in England meets the needs of different groups, where there might be untapped demand for greater engagement within the arts and how different kinds of arts experiences can be designed and communicated in different ways to appeal to different groups.

The segmentation was developed in three key stages with market research agency BMRB:

1. Segment the population using Taking Part data according to whether and how often people attend or participate in the arts as well as their overall attitudes to the arts.
2. Statistical fusion of Taking Part and another dataset called the Target Group Index (TGI) which contains a great deal of information about broader consumer behaviour – where people shop, what products they buy, what media they consume, how they spend their leisure time and attitudes to life in general
3. Produce in-depth profiles of each segment including demographics, arts engagement, leisure interests, media profile, web activity and data on various aspects of life.

It's important to note that we're not guessing or making judgements about how people are likely to behave – this is based on the information people have provided themselves about what they do and think.

Attendance meant having attended at least one arts event (widely defined – from gallery to carnival to pantomime etc) and similarly for participation – the segmentation uses information on whether and how often people have participated in a range of creative activities from playing a musical instrument to textile and wood crafts.

## 2. Overall Segmentation

There are 13 arts consumer types identified (for England today) which fall within three wider groups based on levels of arts activity. At the top are two groups who are highly engaged

### Highly Engaged

#### **Urban Arts Eclectic**

*(younger, professional, participatory wide tastes) 5% of population*

#### **Traditional Culture Vultures**

*(older, more female, frequent attenders) 4%*

Next, there are seven segments with some engagement with the arts. Four of these (left hand side) include people who all attend some arts events. The other three (right hand side) bring together people who are unlikely to attend arts events, but take part in some creative activities, broken down into three age groups (16-29, 30-59 and 60+).

### Some Engagement

#### **Fun, fashion and friends**

*(attending and participating as part of a social scene, quite young) 18%*

#### **Bedroom DJs**

*(participating singly, computer art and musical instruments) 3%*

#### **Mature Explorers**

*(out and about, attending things they come across) 11%*

#### **Mid-life Hobbyists**

*(photography, painting, musical instruments) 4%*

#### **Dinner and a Show**

*(older, comfortably off, big names and blockbusters) 20%*

#### **Retired Arts and Crafts**

*(interested in textiles, crafts, knitting, plenty of time) 3%*

#### **Family and Community Focused**

*(not well off but interested in events which can involve their family or local community) 11%*

The remaining four segments consist of segments unlikely to be engaged in any arts activity but for different reasons.

### Not Currently Engaged

#### **Time Poor Dreamers**

*(fairly young, harassed parents struggling to make ends meet) 7%*

#### **Older and Home Bound**

*(Seniors, probably with health problems) 6%*

#### **Quiet Pint with the Match**

*(Older group, more male, living comfortable life with arts off radar ) 8%*

#### **Limited Means Nothing Fancy**

*(Difficult social economic circumstances, practical barriers) 2%*

### 3. Three Segments Up Close

By looking at three segments in detail it will be possible to look at what is known about them and how this might affect our marketing activity.

#### **Urban Arts Eclectic**

Early stages of developing career and life. **Highly qualified** and **affluent**, they have the means to **splurge occasionally**, treating themselves to an expensive meal or making an extravagant purchase. **Ambitious** with **career aspirations** and believe in seizing life's opportunities. They seek **new experiences** and show interest in other **cultures, food & travel** and are **contemporary** in thinking. They have been educated to act as **global and responsible citizen**, they exercise their **concern for the environment**, animals through their purchase decisions. Consider themselves **arts-savvy** and actively engage with it as a way of **relaxation, developing their skills** and **meeting new people**. **Friends are important** to them in their support and social network. Describe themselves as **optimists, creative** and **open-minded**.

