

October Monthly Planetarium Report

Camera Research

For October, the idea of acquiring a camera has once again come up, and while I ultimately decided on the Insta 360 One R, the decision took a lot of thought and reading. To determine which camera would ultimately work best for the museum, poured through multiple articles about 360 camera and other “action” cameras, to see which one would best fit our budget and needs.

I determined the 360 One R was the right choice for us based upon its ability to shoot a large area and pick up details really well in the dark. This is useful for the planetarium specifically because it will allow me to work on recording and ultimately livestreaming content from the dome to the internet. The camera’s ability to move back and forth between regular shooting and 360 recording will also be valuable, as it will allow us to create our own full dome content in the future. I look forward to working with this camera and will hopefully be able to expand the museum’s outreach abilities in the future with its assistance.

Fly extermination

I have mentioned it before to our Museum Director, but the planetarium and the museum are currently fighting a swarm of flies that has decided to call the planetarium dome its home. This has forced me to spend a non-insignificant amount of time working on killing flies, whether it be setting up, inspecting, and replacing traps, or actively hunting them down with fly swatters. I do this because the number of flies inside the museum at the moment is still at a rather uncomfortable level and leaving them to their own devices is only going to create a larger issue. While I have not been able to fully eradicate this swarm, I have made a serious dent in their numbers and prevented them from overtaking areas throughout the upstairs. I am still working on ways to better trap and kill the flies inside the planetarium each day, and my hope is that once the cold snaps come, I can finally rid our museum of this menace.

Outreach

My outreach this month is most notable from the field trip event that we are currently offering to students in the region. While this was originally only sent to astronomy teachers and professors in Alpena, our director realized this service’s potential and extended it throughout the county. Since then, we have had numerous students from multiple schools come in for their free field trip offer. It has given me the chance to reach out to more people than I normally would, as without these students, there would have been several days without shows this month.

Other outreach I have worked on this month has involved the planetarium's Facebook page. I have been making at least one post a day, every day, for the majority of the past month. This has allowed me to provide people with a cool fact or nice astronomy picture once a day, which gives me the chance to engage with people via this medium. While I cannot say for sure how much it has done at this point, I am certain that it can be a valuable outreach tool if I can continue to add content every day.

I have also tried to work on collaborating with that school in Alaska, but I've yet to hear anything official from them, so I have no idea as to whether or not they still want to virtually tour the museum.

Social media and science research

As mentioned in the previous section, I have been updating my planetarium page on a daily basis, which does require a bit of time to do each day. This has put me into a habit of starting off my day behind my computer, looking online for interesting content to post. The amount of time this can take does vary from day to day, as even science news can be slow at times, but I also gives me the time to stay up to date on everything happening in the astronomy and science world, which is useful for a couple of reasons.

Being up to date on science topics is useful in a few ways, one being that knowing what is happening allows me to answer questions when they come up. Having this information also gives me the opportunity to create content related to popular scientific events, for instance: last year I created a small 15 minute demonstration about the first ever black hole photograph, which I still use to this day when the topic of black holes comes up.

While it feels weird to sit down and browse the internet, it is ultimately useful for a job where I need to interact with the public on a frequent basis.

Other Items

In October I was finally able to get a draft of the planetarium manual together and printed out for review. Creating the manual took a considerable amount of time on my part, requiring me to think a lot about the processes that go into operating the planetarium and then finding ways to appropriately explain them. I also needed to spend time taking and editing pictures of the planetarium systems for the purpose of better giving visual aid to anyone using them manual in the future. My hope is that the manual can be used by anyone at anytime to operate a show in the planetarium without needing any additional materials or support.

