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A non-museum friend recently moved to New York City and was figuring out ways to meet new people. She told me about her experience with **Met Share**, developed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (<http://www.metmuseum.org/metshare/>). **Met Share** allows visitors to enhance their understanding and appreciation of the Museum's collection while connecting with other individuals to share experiences. In an email to me she wrote, *the Met is everywhere on the web—flickr groups, FB [Facebook], YouTube, Delicious, Twitter and MySpace. It's so nice to have all these sources to get information. I now find myself checking their FB site or Twitter feed to see what is going on at the Museum and then hook up with friends. As you know, I never was very into museums (like you), but now I'm finding they're pretty engaging if you can get connected to them in the right way. Oh yeah, and check out **It's Time We Met** (<http://www.metmuseum.org/metshare/timewemet>). This was a contest where visitors could submit their own photographs of how they shared their visit to the Museum with friends. The images are great. I wish more museums would get the public involved, or maybe they are and I just don't know about it. So therein lies the question...for those visitors who are not Facebookers or Tweeters, how do we connect?*

From the other side of the US, another non-museum friend sent me a photo from his iPhone of **Urban Light**, a permanent installation of 202 vintage street lamps by Chris Burden at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. I went to their web site to find an interesting citizen photography project around this installation. In February 2009, LACMA hosted an online exhibition where they showed visitor/citizen inspired photography, video, and creative writing based on Chris Burden's installation. They also created a commemorative print-on-demand book with a selection of the submissions (<http://www.lacma.org/art/urbanlight.aspx>). Of course the model for many of the current "crowd-curated" exhibitions is

**Click!** the seminal 2008 exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. In this issue we feature an article by one of the "crowd," a Brooklyn photographer who describes what it's like to be a participant. Understanding the impact of these new participatory formats on visitors/participants is one of the biggest challenges for the profession. In addition to describing the development process, the selection and judging process, and the impact on the museum, the **Click!** website also discusses efforts to evaluate the exhibition. Go to [www.brooklynmuseum.org/click](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/click).

For those interested in reading about participatory science exhibitions, check out the report **Public Participation in Scientific Research [PPSR]: Defining the Field and Assessing Its Potential for Informal Science Education** (<http://caise.insci.org/news/79/51/Public-Participation-in-Scientific-Research/d,resources-page-item-detail>), from ASTC's Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE). The authors are a group of informal science educators led by Rick Bonney of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. They discuss the models for public participation in scientific research in the following passage:

*Scientific investigations include many processes, steps, or activities in which the public can be involved. These include:*

- Choosing or defining questions for study
- Gathering information and resources
- Developing explanations (hypotheses) about possible answers to questions
- Designing data collection methodologies (both experimental and observational)
- Collecting data
- Analyzing data
- Interpreting data and drawing conclusions
- Disseminating conclusions
- Discussing results and asking new questions

*From an educational perspective, PPSR models*

differ chiefly by involving the public in these steps to varying degrees and by altering the amount of control that participants have over the different steps.

For this report we have divided PPSR projects into three major categories:

1. **Contributory projects**, which are generally designed by scientists and for which members of the public primarily contribute data.
2. **Collaborative projects**, which are generally designed by scientists and for which members of the public contribute data but also may help to refine project design, analyze data, or disseminate findings.
3. **Co-created projects**, which are designed by scientists and members of the public working together and for which at least some of the public participants are actively involved in most or all steps of the scientific process.

To investigate the educational impacts of PPSR the team reviewed ten projects that fell within these model types—five Contributory, three Collaborative, and two Co-created.

On her September 22, 2009 blog (<http://www.museumtwo.blogspot.com/>), Nina Simon discusses this report and adds a fourth category. She states, *I would add a fourth model, tentatively called **Co-option**. In the co-option*

*model, the institution turns over a portion of its facilities and resources to support programs developed and implemented by external public groups...[this model] may be more appropriate to facilities like museums than to scientific organizations. In this model, the public uses institutional facilities or resources to develop and manage projects of their own devising.* This report and Nina's blog are both very interesting and should be reviewed if your institution is considering participatory exhibitions.

In closing, for those of you who share my love of quirky and out of the norm museums, here are few for your perusal.

- Burlingame Museum of Pez Memorabilia (<http://www.spectrumnet.com/pez/>). Please note this is not the official Pez® Candy Inc. Museum, but a cool place regardless.
- The Candy Wrapper Museum (<http://www.candywrappermuseum.com/>)
- And Gene Dillenburg shared this one, The Figurine and Action Figure Museum (<http://www.actionfiguremuseum.com/>).

Over the next few months, get out there (in person or virtually) and check out some exhibitions. If you see any that are intriguing or noteworthy, drop me a line ([beth@redmond-jones.com](mailto:beth@redmond-jones.com)) with the details so we can share it with our other readers in the spring issue of the *Exhibitionist*. 