

So What's Special About North Devon?

A Strategy for Interpretation - A to Z Toolkit





A – Z OF INTERPRETIVE PLANNING INTERPRETIVE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit is designed as a practical guide for those in the process of developing interpretation on any scale. This could be an individual site or a major visitor centre.

Contents

1. Introduction
2. How do we develop an Interpretation Plan
3. Stage 1: Fact Finding
4. Stage 2: Creating the Draft Interpretation Plan
5. Stage 3: Refinement
6. How to appoint an Interpretive Consultant

Appendices

- A. Pros and Cons of Interpretive Media
- B. Bibliography

What is interpretation?

The most widely accepted definition is that of Freeman Tilden. We can adapt this to relate specifically to North Devon as follows:

“Interpretation is the art of communicating the themes and stories of North Devon to the local community and visitors in a range of stimulating, involving, informative and entertaining ways so that they appreciate why its diverse built, natural and cultural heritage is so special and they leave with a real sense of place.”

In a similar vein John Veverka describes interpretation as:

“A communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of our cultural and natural heritage through first-hand experiences with people, objects, artefacts, landscapes and sites.”



Interpretation - “An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”



Interpretation is a very specific and special type of communication process. It is different from information in the sense that **information provides facts** whereas **interpretation reveals the story, message and meaning** which people can relate to and understand. Information is the ‘raw material’ of interpretation. According to Tilden:

“Information touches only the brain but does not reach the heart.”



One of the main challenges of interpretation is to translate the technical language of experts and specialists (for instance, forestry design, maintenance and management) into everyday language which visitors and local people of all ages can understand and appreciate. To achieve this, the following principles should be employed:

- **interpretation should provoke** – a provocative statement can grab attention, capture the imagination and stimulate interest;
- **interpretation should relate** – if the messages being put across do not relate in some way to the everyday lives of visitors and local people they will be meaningless;
- **interpretation should be enjoyable** – most interpretation is aimed at people who are taking part in leisure activities. If it is not enjoyable it will be avoided. Introducing an element of 'discovery' adds to the enjoyment factor;
- **interpretation should be organised** – to be enjoyable and understandable it needs to be logical with a beginning and an end;
- **interpretation should use a range of different media** - to relate to the wide range of different learning styles of visitors. Some people learn by reading, some by listening and others by doing. Most people learn and remember more when they are using a variety of senses:
 - **If you tell me I will forget;**
 - **If you show me I will remember;**
 - **If you let me do it I will understand.**

It is also worth noting that people remember about:

- **10% of what they hear;**
- **30% of what they read;**
- **50% of what they see;**
- **90% of what they do.**

(Dr Bill Lewis, Communications Professor, University of Vermont).

Other research (Sandra Rief, 1993) into how children react to interpretation suggests that children remember about:

- **10% of what they read;**
- **20% of what they hear;**
- **30% of what they see;**
- **50% of what they see and hear;**
- **70% of what they say;**
- **90% of what they say and do.**



These statistics have implications for the planning and delivery of interpretation. For example, an interpretive panel or leaflet will be more effective if it includes text, illustrations with captions and encourages visitors to interact with their surroundings in some way by suggesting they search for, smell, listen out for or touch something. Interpretation aimed at both adults and children will be most effective if it **encourages participation** within the group.

High quality and lasting interpretation has the **capacity to engage** with people, **create a lasting impression** and **communicate important messages** in an exciting, revealing and memorable way. It can also influence **the way people feel and behave**.



The role of interpretive planning

Making the right decision about what type of interpretation to provide, and where to provide it, involves an understanding of a wide range of variables including:

- the physical, human, cultural and financial resources available;
- the audience who will receive the interpretation;
- the themes and stories that should be presented;
- management implications;
- other influences such as the quality and extent of existing interpretation, an assessment of need and identification of constraints.

We have used the interpretive planning model set out overleaf.

