

Storytelling Toolbox	Pros	Cons	Best for
Brochures and free printed materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Relatively inexpensive to create & print * Can provide a self-guided tour * Can provide an overview or introduction * Can be updated when reprinted * Can serve as a souvenir * Lets visitors set their own pace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Not everyone likes to read * Need to keep materials in stock * Includes only limited information * Need to have distribution system * Need to avoid temptation to squeeze in information by shrinking type and not including illustrations 	Good first step for an organization with a limited budget and staff.
Guidebooks and printed materials to sell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can generate income * Can provide more detailed information * More space for illustrations * More space for larger fonts for readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can be expensive to create * Need to store * Need to track inventory * Need to market and sell publications 	Sites with in-depth scholarly research where there is a market for the kind and quality of publication you have in mind.
Interpretive Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can provide information 24/7 * Can be positioned so view from sign connects to the story told * Good visuals and concise, well-written copy can encourage visitors to learn more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Are more expensive and more permanent than brochures * Limited space to share information * Updates/corrections require new panels * Vandalism or weathering may occur * Need to have plan for upkeep * Need permission of owner to install 	Outdoor sites without staff, or additional outdoor interpretation for sites with staff.
Artifact and Object Exhibits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Opportunity to display authentic artifacts * Can provide low-tech interactive opportunities for discovery (e.g. lift flap, open book, illuminate spotlight etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Danger of displays becoming “grandma’s attic” with no context * Requires curatorial care for artifacts 	Sites open to the public that have artifacts.
Interactive Exhibits using Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Offers great interaction opportunities * Variety of options with audio, video, touch-screen, etc. * In today’s world, is becoming expected * Can poll visitors to engage them in dialogue (What do you think...?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Technology requires outside expertise * Technology can break 	Sites with human and financial capabilities to create and maintain technology exhibits

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Interactive Kiosks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can provide a lot of information in a small space * Visitor can access specific information of interest to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can only serve a limited number of visitors at one time. * Requires technological assistance to develop and maintain * Needs to be in a secure location 	Good for a secure and safe location with the availability of staff or outside technical assistance to maintain
Audio Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Relatively affordable * Provides control over information provided * Can include sound effects * Can include clips from oral histories * Variety of equipment options (CD, MP3, cell phone, PDAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Requires equipment to maintain/track * Checking equipment in/out * Updating tour may require outside help * Choose format carefully as technology is always changing * Ensuring target audience is comfortable with the kind of equipment you use 	Good as a self-guided tour at a site, or as part of a walking or driving tour of the region in place of staff or volunteers. Be aware that some older audiences may be less familiar with more recent technologies.
Films	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can help to recreate events * Adds drama * Can show locations or interiors that are not accessible to the public * Provides control over information * Can be used in multiple locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Requires specialized expertise to create * Can be expensive to produce * Locked into set timeframe * Need secure area to show film * Not easy to update * Requires equipment and some technical expertise to operate * If playing continuously, can be distracting for staff and visitors 	More established sites with dedicated auditorium space and the resources to develop a high-quality film.
Guided Tours for Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Guide can engage visitors in conversation * Tour can be personalized to interests * Tour can be tailored to fit timeframe * A good guide can make a site come alive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cost/challenge of having staff available * Requires ongoing training * Challenge of making guides are available when visitors are there * Incorrect information can be shared * If group is too large, can be hard to hear 	Sites with ample staff and volunteers that have extensive hours of operation.

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Guided Tours for school groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enables you to reach visitors who would never have otherwise come to your site * The opportunity to influence young minds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School tours can be labor intensive * Schools often have limited budgets * Noise from school tours can disrupt other tours 	Sites visited by youth or school groups.
Living History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Living history (where costumed interpreters role-play historical characters) helps to make history come alive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can be expensive and time-consuming for staff and volunteers * Can require special training 	Sites with ample staff, volunteers and budget with extensive hours of operation.
Role Playing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Living history taken one step further—where visitors become active participants in role playing scenarios led by living history interpreters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Requires training and ability to improvise * Can be expensive and time-consuming for staff and volunteers 	Sites with ample staff, volunteers and budget with extensive hours of operation, or for groups by appointment or special events at sites.
Hands On Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * An opportunity for children or adults to make or do something * Visitors will remember more when they actively participate in the experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * More difficult to do with large groups * Can require special equipment and supplies * Staffing and supplies add cost * Takes time for staff and visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sites with opportunities to have an extended visit with a small group. * Group tours or times when sites know visitors will be there.
Group Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Special offerings can be added to the tour because you know a group is coming * With advance notice you can match the right guide with each group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Need to schedule and book tours * Need to be sure guides show up 	Sites with the ability to promote and coordinate the advance arrangements for group tours
Special Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can help to make a site come alive * Can help draw locals to your site * Provide opportunities for “behind-the-scenes” tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can be time intensive to organize * Only happen at limited times during the year, or possibly just once. * Requires extra publicity to generate a crowd. 	Sites with ample volunteers
Virtual Tours or Exhibits on Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 24/7 accessibility * Opportunity to reach larger audiences * New web technologies can allow interactive elements (blogs, chats, etc.) * Can prepare visitors in advance of visit * Relatively affordable * Can be developed in phases * Provides user with self-directed options * Can include podcasts that can be downloaded as part of tours of the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Requires web expertise * Initial investment can be substantial * Visitors may not actually visit your site * Not all visitors are web-savvy * Interactive elements need to be monitored 	Any site with access to the technical website expertise where potential visitors are web-savvy