

EVALUATION OF VISITORS-SIGNAGE INTERACTION at Parco Natura Viva

(Verona, Italy)

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ABSTRACT

Educational signage potentially may reach thousands of zoo visitors, but we know that a lot of people show lack of interest about them. What’s the situation in Parco Natura Viva? What shall we do to implement the use of signage?

We studied the interactions between visitors and exhibit labels, trying to understand: 1)the rate of use; 2) the reasons hidden behind this rate; 3) the behavior of the different typologies of visitors 4)their inner motivations about reading and zoo-visit; 5) finally, we valued the visitors opinion about the educational outcome of the visit.

Non-intrusive direct observations of visitors analyzed: 1)the behavior towards educational signs; 2)spontaneous exclamations and statements about animals and exhibits; 15000 visitors have been observed and 3000 comments have been transcribed. Then we built and tested a closed-ended questionnaire for a survey, that 80 visitors completed during interviews after that their behavior toward signs was observed.

Results: 1) 22% of observed people look to the signage only for superficial examination, and 9% of thorough readers; 2) the species subject of signage affects the reading behavior (visitors prefers to investigate about non-charismatic, “strange” and easily visible species); 3) signage on eye-level and high-contrast colored looks more readable; 4) PNV visitors are mostly families, but usually the signage readers are young couples; 5)personal curiosity is the main motivation of reading and pleasure is the motivation of the visit; 6) people said that concepts learned during the visit are mainly about biodiversity and conservations, and claimed that the goals of a zoo are recreation but also education, research and conservation.