Guiding principles for good interpretation

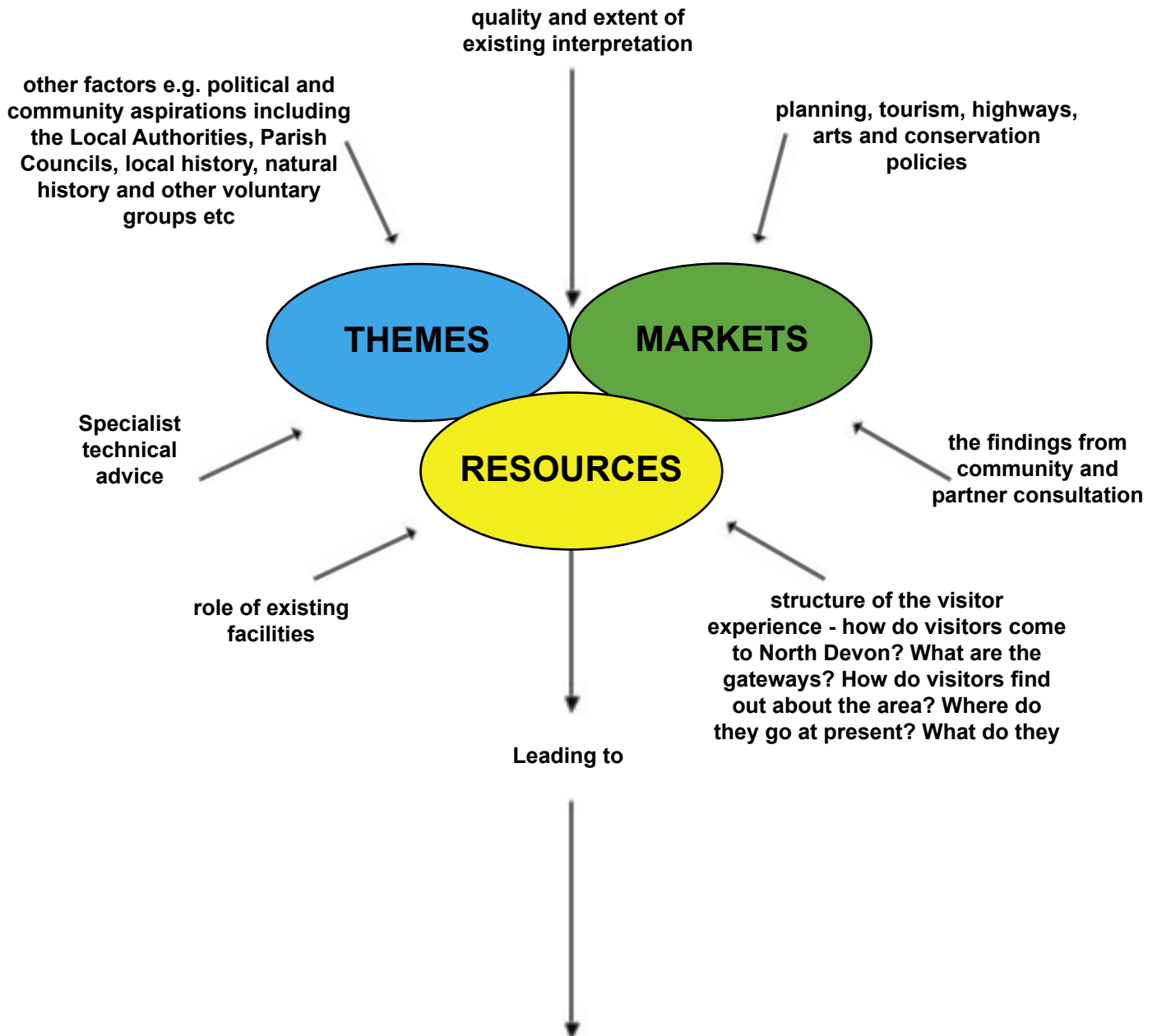
Experience suggests that the following **guiding principles** should be followed to ensure the delivery of innovative and effective interpretation along the North Devon coast:

- interpretation should **enhance local distinctiveness** by drawing out the special qualities of the area and its relationship with adjacent communities;
- interpretation should **encourage visitors to explore** not only the unique qualities of the coastline but also the diverse countryside inland.



An interpretive planning model for North Devon

The synthesis of:



- identifying the key themes and stories to be told;
- the resources (including human) available by which to tell them;
- the most appropriate places at which to tell the stories (genius loci);
- the most appropriate, effective, imaginative and interactive media to use;
- developing a hierarchy of interpretive provision;
- identifying the operational and revenue implications;
- establishing an effective mechanism for delivery;
- proposing the next steps.

