

VMS
AMS

Verband der Museen der Schweiz
Association des musées suisses
Associazione dei musei svizzeri
Swiss Museums Association

Museum visits in Switzerland 2009



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Generalsekretariat
c/o Schweizerisches Landesmuseum
Postfach, CH-8021 Zürich

Telefon +41 44 218 65 88
Telefax +41 44 218 65 89
info@museums.ch, www.museums.ch



Mitglied der Schweizerischen Akademie
der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften
www.sagw.ch

1. Introduction

The Swiss Museums Association (SMA) is the umbrella organisation of Swiss and Liechtenstein museums. The SMA gives the museums a collective voice, sets standards and serves as a forum for sharing ideas and experiences. It has been taking stats on museum visits all over Switzerland since 1999. The SMA's statistics are the only national source of data available on this subject.

The museum scene in Switzerland is highly diverse, and so the SMA differentiates between eight different types of museum. Regional and local museums are town and village museums with their own regional and local significance. The art museums feature fine and applied arts, as well as church treasures and collections on the history of architecture and the historical museums concentrate on military, religious and general history. Collections on European and non-European cultures can be discovered in folklore museums and ethnological museums. In the natural sciences museum category you can find museums dealing with medicine and public health, and there are botanical and zoological gardens. Technology museums cover science and engineering, industrial history, transport and telecommunication. Another type of museum is archaeological museums and their collections. Finally, there are themed museums, which exhibit specialised collections on subjects that have not already been covered by the other types of museum.

2. Total museum visits

Swiss museums were regularly visited again in 2009. The 1'061 museums counted 18.3 million admissions over the past year. Not counting the botanical and zoological gardens, there were 12.6 million visitors. This represents a 5% increase on last year's total of 17.3 million museum visits. These pleasing results prove that Swiss museums remain very popular with the public, and that the need for cultural events and institutions is still great.

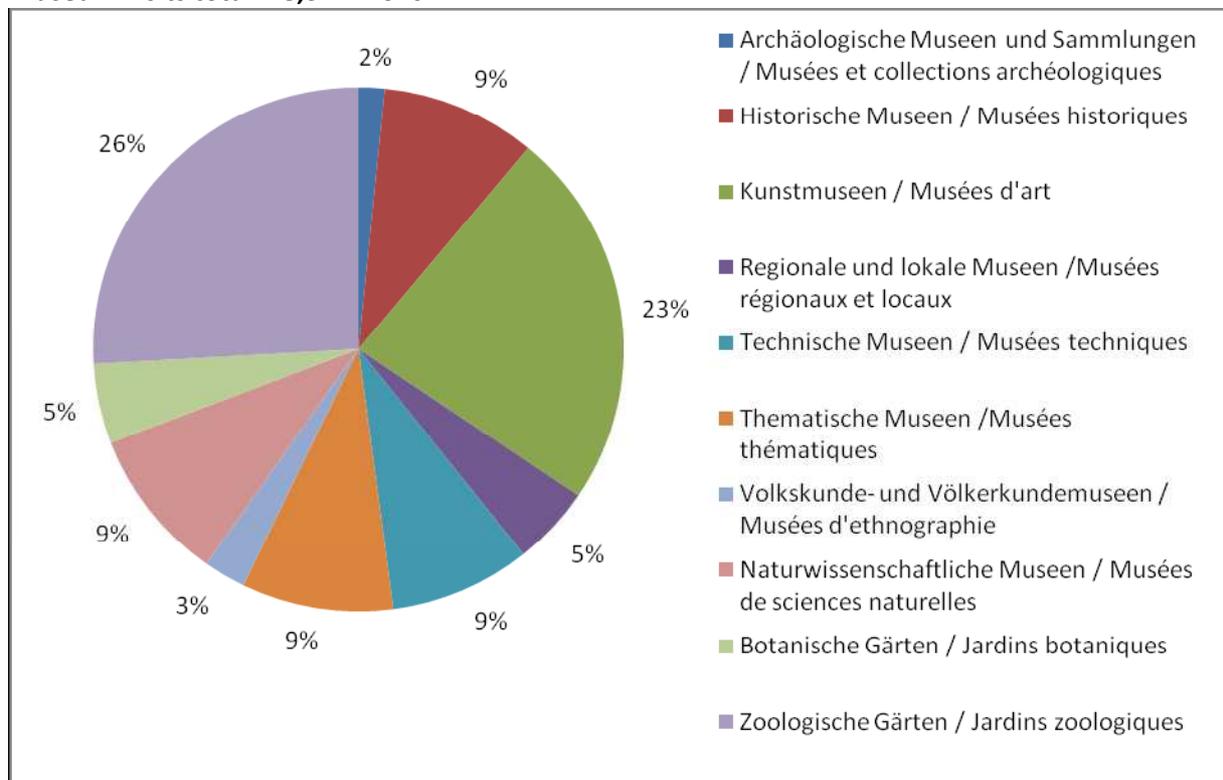
One of the reasons acknowledged for the growth in museum visits is that the year 2008 was a poor one for museums, because of the European Football Championships. Euro 2008 directly led to a decrease in museum admissions in the host cities of Zurich, Berne, Basel and Geneva, in particular. In addition, strong figures for the Kunstmuseum Basel and the zoological gardens contributed to this rise. With its successful exhibitions on display during the course of 2009, the Kunstmuseum Basel was able to more than triple its number of admissions.