Although the segmentation is not based specifically on demographics but it is possible to pick up indicators:

- young adults (50% aged 16–34)
- no children in household (70%)
- high proportion from a Black or minority ethnic background (17%)
- mostly urbanites (85%) – 28% live in London
- well-educated (61% higher education)
- working, mostly full-time
- in a high level job – 44% in managerial jobs, 67% in higher socio-economic groups
- affluent – 27% earn £30K+

Their life stage and attitudinal traits we'd associate with this group:

- Confident and self-assured
- Appetite for the contemporary, the progressive
- Hedonistic approach to life, not tied down by family obligations and household chores
- Perspective is definitely global not local
- Self-assured, have already succeeded
- Balanced lifestyle, healthy diet, physically active
- Relish challenges and experiences

Leisure Interests:

In their spare time they like to do lots of everything – eating out, travel, fitness – keen swimmers and gym members with wide ranging artistic tastes, both as attenders and participants. Probably a core audience for anything contemporary or experimental and will seek out new cultural experiences in all sorts of places, from theatres and concert halls to street arts and festivals to the internet.

Engaging with this group is not difficult:

- They want to broaden their horizons, explore other cultures, learn new skills; the arts really speak to that
- Anything that feels new and cutting edge will appeal, as will anything that offers an opportunity to socialise with friends or meet new people
- They'll be avid readers of marketing materials in existing venues and are also easy to engage with on-line

### Dinner and A Show

The dinner and a show segment are much less active in the arts and are really only engaging on an occasional basis. They are affluent enough to enjoy what they see as the good things in life – a nice house in the suburbs, holidays, meals out with good friends

They are **comfortable** with where and what they have acquired in life. Having worked in **higher level jobs** and approaching **retirement**, they have **accumulated** sufficient **wealth**. They are relaxed with **money management**, **young at heart** and view money as a means of **enjoying life** – **eating, travelling**, making occasional large purchases.



### Key demographics

Their children will have left home, leaving them free to enjoy the fruits of their labours – they're reasonably well-off and are likely to own their own homes

- key age group 45–64 (37%)
- no children in household (72%)
- 55% males, 45% females
- comfortably off financially – slightly higher than average income profile, 56% in higher socio-economic groups
- more likely than average to own their own homes (78%)
- average education level

## Current Lifestyle and Attitudinal Traits

This group is also comfortable and confident. They have worked hard, earned money, brought up their children and are now enjoying life. Compared with the previous group, they're much less interested in pursuing new experiences – they know what they like. They are practical and down to earth and probably still quite physically active. They're probably well-read and well-informed, but not likely to consider themselves as particularly creative.

## Leisure Interests

In their leisure time they've got a wide range of interests but tend to stick to the mainstream. They like sports, restaurants, parks and gardens – day trips with the family and evenings out with friends, probably other couples

When they go to an arts or cultural event it's likely to be a big name rock group – Rolling Stones, say – or a blockbuster production of a play or musical. In terms of media, they watch the news and sport on TV; read the weekend supplements; Wogan, Chris Moyles, Chris Evans on the radio, as well as Five Live sport. They are average internet users – it's a practical tool for finding out information and booking tickets, not so much for socialising or networking.

## Engaging with this group

- Arts engagement is not a big thing for this group but they've got huge potential – they're a big group in the population (20%) and many say they would like to attend the arts more often
- At the moment their interests are in live pop and rock, theatre, musicals – generally the big mainstream shows
- Important to know that they're going to enjoy something – this group don't want to risk their valuable leisure time on an unknown quantity
- Reassurance of quality is important – and they won't be drawn to anything that feels too 'intellectual' or esoteric.
- Grandchildren might be a key route in to this group

## A Quiet Pint with the Match

This is a very different segment.

Typically hardened **males** who perceive themselves to be past their **prime**. **Less educated**, working in **routine jobs**, they have little expectation, nor wish, of change. They are generally quite **satisfied** with their life, showing low levels of interest in self improvement or acquiring new knowledge.

Their after-work social lives are mostly centred around the **pub**, or spent in front of the **TV** at home, often watching **sport** channels. They **live simply** with no need for anything more than a **beer** at the local or a day out **fishing**.