- all interpretation should **provide the wider context** of the evolution of the landscape and communities of the area and the way sustainability is being introduced into every aspect of life in the area;
- an emphasis should be placed on **face to face interpretation** wherever possible which is the most effective and memorable interpretive media. This, however, places a burden on both staff and volunteers and requires training in customer care and communication skills;
- **physical interpretation** e.g. orientation and interpretive panels (or units) should be kept to a minimum;
- **people tend to be interested in people** and the human stories of the area e.g. the farmers, foresters, fishermen, shipbuilders, tradesmen, railwaymen and others are a powerful reminder of the past and can be related to how people live their lives today;
- **there should be a hierarchy of interpretive provision** providing different levels of messages for different audience groups and allowing access to more detailed explanations in a readily accessible and digestible form for visitors, users, researchers, schools and local residents who want it;
- **interpretation should be multi-sensory and engaging** to make it accessible to all;
- **involvement of local people and volunteers** in the planning and development of interpretation should be encouraged and supported wherever possible. This can lead to unique and locally distinctive projects and generate a sense of ownership and pride of place;
- **interpretation should be integrated into what is already happening** e.g. ecological management, flood defence, etc. This can be achieved by erecting temporary notices and panels to explain what is happening, and why, and encouraging interaction between those performing the tasks and visitors;
- **encouraging the sustainable use of resources in the provision of interpretation** e.g. recycled paper, recycled materials used in physical interpretation, etc.

How do we develop an interpretation plan?

Three stages

There are three key stages:

- **Stage 1: Fact Finding;**
- **Stage 2: Preparing the Draft Plan for consultation;**
- **Stage 3: Refinement.**

Methodology

The **fact finding stage** is undertaken through a combination of:

- desk research (rarely primary research);
- consultations with all who have an interest, or are involved, in the site;
- site appraisal: it is important to understand the site or building;
- brainstorming with colleagues. It is difficult to think of everything one's self. By discussing issues and opportunities a much better plan evolves at the end of the day.



It is only when you fully appreciate all the issues, and can balance the pros and cons, that you can move to the **plan making stage**. It is only then that you can:

- identify your interpretive aims and objectives;
- articulate the interpretive resources that are available;
- identify your interpretive themes and stories;
- review the range of interpretive media available by which to communicate the themes and stories to the anticipated audience;
- consider the structure of the visitor experience;
- decide on your interpretive proposals and where they should be presented;
- assess the capital and revenue implications and decide where the funding is going to come from;
- consider how you are going to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your proposals;
- identify how you intend to manage and maintain the proposals.

This represents a **DRAFT Interpretive Plan**. It will have involved other people in its preparation and they need to be consulted on the draft document. This can be by:

- circulation of the document for comment;
- setting up a workshop at which you present the document and discuss it in '**open session**' or by means of **break-out workshops**.

It is only when others have had an opportunity to review and comment that you can take that feedback and refine the document into a **FINAL Interpretation Plan**.

Postscript: This document can be used as the basis of funding bids. It needs to be well presented with plans, photographs and diagrams. If interpretive concepts have been suggested, it is good if they can be visualised by a designer.

Stage 1: Fact Finding

Introduction

The fact finding stage sets the scene and identifies all the parameters we need to take into account. There are a wide range of factors we have to understand and appreciate, which all have an influence on the plan making stage.

Understanding the site

It is important to fully understand the site or feature, its history and significance, the way people use it, how they arrive and move about it, the extent of existing interpretation, the existing visitor facilities, the quality of the existing visitor experience and any issues or constraints that you need to be aware of.

Understanding people's views and opinions

It is necessary to consult widely to get the views and opinions of all who have responsibility for, interest in or are in some way involved in the site. This could include officers and members of local authorities, parish or town councils, national and regional agencies (Natural England, Environment Agency, English Heritage etc), County Wildlife Trust, local groups and societies. Local people who live nearby and could be affected by any proposals should be consulted.

Undertaking an audit of the most important heritage resources

We need to understand what resources are available by which to interpret the site or feature. This would normally include:

- **natural** – habitats, river system, woodland;
- **physical** – canal locks, harbour walls, visitor centres, trails, viewpoints, car parks;
- **cultural** – hillforts, castles, churches, communities, myths and legends, archives, records;
- **human** – specialist advisors, volunteers, local people, reminiscences and memories.

It is important to create an inventory of resources, describing them and where they are located, assessing their accessibility all-year round and describing why they are important from an interpretive point of view. A good way to do this is in a table similar to the one set out below. A landscape format is recommended:

Name	Location	Description	Accessibility	Interpretive Significance



Developing the interpretive themes and stories

By developing a thematic approach to interpretation we are able to draw out the most important stories and messages about a specific site or feature in North Devon and identify the key things we want visitors and local people to remember about their visit to the site.

