



INKLINGS

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

December 2008 Volume 8, Issue 3

Interpreting Technology

Lise Schools, Owner

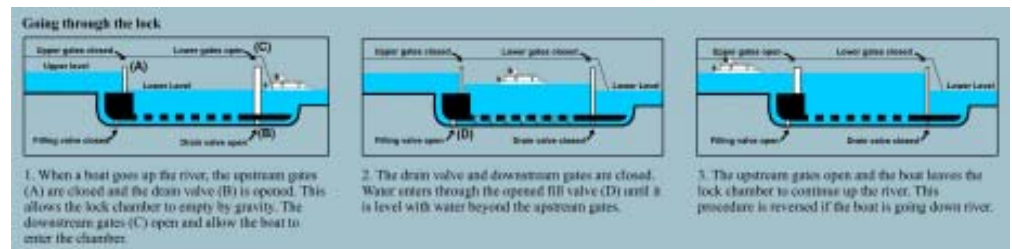
*“How does a turbine work?”
“How do ships move through a lock?”
“What is the wastewater treatment process?”*

My academic background and experience have been directed more toward the biological sciences than physical sciences. Increasingly, however, sites offering a technological story are creating interpretive experiences.

Having overcome my initial fear of physics, I’ve realized that the basic principles of good interpretation work as well for technology as for biology.

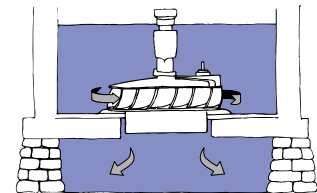
Some helpful suggestions:

1. *Breakdown the technology into its basic steps.* Looking at the whole process may seem overwhelming to an audience. Looking at each step independently makes the process easier to understand.



Moving through a lock is broken into clear steps.

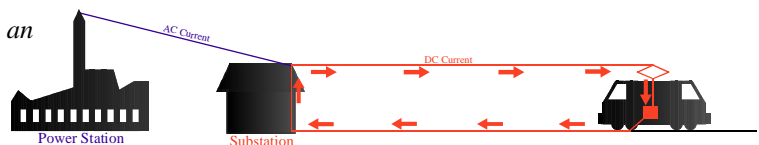
2. *Relate to the familiar.* We understand how wind spins a child’s pinwheel. The same principle applies to flowing water spinning a mill’s turbine.



How is a turbine like a pinwheel?

3. *Diagrams.* Technology is about energy flow. The waterwheel spins the shaft, which turns the belts, etc. A diagram with arrows marking the energy path helps to illustrate energy flow.

Energy flow in an interurban.



Things to Avoid

1. *Going to Far.* Whether it’s a sign or exhibit, focus only on one feature of the entire process. Going beyond this will add to the word count and overwhelm the audience.

(Continued)



Visit our website www.interpretiveideas.com

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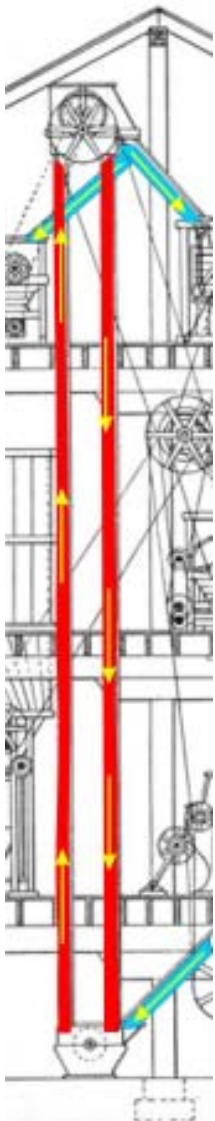
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Interpretive Ideas

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*Mansfield Mill, buckets
(red) move the grain (blue)*

(Continued from front)

2. *Technical Terms.* If you must use a term, it must come with a definition.

Remember that your audience does not come with your background. Words that you use every day in your work are unfamiliar.

A few examples of Interpretive Ideas technology projects

1. H.T. Pritchard Generating Station, Indianapolis Power and Light
2. Interurban Railroad, Hamilton County Parks, IN
3. Mississippi Lock and Dam #1, Corps of Engineers, MN
4. Mansfield Mill, Indiana DNR
5. Astronaut Gus Grissom Memorial, Indiana DNR
6. Chilo Lock and Dam, Clermont County, OH
7. Mt. Morris Dam, Corps of Engineers, NY
8. Wastewater Treatment Plant, City of W. Lafayette, IN