Description:

TripAdvisor.com is a travel website that allows people to search for travel information, participate in forums, and post reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions, and airlines.

Benefit/Value:

According to TripAdvisor’s website, they can help traveler’s plan the “perfect” trip by allowing users to access advice from real travelers. Users can read reviews of various hotels on the TripAdvisor website, and then allows them to find the best rate and book a reservation for that hotel by partnering with reservation sites such as Orbitz, Expedia, and hotels.com. What makes the review feature of TripAdvisor stand out from booking websites such as Expedia and the others is that TripAdvisor allows users to create a profile when they submit reviews. This allows other users to see what other reviews a particular user has written, what interests this user has, and where this user has been. By viewing this information, a user is better able to determine whether they trust the advice of any particular user.

The forums are also beneficial to travelers who have specific questions about a destination. Here any other users can chime in with information that the user has requested.

Potential Value to Arts Organizations:

I recently saw TripAdvisor mentioned on a blog I enjoy [http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/]. The author of the blog mentioned TripAdvisor in reference to how to keep a person engaged and participating with your institution after they’ve participated in any way, whether by leaving a comment online, or participating in an event in person. TripAdvisor sends a message to users who have left reviews to let them know that their participation matters. According to Nina Simon, the author of the blog post, sending this type of message validates participation and may encourage users to continue to do so.
Acknowledging the contributions and ideas of users makes interactions two-sided rather than one-sided. It seems to be normal for museums to post information about their institution, exhibitions, and events, which is a one-sided interaction. The museum gives information and the audience is expected to listen. But by allowing users to post their own opinions and make submission, a conversation is created and museums can garner greater participation. TripAdvisor makes a formal acknowledgement of user contributions by sending this message, but a museum can do this informally simply by responding more to ideas and comments left by users on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. This can encourage a two-way conversation that leads the user to be more engaged.