Shutdown Plans

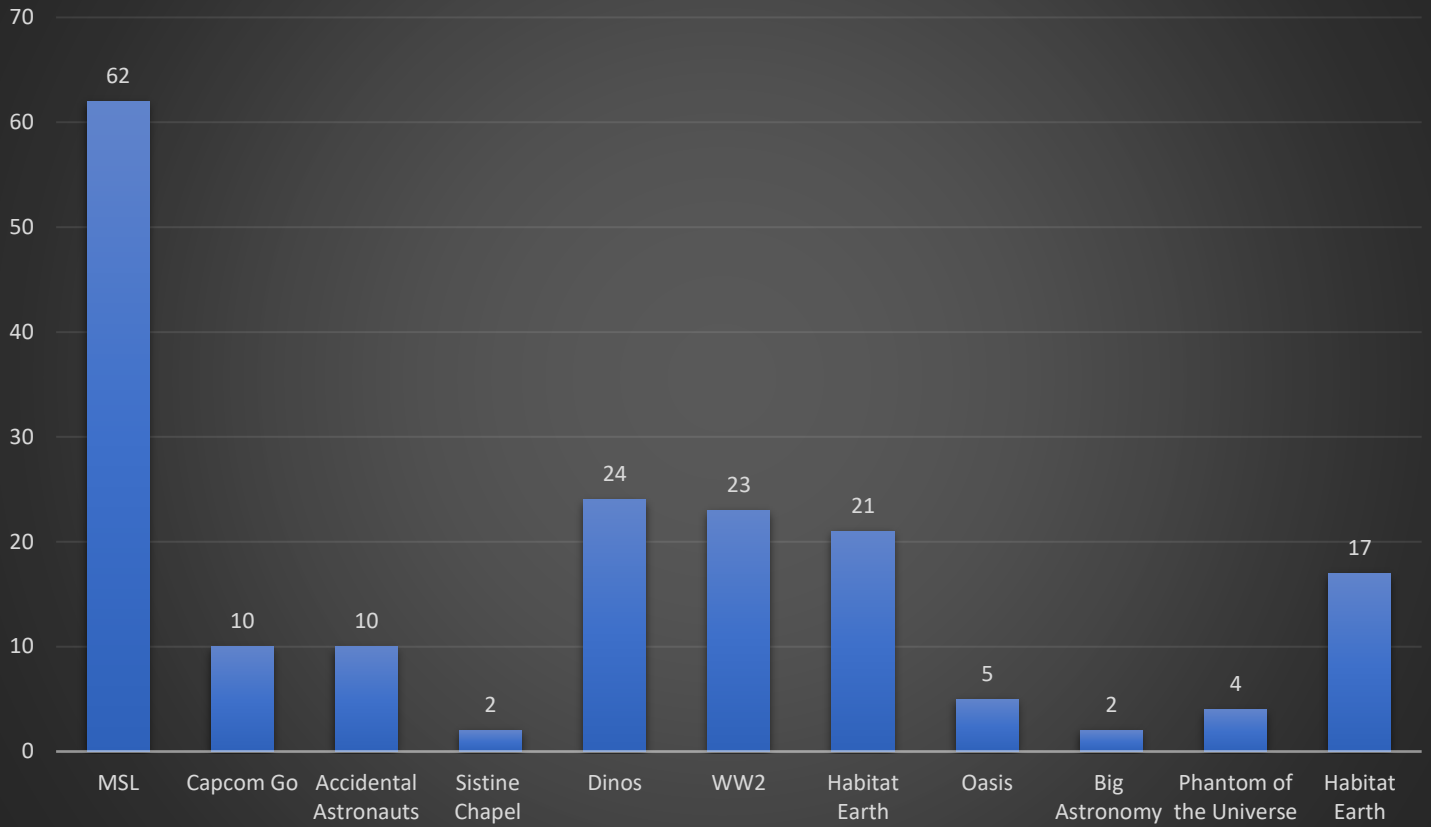
With the Corona Virus showing no signs of slowing down in the U.S. and around the world, it has become obvious that we may face another shutdown at some point in the near future. So, I would like to ask if the Museum Director or the board of directors has any plans in place in the event of another shutdown.

As for the planetarium, I now have better tools and experience available to me than in March, which would allow me to create even more engaging digital content than previously. I also have some ideas on creating science, art, and history boxes based on astronomy, similar to Art in the Loft, except creating them related to astronomy. With Amanda's assistance, I am sure we could create an educational kit that is not only fun, but also meets local, state, and federal education benchmarks. I will continue to think and plan on making the most of my time in the event of a pandemic so that the museum and the Planetarium can maintain a positive influence on people all across the world.

