NON-PERSONAL SERVICES

Media	Advantages	Limitations	Key Audiences	Start Up Cost/Time	Continued Cost/Time
WAYSIDE EXHIBITS: Often the first or only interpretation a visitor may receive. These physical structures are ubiquitous with the NPS experience and help interpret a significant feature, typically within viewing distance.	• Helps identify physical resources • Orientation and interpretation 24/7 • Can show changes in a resource over time	• May frustrate visitors who have additional questions • Hard to interpret complicated stories • Subject to vandalism and weathering	On-site and outside visitors, those short on time, physically challenged.	$$$$ Lifespan in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
BROCHURES: Visitors often ask for brochures when they first arrive, seeking an informative resource they can carry throughout the trip and a tangible reminder of an experience. At best, these are well-written and contain inspiring images; at worst, they are forgettable and become campfire fuel.	• Useful as self-guided tour • Provides a souvenir and interpretation at home • Meets visitor expectations • Can be developed in-house	• Requires frequent revision to remain current • Creates litter once no longer useful • Discourages those who don't want to learn by reading	Visitors entering information centers, individuals with special interest, frequent national park visitors	$$ Lifespan in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
PUBLICATIONS: Books, magazines, newspapers are all examples of in-depth publications. Because there is often an associated cost, visitors purchase publications on self-selected topics. Expectations for accuracy, authority, and scholarship are much higher.	• Provides detail and specificity • Offers an authoritative voice • Generates bookstore income • Visitors can read and re-engage at future dates	• May discourage readers because of lengthy text • Printing may not be environmentally friendly. • May not be appropriate for all ages or languages	On-site visitors looking to purchase a tangible reminder or those seeking more information on a special topic.	$$$ Lifespan in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
HISTORIC FURNISHING: Objects and furniture can fill spaces and recreate 3-D environments appropriate for a particular period in history. Except for time travel, this may be the most realistic glimpse into the past. Significant collaboration with cultural historians is needed to achieve historical accuracy.	• Helps a historic place come alive for visitors • Offers cues and props for interpreters giving tours and programs.	• Requires security, maintenance, and conservation • Historic structures may be inaccessible • Needs additional interpretation, not effective as a stand alone	Organized tours, school groups, and those with a keen interest in history. May not be youth friendly.	$$$$ Lifespan in Years (5 10 15 20)	$$
MUSEUM EXHIBITS: Exhibits have evolved to fully immersive experiences that appeal to all ages and learning styles. New exhibits are designed to be hands on, fun, and engaging; out of date exhibits in parks feel stagnant and are embarrassing.	• Visitors can interact with objects • Viewable at own pace and desired level of complexity • Multi-sensory • Multiple layers of interpretation	• Not available after hours • Frequent maintenance and repair • May be difficult for large groups to experience an exhibit at the same time	People at visitor centers, particularly families, destination visitors, or free choice learners	$$$$ Lifespan in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
AUDIO/VIDEO: Multimedia can include park films, audio tours, podcasts, and web features. The combination of audio and moving images can create strong emotional connections and memories. Visitors have high expectations because of exposure to popular television shows and movies.	• Creates mood or atmosphere • Provides views of inaccessible places or resources • Presents material sequentially • Increasingly easier to distribute online, not just visitor centers	• Disappoints visitors who want to learn at their own pace • Relies on technology that can break or become out of date • Visitors expect professional production value	Youth, classroom learners, online viewers, families, those seeking entertainment	$$$$ Lifespan in Years (5 10 15 20)	$

INTERPRETIVE MEDIA MATRIX

HOURS PER WEEK: 0-5 | 5-10 | 10-15 | 15-20 | 20+

ANNUAL COST INCLUDING STAFF AND MATERIALS: $ (<$500) | $$ ($500 - $2000) | $$$ ($2000 - $5000) | $$$$ (+$5000)