Many people mix up the words **topics** and **themes** but they are, in fact, quite different. The topic of any interpretation (whether written or oral) is simply **its subject matter**. The theme of the interpretation **is the specific message about the subject we want to communicate to the audience**. In other words, **it is the story we want to tell**. It is possible for the interpreter (or interpretive planner) to select any number of themes from a single topic. But since any one theme constitutes a different story, the interpreter will find that different kinds of information are required to develop different themes. The essence is, therefore, to decide what is the most important message, or story, that we want to communicate. It is then possible to develop the themes as a sentence.. 'when it come to birds (forests or estuaries, etc) I think it is important for people to understand that..'

The key steps in theme-writing are:

- select the general topic you want to communicate eg. birds;
- state the topic in more specific terms... specifically I want to tell my audience about flight.....;
- express the theme by completing the following sentence....I want my audience to understand that birds' wings are designed in such a way...;

People remember themes: they forget facts. Themes should:

- be stated as short, simple, complete sentences;
- contain one idea;
- reveal the overall purpose of the presentation;
- be specific;
- be interestingly worded.

Thematic interpretation is based on the identification and description of a hierarchy of themes starting with an **overarching theme**. This is the one thing above all else that we want the visitors and users of a site or feature to remember and appreciate about their visit. From this we can develop **key themes** on a range of **topics** about the site. These can then be broken down into no more than four or five **sub-themes**. These are the building blocks which make up a specific topic. The sub-themes can then be broken down further into a series of interpretive topics which form the framework for the development of all subsequent interpretation.

Finally, we have identified the natural place at which each sub-theme should be presented.

Writing interpretive themes is not easy and takes time. Do not rush, and revisit your first draft. Ask others for their opinion.

A template for developing individual themes is set down below:

Topic or Subject		
Key Theme		
Sub-themes	Interpretive Topics	Suggested Sites

Identifying the perceived audience

We need to develop the audience profile for the specific site or feature. This can be generated from:

- visitor surveys;
- analysis of ticket sales;
- observation;
- visitor counters;
- visitor data from other similar sites;
- national tourism data.

Detailed visitor surveys give the most accurate information but these are, unfortunately, the exception rather than the rule.

Understanding your visitor is a crucial ingredient in planning new facilities and is increasingly required by funders. If you do not have any data then serious consideration should be given to:

- introducing counters;
- commissioning a visitor survey (but it should be extensive enough to be statistically robust);
- asking volunteers to carry out a snapshot survey everyday for a fortnight (ideally during the summer).

It is important to know:

- who is using your site or feature;
- when do they come;
- why do they come;
- what do they do when they are here;
- what else do they need to make their experience better.

It is important to put the site into context within North Devon. Who comes to the area, when do they come, what are their interests, what are the trends? Tourism data can be obtained from local authority tourism officers, South West Tourism and from local tourist associations.

It is also important to identify **non-users/visitors**. Who are these groups? What are the reasons they do not come (barriers to access) and what can we do to encourage them to come in the future? The concept of audience development reflects national policy in relation to social inclusion and access for all.

Identifying the interpretive implications of different audiences

Once we have a clear understanding of to who our current and potential audience is, we can then assess the potential interpretive implications in relation to each group.

We have developed a simple table (overleaf) to help you think about what these implications may be.

Inclusive Access

Across all sub-groups of the audience there will be people with a wide range of abilities. With the advent of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) it is no longer just good practice but a legal requirement to ensure that interpretive provision along with other services are designed to ensure that all members of society have equal access to it. The DDA defines disability as *“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”* This includes the following:

- Wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people.
- People with poor manual co-ordination or little strength.
- People with sensory impairments, including impaired sight or hearing.
- People who lack memory, concentration or understanding.

It is therefore essential that reasonable measures are taken, wherever possible, to be as inclusive as can be. For example the following could be considered:

- Develop a multi-sensory approach to interpretation.
- Design any new facilities to be as easily accessible as possible and adapt existing facilities.
- Include a hierarchy of information that can be understood by all.
- Use best practice for signing, orientation and information for those with visual impairment (e.g. RNIB practical advice on designing, producing and planning for accessible information - www.rnib.org.uk).
- Consider audio versions of the written word where reasonable.
- Provide clear information on the level of physical accessibility to sites.
- Consult with local groups with knowledge of disability issues.