### Key Demographics

- male dominated (64%)
- slightly older than average age profile
- low educational level – half have no qualifications
- typically low paid, low level jobs – almost half in routine/semi-routine jobs
- limited means – half have income less than £10K pa
- more likely than average to:
  - live in the North
  - not currently be working
  - have no live-in children

### Current Lifestyle and Attitudinal Traits

- Routine, simplicity and satisfaction are the key themes here
- They live in their comfort zone and have no desire to change or advance
- Simple needs which are easy to meet – and so they feel content with life
- Not interested in any kind of fuss or affectation

### Leisure Interests

- A quiet pint or two in the pub is the main event
- Not necessarily with friends – happy with a fairly solitary existence
- Big TV watchers, especially sports and the soaps
- Regular Lottery players – most active of all segments



### Engaging with this group

When it comes to the arts, this is not an easy segment to engage. The arts are way off the radar for this group – not something they would ever think about and not something that would have been part of life growing up. They are likely to be fairly hostile to the overall concept of the arts – something pretentious, ostentatious and unnecessary.

They may be interested in a chance to contribute at a very local level – to use their practical skills and craftsmanship – or to tell their story in some way. It's unlikely that you will reach this group through a conventional route – it's going to have to be very local and focused.

#### 4. Initial Reflections

##### The Policy Challenge

- current 'core' audiences for the arts represent a fairly small (c.8%) and privileged section of society
- public investment has historically benefited this group and targeted the very socially excluded with specific programmes
- market failure might relate to the groups of 'ordinary people' in the middle... If you're an economist you might argue that market failure in the arts is really around the groups of 'ordinary people' in the middle, who might well get a lot of value from engaging more with the arts than they do currently
- Similarly, if this was purely a commercial question, some segments make much more sense to target than others, when you compare the effort it will take to reach them with how easy it will be to 'shift' their behaviour
- ...but questions of equity and social justice are key
- given limited resources, there are big decisions to make with regards to target audience groups

##### Changing Practice?

This research does seem to suggest huge potential for building new audiences for the arts. In fact, ACE also has qualitative research which suggests that there is an appetite among many people for new, stimulating, inspiring creative encounters. However, this isn't just a case of promoting more vigorously what's on offer already. As you know, reaching out into society and encouraging people to try something new takes real imagination and effort – and often an entirely new approach.

This research reinforces the fact that different people have very different attitudes, motivations and ambitions in life – and the arts relate to people's aspirations in different and often deeply personal ways. We might need to think and talk about the arts in new ways and with a new language – to enable different groups to make the connection between what they hope for in life and what the arts can offer.

And perhaps we need to consider whether the arts in England today – and certainly the arts supported by Arts Council England – really do have something to offer for everyone. Perhaps our current concept of 'the arts' doesn't really resonate with most peoples' experience of life today?

Perhaps we should consider what a different offer might look like – something challenging and inspiring, but also meaningful and relevant to a wider range of people? How far are we prepared to go?

## 5. Finding Out More

### Underlying Data

Segment profiles draw on large amounts of data from Taking Part and TGI surveys e.g.

- arts engagement – attendance, participation, frequency
- cultural and sport participation, volunteering
- other leisure time activities – eating out, cooking at home, TV, going out to pubs, theme parks, etc
- holidaying habits and destinations
- details of media consumption – TV, radio, internet, newspapers
- where they shop
- what types of books they buy, and where
- attitudes towards different areas of life – work, family, environment, eating, drinking, finance, etc
- socio-demographic information

### Accessing the Data

- summary profiles, full methodology and additional data is available on the Arts Council website: [www.artscouncil.org.uk/audienceinsight](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/audienceinsight):
- setting up a system to share more detailed data with funded organisations via the audience development agencies
- potential geographic modelling
  - who is in my local area? Local area breakdown by segments
  - where are the 'urban arts eclectic'? Estimation of segment distribution by postcode sectors
  - analysis of existing audiences (box office postcode data) by segments

### Questions

*As one of the 185 arts organisations which have recently lost arts council funding could you let me know why we are being given a double kicking in terms of being deprived of this data?*

The technical answer is that there are legal restrictions on much of the data and it can only be shared with organisations that are recognised clients of ACE. However, we have been negotiating so that we can make as much available as possible to a range of people and there is quite a lot available online.