The following 30 museums admitted over 100'000 visitors:

Zoo Zürich	Zürich
Zoo Basel	Basel
Natur- und Tierpark Goldau	Goldau
Kunstmuseum	Basel
Verkehrshaus der Schweiz	Luzern
Fondation Beyeler	Riehen
Städtischer Tierpark Dählhölzli	Bern
Schweizerisches Freilichtmuseum für ländliche Kultur Ballenberg	Hofstetten
Conservatoire et jardin botaniques	Chambésy
Château de Chillon	Veytaux
Fondation Pierre Gianadda	Martigny
Swiss Science Center Technorama	Winterthur
Museo del cioccolato	Caslano
Kunsthaus	Zürich
Exposition Swissminiatur	Melide
Papiliorama - Swiss Tropical Garden	Kerzers
Muséum d'histoire naturelle	Genève

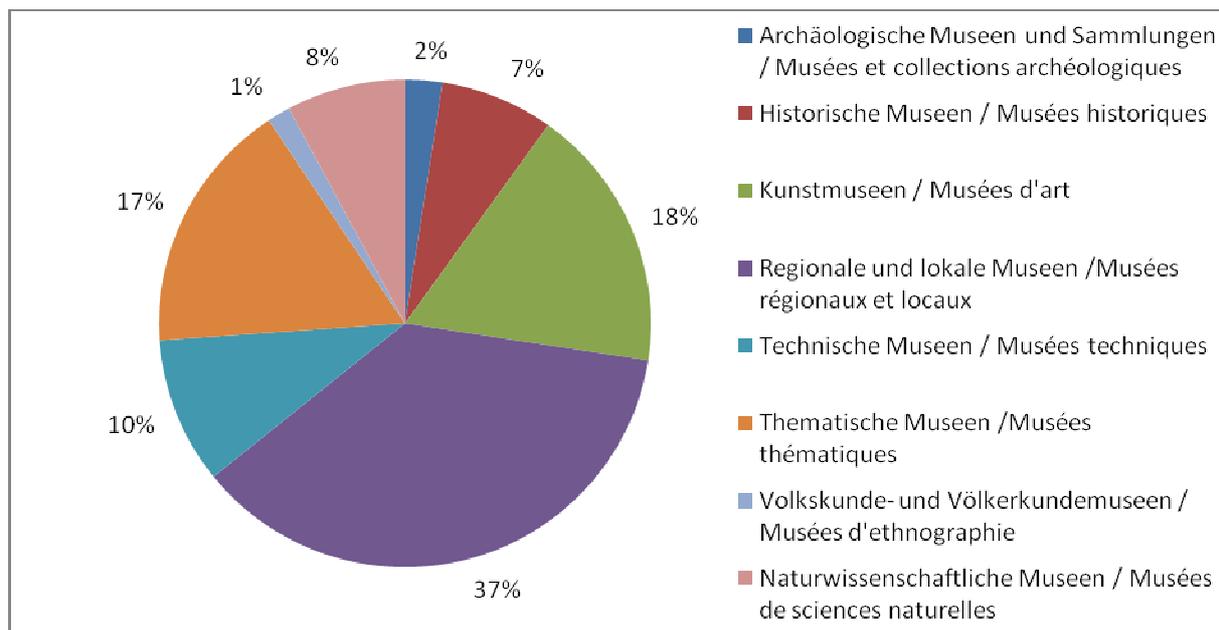
Musée d'art et d'histoire	Genève
Château de Gruyères	Gruyères
Le Musée Olympique	Lausanne
Landesmuseum Zürich	Zürich
Museum für Gestaltung Zürich	Zürich
Historisches Museum Bern / Einstein Museum	Bern
Botanischer Garten der Universität	Zürich
La Maison du Gruyère	Pringy-Gruyères
Zentrum Paul Klee	Bern
Stiftsbibliothek	St. Gallen
Gletschergarten	Luzern
Museum Tinguely	Basel
Musée international de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge	Genève