For more information see www.disability.gov.uk.

Audience: Visitors

Includes:

- day visitors;
- staying visitors (including serviced accommodation, camping and caravan sites);
- visitors staying with friends and relations;
- overseas visitors (e.g. with an interest in World War II and/or countryside).

Specific target audiences:

- day and staying visitors.

Interpretive considerations:

- consider 'threshold' signage to draw visitors' attention to the fact they are entering a special area;
- provide attractive orientation (eg. shelters, panels or displays) and a statement of the main themes at gateways, including any new 'gateway' centre, existing attractions, TICs, railway stations, bus stations, roadside lay-bys and viewpoints. This will help visitors plan their visit, what there is to see and do, and appreciate the sheer scale and diversity of the area;
- target interpretation and information at 'gateway' and at "decision-making points" into the area;
- ensure the relevant logos, straplines and key themes are included on existing interpretation to key sites within the wider context of the area;
- consider distinct website for the area, with hyperlinks to all key visitor destinations, and encourage all operators to use the logo and strapline on their home page;
- enhance existing bedroom browser-packs to include an introduction to the area, the interpretive themes, details of places to visit and things to do;
- enhance existing twice yearly, or seasonal, events calendar and/or newspaper to reinforce understanding that all popular attractions and facilities are part of what makes up North Devon;
- consider involving an interactive face-to-face interpretation offering a unique insight into the character and local distinctiveness of the area.

Audience: Young People

Includes:

- young children visiting with family;
- teenagers visiting with family or friends;
- those on formal educational visits including primary, secondary and tertiary age students.

Interpretive considerations:

- interpretation must be engaging, involving and exciting to capture the imagination of young people on leisure visits eg. drama, music, participatory arts events, re-enactment, etc;
- develop a partnership approach to activity and project-based educational resource materials structured to the requirements of the National Curriculum, including pre-and post-visit work and on-line access to databases and reference material for homework.

Audience: Young People Cont'd

Specific target audiences:

- further education and university studies;
- outdoor education centres.

Interpretive considerations:

- develop packages between sites to offer a full day visit covering a variety of curriculum-related topics;
- inclusion of a quiz, competition or physical challenge to make learning more exciting, challenging and rewarding;
- encourage families to learn and discover together;
- need for a hierarchy of messages to interest a mix of generations;
- need for outreach interpretation aimed at children through schools and youth groups e.g. play-scheme events, children's newsletter, children's wildlife or history clubs;
- develop orientation and interpretation feature within outdoor education centres, which orientates the users and introduces them to the interpretive themes and the need to act responsibly whilst using the landscape;
- use latest technology linked to the interests of young people eg. interactive computer games;
- promote the public libraries' local history collections as a study resource for life-long learning;
- work with schools to develop locally-themed temporary exhibitions or events at destinations, libraries or town centre sites, which attract visitors.

Audience: Specialist-Interest Individuals and Groups

Includes:

- local people and visitors on leisure visits with a wide range of specialist interests, including nature conservation and wildlife watching, crafts, industrial heritage, gardens, historic houses, archaeology, literature, photography, art, churches, events and festivals;
- people on educational or study visits.

Interpretive considerations:

- need for a hierarchy of interpretation to satisfy both specialists and those with limited knowledge;
- skills and expertise of local specialists should be harnessed to support the development and delivery of interpretation;
- potential for residential leisure-learning weekends, or themed short breaks, to bring new money into local economy. Need for partnership projects between site managers, local experts, accommodation and food providers.

Audience: Specialist-Interest Individuals and Groups

Specific target audiences:

- short break market for leisure learning;
- local specialists interested in becoming involved in research and delivery of interpretation;
- local people and visitors interested in life-long learning;
- local people and visitors interested in leisure learning.

Interpretive considerations:

- develop events and festival programmes linking key themes to the special-interest market. Involve the resources of the local community in research and development. Include participatory events to pass on skills;
- ensure sites offer referral to other sites with similar themes e.g. development of craft trails, industrial heritage trails, church trails using sustainable transport where possible;
- develop theme-based car trails related to villages, churches, historic houses, industrial heritage, gardens, etc, focusing inland for older people with limited, or reduced, mobility.

Audience: Activity Visitors

Includes:

- local people, day and staying visitors with an interest in activities;
- walkers (long and short distance);
- cyclists;
- horse riders;
- kite flyers;
- hanggliders and paragliders.

Specific target audiences:

- walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Interpretive considerations:

- need for variety in length and difficulty of routes. Consider development of circular routes from national/long distance trails, e.g. South West Coast Path, so they can be completed in sections;
- focus on themes in developing trails to provide a cohesive story to the route and encourage the visitor to learn as they walk/cycle/ride;
- establish cross-border partnerships to develop routes and trails, with identity focused on theme, or route, rather than on the organisations involved;
- enhancement of the image of North Devon through a partnership approach to the development of a collectable 'pack' of trail route cards across the whole geographical area (building on the success of the Tarka Trail). Each card produced by relevant organisation to fit the 'family' house style;
- use interpretation as a tool for visitor management through the development and marketing of the Devon Country Code to ensure that visitors have a satisfying experience without damaging the very resource they have come to enjoy;
- need to promote access to routes via public transport, including one-way routes linked to bus and train services.

Audience: Local People

Includes:

- people living within North Devon;
- people living in the surrounding towns and villages;
- land owners and managers;
- regular repeat visitors;
- non-visitors.

Specific target audiences:

- non-visitors from surrounding communities including ethnic minorities and children;
- community groups and specialists who may be encouraged to become involved in research and provision of interpretation.

Interpretive considerations:

- involve local people of all ages in the development of interpretive projects to provide a new dimension to content and generate a sense of ownership;
- need for regularly, or seasonally, changing interpretation to maintain the interest of repeat visitors;
- need for outreach interpretation to attract the interest of those who do not currently visit, e.g. drama or arts projects in surrounding towns, villages or schools, and at heritage attractions, events and activities like summer play-schemes, community picnics or craft fairs;
- well way-marked and promoted footpath and cycle access from towns with trail leaflets including routes between town and countryside;
- information about public transport including facility and attractions leaflets. Ensure information about attractions and events is included in public transport timetables or at relevant bus stops;
- value of temporary interpretation where visitors can see land management practices in operation.

Audience: Coach Market

Includes:

- whole and half day tours (themed and unthemed);
- touring coaches (domestic and overseas).

Interpretive considerations:

- provide familiarisation materials and visits for coach drivers and couriers. Offer services of tourism guides to enhance the quality of the visitor experience;
- provide orientation panels at key coach drop-off/ parking areas to assist visitors appreciate the scale and diversity of the area and what it has to offer. Introduce the key interpretive themes;
- develop links with coach operators to ensure coach parties are furnished with trail leaflets and other interpretive material upon arrival;
- develop packages between coach operators, museums, country parks, attractions and event organisers;
- proactively promote a large-scale events programme to coach operators.



Understanding the structure of the visitor experience

Identifying appropriate places for interpretation

For interpretation to be effective there needs to be a balance between where it is required by the visitor and the natural and most appropriate place at which to present a specific theme or story (which we call the **genius loci**).


Further, there is an issue about **accessibility**, both physical and intellectual, and the importance of interpretation being available to visitors at all reasonable times. This will influence the media used. For example, interpretation located in a visitor centre, or attraction, which is only open at certain times is less accessible than an interpretive shelter located in, for example, a beach car park.

There are four distinctive elements to **visitor communication** which should be defined in this context:

- **welcome and orientation** – which introduces visitors to a site or area, provides a high-quality plan identifying what there is to see and do and, to varying degrees, provides the visitor with the wherewithal to go out and enjoy the area. This can be an orientation panel or something more elaborate like an interpretive shelter. Such facilities need to be readily available at entrances, or ‘gateways’, to the area, including railway stations, car parks, attractions, viewpoints, beaches, local shops/post offices and pubs;
- **information** – to assist the visitor get the most out of their visit. This can be in the form of face-to-face information at Tourist Information Centres, a 1/3 A4 promotional leaflet on the whole area or leaflets on particular sites and attractions which are available on site or at the Tourist Information Centre;
- **referral** – which is information provided to visitors at the end of a visit to a specific site, or attraction, which helps them to appreciate what else is on offer and encourages them to visit other places in the vicinity. These are usually provided at exit points, e.g. the walk to the car park or as the visitor drives out of a car park. They can also be provided at bus stations, railway stations etc. The objective is to raise awareness of other opportunities for the visitor and to influence their future attitudes and behaviour which can lead to return, or repeat, visits;
- **interpretation** – the media by which the themes and stories about North Devon are communicated to the visitor. Finding the most appropriate place for interpretation is a key issue in helping the visitor appreciate what is so special about the area. It should be the ‘natural point’ which we call the **genius loci**. The choice of site is particularly important and should be on the route along which visitors naturally walk or travel.