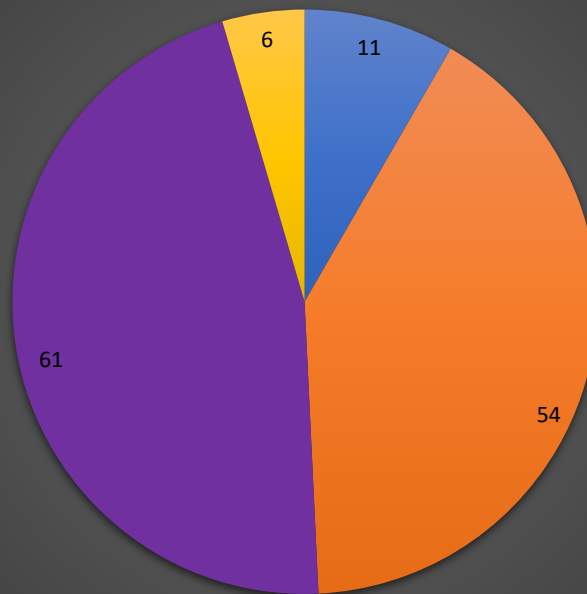
Attendance

Attendance was low this month, only totaling 159 guests, this low number is expected but there were enough field trips from the area to where we would have at least one show a day. Our two middle time slots 11:30 and 1:00 are the two most well attended times that we have right now, with the 3:00/ 2:30pm slot only being attended once this month. Since the high school shut down this month, it is hard to say how well the new time period will appeal to high schoolers, and we will likely have to wait until the school opens up again to test the time slot's utility to high schoolers.

Shows

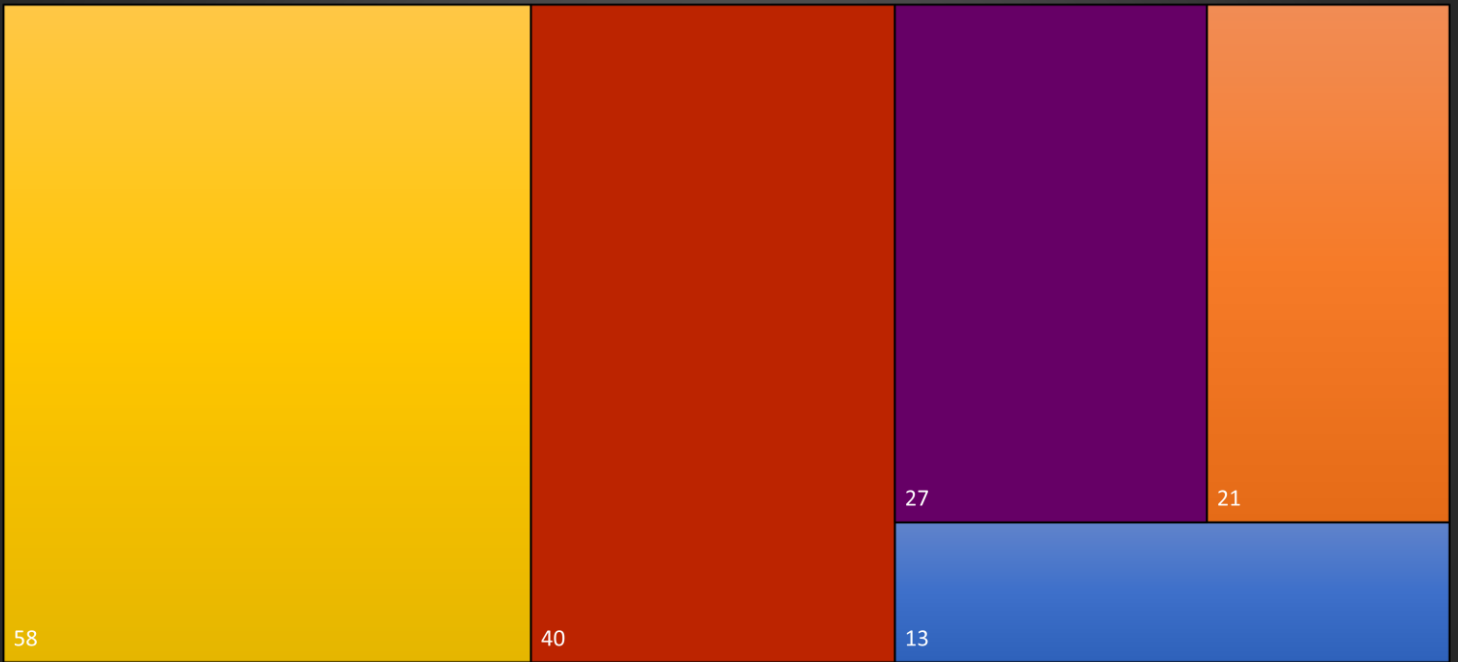


Showtimes



■ 10:00 AM ■ 11:30 AM ■ 1:00 PM ■ 3:00 PM

OCTOBER ATTENDANCE



Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday