

# DURATION

The duration of a game art(s) exhibition must align with its overall goals, within the capacity of the producers to offer the experience to the standard expected by the venue and audience. There is no definitive answer for how long an exhibition should last, but numerous factors will affect the decision.

Typically an art exhibition with no interactive elements may last roughly 6 months, whereas standard gaming conventions last only a few days. History museums will have often have permanent collections that are on display for multiple years, while small galleries might have many shows that last a few weeks each.

When deciding the length of your exhibition, consider the following factors:

## **What is the goal of the event, and how much time will it take to achieve that goal?**

A public convention is designed to create excitement for upcoming games, ideally driving future sales for the developers. As such, a shorter time period makes sense for restricting access in order to make the event feel more urgent.

An exhibition dedicated to showcasing work around a particular theme or topic may wish to have a calmer environment. That means longer opening hours over a longer period of time, without thousands of people queuing to play. If the works encourage multiple interactions in order to examine them critically, how long is needed in between visits?

An irreplaceable object (such as a unique work of art or a site-specific installation) may benefit from a longer exhibition period, allowing more individuals to engage with it (as they would not be able to do at home or in another venue). However, considerations of funding, security, and maintenance may limit the length of time that such a work can reasonably be displayed safely.

Consider who your audience is and what their expectations are. Make sure to also take into account limiting factors such as who and what needs to be present; for example: a developer can afford to take a weekend to be physically present to promote their game, but not months.

## **What resources are required? How do they change based on the length?**

On top of base funds needed to produce an event, any exhibition with interactive objects will require ongoing investment. Producers should calculate what costs will be incurred and take account of this in their planning.

Objects that require touch for interaction may require repeated sanitation or general maintenance. High-priced but small items such as speakers, controllers, and handheld consoles or touchscreen interfaces might be targeted for theft or vandalism; requiring them to be secured or potentially replaced. Large numbers of visitors in a short burst of time may cause a different type of “wear-and-tear” than many visitors over an extended period; and continued use over an extended period of time will necessitate replacements or repairs to certain interactive elements.

## **How are the works to be displayed? How does that affect the event?**

Still images, enclosed object displays, and time-based but non-interactive media may extend the length of time an object can be displayed safely, but may be less popular or less engaging to an audience (in comparison to interactives). Consider whether this still achieves the goals of the

exhibition, or augments it too significantly.

A short exhibition period with no non-interactive objects may ensure the safety of the works on display but limit the amount of exposure for the exhibition as a whole. A longer exhibition with a mix of object types may allow for a larger audience to experience the exhibition, but with less opportunities for direct engagement between curator, maker, and viewer.

## Notes

In the context of this article, I am using the terms exhibition, event, and program interchangeably; in the case of most venues and institutions, these terms have specific internal meanings and are not interchangeable per se.

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