

**HERITAGE**

*hands*  
**ON**

*hands*  
**OFF**

**ARTEFACTS**

?

**Activating Heritage Artefacts -**

**The Conservation and Safety Issues**

**A one-day Seminar: 16 November 1992**

**scienceworks**

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## HANDS ON, HANDS OFF? A KEY GUIDE FOR DECISION MAKERS.

Lawrie Conole and Martin Hallett

Issues raised in the papers and discussion can be usefully set out in a decision tree or dichotomous key. By using this key, heritage workers can systematically check their decisions on the major factors influencing the selection and use of artefacts for activation. The key is offered as a tool which should assist workers to evolve well judged positions on the activation of heritage artefacts.

*The key consists of a series of questions. After the options of 'Yes' and 'No' are indications of which question to proceed to next. You will sometimes be directed to a caution before the next question. In several cases you will be directed to the end of the key, where a strong caution urges reconsideration of your motives for choosing activation for the interpretation of the object.*

<b>YOU ARE CONSIDERING USING A HERITAGE ARTEFACT INTERACTIVELY ...</b>
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### HERITAGE ISSUES

1. Is the object unique?
 

A. Yes	GO TO 25
B. No	GO TO 2
  
2. Is the object associated with a person place or event of local state or national significance?
 

A. Yes	GO TO 3
B. No	GO TO 4
  
3. **CAUTION:** A degree of heritage significance is indicated. Carefully reassess before proceeding.
  
4. Does the object represent a significant development in material culture?
 

A. Yes	GO TO 5
B. No	GO TO 6
  
5. **CAUTION:** A further degree of heritage significance is indicated. Carefully reassess before proceeding.

### INTERPRETIVE ISSUES

6. Is there a satisfactory alternative to activation which will be educative, entertaining and compatible with other programs?
 

A. Yes	GO TO 7
B. No	GO TO 8
  
7. **CAUTION:** Why have you chosen to activate the object if a satisfactory alternative exists? Carefully reassess before proceeding.
  
8. Is there sufficient documentation to accurately activate and interpret the artefact?
 

A. Yes	GO TO 10
B. No	GO TO 9

9. CAUTION: On what basis will you interpret the object? Carefully reassess before proceeding.
10. Can a reproduction be substituted for the object in interactive use?  
A. Yes GO TO 11  
B. No GO TO 12
11. CAUTION: If a reproduction can be used, reconsider the use of an original. Carefully reassess before proceeding.
12. Will the object be significantly degraded by interactive use?  
A. Yes GO TO 13  
B. No GO TO 16
13. Can degradation be minimised by engineering or operational means?  
A. Yes GO TO 16  
B. No GO TO 14
14. CAUTION: This implies progressive degradation of the artefact. Carefully reassess before proceeding.
15. Do interpretive benefits justify the degradation of the object?  
A. Yes GO TO 16  
B. No GO TO 25
16. Will the value of the object as historical evidence be preserved?  
A. Yes GO TO 18  
B. No GO TO 17
17. CAUTION: Are there other sources of equivalent information? Do you have access to them? Has their value been identified? Carefully reassess before proceeding.
18. Will activation of the object involve loss and/or replacement of original parts?  
A. Yes GO TO 19  
B. No GO TO 20
19. CAUTION: This implies loss of integrity and historical evidence. Carefully reassess before proceeding.
20. Are replacement parts available?  
A. Yes GO TO 22  
B. No GO TO 21
21. CAUTION: Do you have the capacity to have parts fabricated or repaired? If not, activation will have a limited life. Carefully reassess before proceeding.

#### SAFETY ISSUES

22. Does interactive use of the object present a safety risk to operators or the public?  
A. Yes GO TO 23  
B. No GO TO 24
23. Can the object be made safe by engineering or operational means and still maintain its value for interpretation as a heritage artefact?  
A. Yes GO TO 24  
B. No GO TO 25

**RESOURCE ISSUE**

24. Can you meet the ongoing operational and maintenance costs of using the object interactively?
- A. Yes GO TO 26
  - B. No GO TO 25

**CONCLUSION**

25. You have identified a compelling reason for rejecting activation as an interpretive mode for this object. Reconsider your approach.
26. You have not identified a compelling reason for rejecting activation. Proceed with caution and schedule regular reviews to ensure that your assessment remains valid.

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