Museum visits total: 18,3 millions



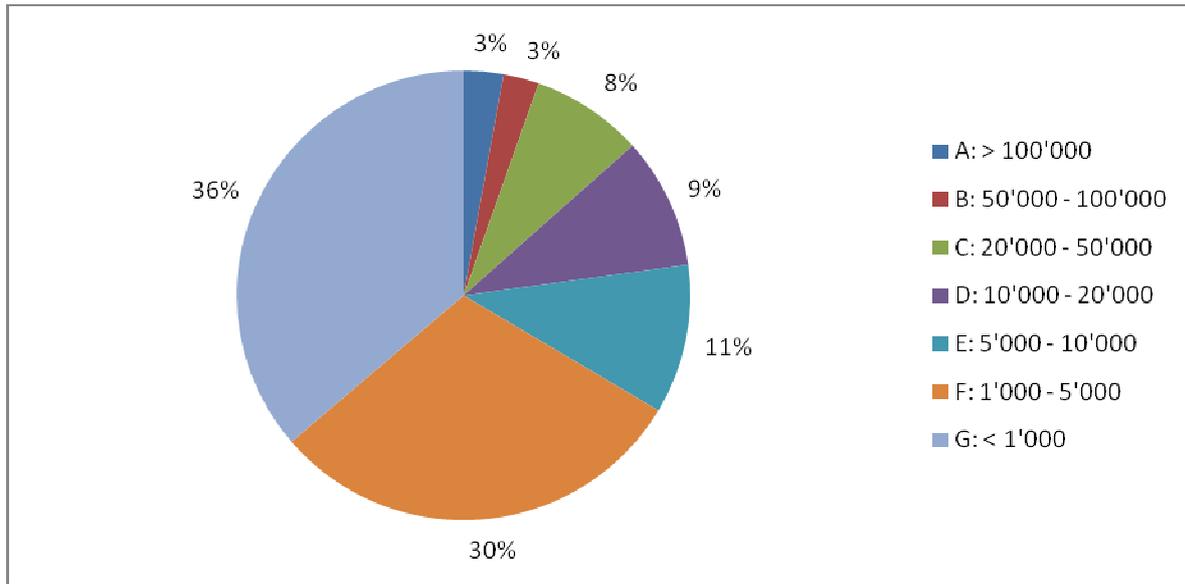
Museum visits (including the botanical and zoological gardens)	Number of visits	Percentage
Archaeological museums and collections	289400	2%
Historical museums	1729600	9%
Art museums	4267800	23%
Regional and local museums	891400	5%
Technology museums	1565600	9%
Themed museums	1687100	9%
Folklore and ethnological museums	468500	3%
Natural sciences museums	1728300	9%
Botanical gardens	898000	5%
Zoological gardens	4727800	26%
Total	18253300	100%