*Maybe there is a way of enabling this to happen through the audience development agencies?*

*In the past ACE has shared data with organisations broadly receiving funding [i.e. not just RFOs] – or those presenting venues taking touring companies funded by ACE. BMRB has previously been happy to share this data.*

[Chair] I don't think this is something we can sort out now. CB will be able to take these points away for consideration at ACE.

*Your man in the pub doesn't attend the arts but supports them through buying lottery tickets. Alan Brown's presentation yesterday showed that people are well disposed to things they pay for. Perhaps this interest could be levered somehow into the arts.*

It's an interesting suggestion. In Canada, they gave people points which built towards tokens for arts attendance when they bought lottery tickets.

*This was something similar muted in this country – Guinevere's Gift – which might have been popular but was never implemented.*

*Can you tell me what you think is the comparison with Mosaic? In Scotland there are Mosaic groups which are very similar to the Urban Eclectics and Culture Vultures.*

The difference is that ACE segmentation is based on attitudes and behaviour towards the arts. You could segment based on socio-demographic factors and then look at how this relates to the arts.

*Could we see the segmentation with London removed? Is it skewing it?*

Yes, on the website it is possible to take it a region at a time. It would be interesting to run it specifically in the north and it would give you a slightly different picture.

*In terms of rationale – people don't do what they say they do – is there a way of combining this with actual purchasing data?*

Different kinds of data answer different kinds of question. Box Office data is incredibly powerful and tells you about more than survey data but it doesn't tell you much about those who aren't buying tickets. This is where this kind of segmentation is more useful – they are people who will never be on the box office system.

*I think we need to be careful of using this as a catch-all answer to all our needs. It's only one picture. Until the next developments attaching it to postcode data, how do you envisage that arts organisations will actually tap into and use this information?*

Yes, there are lots of different models of segmentation and what you use will depend on your needs. This is a market segmentation not an audience segmentation and that will be for individual organisations to use their own information.

To take the second point, this was originally devised for Arts Council England's policy needs, it wasn't designed for arts organisations to use in the way we are discussing now; this is what we are just exploring and is part of a further debate which needs to happen (such as this one today). Having said this, it seems mainly that it will enable arts organisations to cross-reference their own audiences with the bigger context. It is also especially interesting in terms of non-attenders.

*TGI has been very useful since it was made available to us in 1986. How much of this is based on TGI?*

It was more reliant on Taking Part than TGI. Taking Part has been in the field for three years and was huge in terms of household surveys. The first three years it was 28,000 a year

though the sample size is now reducing. Compared to TGI, Taking Part asks more specific questions.

*If TGI is 20,000 across all the UK and Taking Part is 28,000 in England only, it is useful to know, as Taking Part seems more robust.*

*Where can you get information on Taking Part?*

The Taking Part material can be accessed via the DCMS website. If you want to look at the first year's records it is possible to download it from the 'Essex Data Archive'.

*What is the relationship between the minority groups work [FreshMinds – see Conference Report Part 1]?*

DCMS for a long time had targets around priority groups so that was why that research was done. They are quite broad groups and it doesn't really make much sense to talk about motivation around such categories. That was part of the motivation for this study, which needed to look at more defined segments.

Sport England has quite a good approach in that it separates the two things – the targets which are required for reporting back and the segmentation needed to undertake its work.

*[The Arts Council of Scotland] In Scotland, there is a Taking Part style survey happening and we hope to take a proactive approach to segmentation similar to this.*

*Do you have a plan for encouraging people to use Taking Part and the segmentation given that the take up of TGI and Area Profile Reports has always been historically very low?*

There is a whole new part of the website dedicated to this and a range of publications being developed, although we are still in the process of finding out from practitioners what is needed. The Audience Development Agencies will be important to this process.

*Was there anything in the segmentation that picked up on minorities and the barriers which they feel?*

The segmentation shows that there are many different factors which go in to the decisions which people make. Overall, we know that engagement amongst BME groups is low, but if you look at a group like Urban Eclectics this is a very diverse group. So it looks at the question from a different perspective.

[CB ended by inviting people to keep sending their queries, ideas etc to her at ACE]