	Media	Advantages	Limitations	Key Audiences	Start Up Cost/Time	Continued Cost/Time
NON-PERSONAL SERVICES	**WEB PAGE:** One of the most flexible, powerful, and challenging mediums. The public now expects every major organization to have a web presence. While websites can hold an infinite amount of information, be judicious and strategic in how one's site is organized. The user experience a key to success.	• Material costs are negligible • Easy to change and edit • Can transmit content to virtually anywhere in the world • Easy to evaluate statistics • Information available 24/7	• Can be a one-sided flow of information • Requires fresh content to keep audiences engaged • Writing for the web requires new skill set for interpreters	Trip planners, students, researchers, key decision makers, local communities	$$ — **Lifespan** in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
	SOCIAL MEDIA: Playing on the human need for community, social media websites have exploded in popularity over the past decade. For many users, they are *the* primary form of social interaction, the place where news, events, conversations, and memories are collectively shared.	• Creates dialogue and allows one to listen to audiences • Easy-to-share tools encourage content to go viral • Access to hundreds of millions of online community members	• Most rapidly evolving medium and challenging to stay current • Not all visitors like to share private/personal information online • Content is short-lived	Digital natives, local communities, frequent visitors, urban populations	$$ — **Lifespan** in Years (5 10 15 20)	$$
	BLOG: Short for *web log*, blogs are journal-like web pages where posts appear chronologically. This format is appropriate for narratives and articles around a common theme. For parks, blogs offer the public a behind-the-scenes look at park staff and operations.	• Users can comment on posts • Easy to share links and multi-media • Automatic archiving • Appropriate for seasonal or timely topics	• Presents information in a linear formats • Can be hard to find old content • Requires commitment to produce original content on a regular schedule	Niche groups, enthusiasts, subject matter experts, students	$$ — **Lifespan** in Years (5 10 15 20)	$$
	MOBILE PHONE APP: Smart phones are quickly dominating the cell phone market. Because content is streamlined and specific, navigating an app is faster and more intuitive than a web page. Common features include: navigable maps, augmented reality, photo galleries, and social media integration.	• Can host multimedia content • Interpretation on demand • Can present geo-specific information • Acknowledges 21st century visitor needs and expectations	• Requires expensive equipment. • May require cell phone coverage to work (though not always) • Hard to make apps available across different phone platforms • So far, no servicewide standard	Those comfortable with technology, urban populations, digital natives	$$$$ — **Lifespan** in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
PERSONAL SERVICES	**INFORMAL AND EXTEMPORANEOUS INTERPRETATION:** Most interpretive contacts are or start as informal exchanges. Contrary to popular belief, because this depends on a dexterous and flexible exchange between interpreter and visitor, this is an advanced and not a basic skill.	• Meets immediate and specific need of visitors • Based on a two-way interaction, not a static presentation	• Confused with customer service • Perception that this is easy to do well • Requires deep understanding of human behavior and motivation as well as subject expertise	Visitors interacting with the resource, at overlooks, repeat and local visitors, rule-breakers	$ — **Lifespan** in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
	LIVING HISTORY: Living history and costumed interpretation are among the most difficult media to do well. Ironically, emphasis on interpreting differences in the tasks of daily life can create barriers to understanding the relevance of the past to the modern world.	• Can "people" a landscape and humanize the past • Provides opportunities to discuss people and illustrate their lives • For living historians, a powerful way to learn about the past	• Requires extensive research and training to do authentically • Emphasis on daily life differences reduces empathy and relevance of the past • Presents safety and health issues	History buffs, families, students, tour groups, seniors	$$$$ — **Lifespan** in Years (5 10 15 20)	$
	TALKS AND TOURS: People are an interpretive medium too! While overwhelmingly the "default" method for communication, because people are expensive and valuable resources, be deliberate and strategic in decisions to use them. Talks and tours are the most common form of personal services.	• People enjoy connecting with other people • Is flexible and can respond to changing needs and conditions • Can be interactive and customized in the movement • Can be mobilized quickly, especially with prior training	• The most expensive medium to use, maintain, and mange. Increasing fixed costs • Requires ongoing training • Requires close supervision, management, and attention • Messaging generally inconsistent person-to-person	First time visitors, families, school and tour groups, those with time available, and those who plan in advance.	$$ — **Lifespan** in Years (5 10 15 20)	$