Number of museums per museum type: 1061 museums



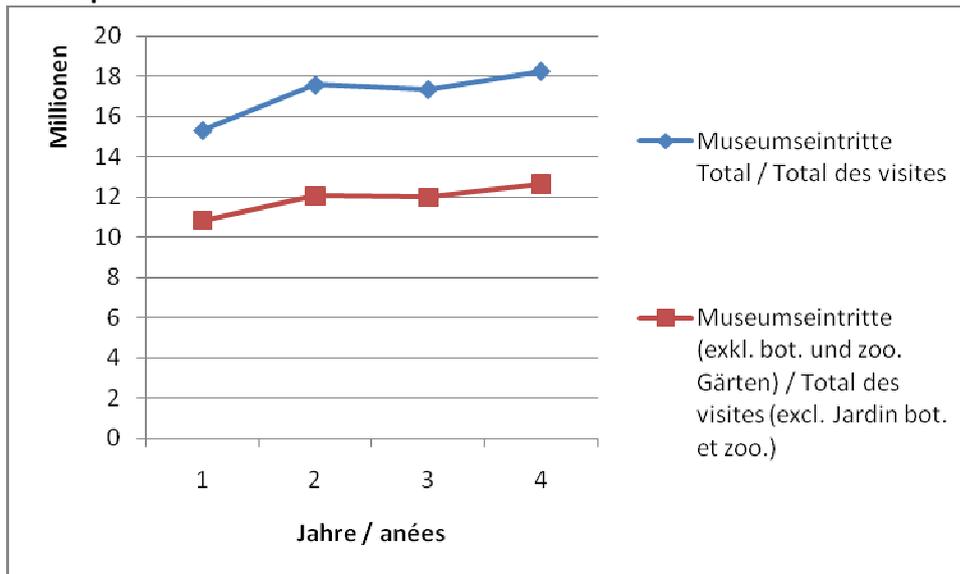
Museum types	Number of museums	Percentage
Archaeological museums and collections	26	2%
Historical museums	79	7%
Art museums	186	18%
Regional and local museums	390	37%
Technology museums	103	10%
Themed museums	178	17%
Folklore and ethnological museums	16	2%
Naturalo sciences museums	83	8%
Total	1061	100%

Number of museums per museum category: 1061 museums



Museum category	Number of museums	Percentage
A: > 100'000	30	3%
B: 50'000 - 100'000	27	3%
C: 20'000 - 50'000	85	8%
D: 10'000 - 20'000	100	9%
E: 5'000 - 10'000	114	11%
F: 1'000 - 5'000	320	30%
G: < 1'000	385	36%
Total	1061	100%

Development of museum visits from 2006 until 2009



Year	Museums visits total	Museum visits (including the botanical and zoological gardens)
2006	15310500	10832000
2007	17569500	12045500
2008	17349000	11985000
2009	18253300	12627700

3. The state of digitalisation of museums in Switzerland

These figures come from a study carried out by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2007 on the “state of digitalisation of museums in Switzerland”.

Arrival on the web

As a whole, the Swiss museum scene is in good order and almost completely represented on the internet. Information can be found on the web on up to 98% of the more than 1'000 museums in Switzerland. Just 2% yielded no details, or the sites were not available. 66% lay claim to their own representation on the web whilst 32% of the museums have representation but not independently. Of course, this does not mean that no information can be found on these museums. Information can normally be obtained by looking at the local municipality website, or the website of the canton or from the canton museum association.

Of the establishments supplying their own independent website, 54% of these had sites classified as being between “big” and “very big” in size. Around 20% of these wholly-owned websites were placed in the “basic offering” category.

Digital documentation

Around 56% of museums possess electronic object cataloguing. However, there were only 17 instances where such a database could be accessed using the internet. Databases of objects that are accessible to the public are still a rarity. The majority of electronic item cataloguing systems exclusively serve internal purposes.

When questioned about the introduction and style of standardised strategies for identifying objects, it was found that 46% of museums implemented systems they have developed themselves. It's clear that what are lacking are overlapping portals or joint projects to be shared by other cultural institutions, just as one would increasingly see today in other countries.

Recommendations for action from the SMA

The SMA has recommended some guidelines on object identification. A methodologically sound approach based on set standards in item identification and choosing pioneering, technological solutions should be essential and fundamental requirements for the formation of object databases. The SMA has developed quality criteria for taking inventory of museum pieces, and is communicating this to the museums, make them accustomed to it, and train them in it.