The role of gateways

A ‘gateway’ is an entrance into an area, site or town, which, at the lowest level, can be a sign defining that the visitors are actually entering a site or a lay-by, or car park, containing an orientation panel which provides essential orientation and also introduces the visitor to the key themes about the area. Similar panels can be located at railway stations, bus stations, or, in some cases, motorway service stations, e.g. Sedgemoor on the M5, which acts as a ‘gateway’ into Somerset, Exmoor and North Devon providing visitor information.



In North Devon there is a wide range of ‘gateways’, although we know that the busiest access into the area is the A361 from the M5. There has been some discussion as to whether a gateway visitor centre should be developed. Such a centre could be a “one-stop-shop” for visitors to introduce them to the area and what it has to offer, have audio visual displays and exhibitions, and provide wide-ranging information on what there is to see and do. The role of such a centre needs to be carefully considered as part of the whole visitor experience. An alternative approach is to make more of existing resources, which include the wide range of visitors’ centres, Tourist Information Centres, museums and visitor attractions. These are spread right across the area and could be defined as ‘dispersed gateways’. They are places which attract visitors and are the focus of visitor activity. With a common approach to service delivery by all the providers of these facilities (including private sector operators) they could all present and promote the area.

The role of tourist information centres

Tourist Information Centres (TICs) can play a key role in orientation and in the interpretation of the area, as well as of specific sites, through face-to-face advice from an assistant or through tourism leaflets about the area or site in the racks. Where there is space, it would be valuable to create a colourful and attractive unit, which could introduce the area by means of maps and photographs and include free literature and ‘for sale’ publications on what there is to see and do. TICs should not be seen as separate from visitor centres and other interpretive facilities, but as part of the wider network. This requires more clarity of the specific role of each facility and greater cooperative working.

Genius loci

In the strategic planning of interpretation, it is usually not difficult to identify the most appropriate location(s) at which to present the key messages. These should not only reflect the importance of the resource about which the story is to be told but also the natural movement of people around the site, e.g. where they congregate, where people stand to enjoy the view and the safest places to interpret specific features. The genius loci is, therefore, at three levels:

- which is the most appropriate location?
- which is the safest place within that site?
- where on the site do visitors naturally congregate?

Conclusion

The bottom line is that visitor orientation, information, referral and interpretation are critical to maximise visitor enjoyment and satisfaction and to influence attitudes and behaviour. However, they must be provided where visitors require it: people are inherently lazy and are not prepared to ‘park and walk’ more than a few metres. The location is critical and needs most careful consideration. **Conclusion:** This essential fact-finding stage will provide a full understanding of all the issues that need to be considered in preparing the Interpretive Plan. The next stage is to pull it together into a Plan.

Stage 2: Creating the Draft Interpretation Plan

Introduction

There is a series of specific stages in plan formulation.

Establishing our interpretive objectives

This is an important first step. We need to be clear as to why we want to interpret the site and what our interpretive objectives are. Our interpretive aims may, for instance, enable users to:

- (a) feel reassurance that they are welcome;
- (b) understand where they may go, what they can do and what is expected of them;
- (c) share in the 'sense of place' and feel they have been somewhere outstanding and memorable.

To do this we may need:

- to enhance the experience of all users of the area (local people and visitors alike);
- to involve local people in interpreting features and stories of importance to them;
- to influence the behaviour of visitors positively;
- to provide users with information and orientation, allowing them to enjoy the area to the full in safety, and without detriment to each other, the natural and cultural resource or themselves;
- to reduce and contain the incidents of vandalism and antisocial behaviour;
- to engender respect between user groups;
- to assist in the management, conservation and protection of the area by raising awareness of its natural, built and cultural heritage, and the important role that visitors and local people play in sustaining its resources for others to enjoy;
- to add value to a visit by providing high-quality, stimulating, exciting, revealing and memorable experiences;
- to provide a learning experience so that visitors leave with a sense of achievement through learning something new;
- to raise awareness amongst visitors of the important economic, educational and recreational role of North Devon;
- to ensure that the interpretive provision supports the local economy and sustainable tourism initiatives.

From this we can develop a set of **interpretive objectives**, which will establish what role we wish interpretation to play and will also provide a baseline against which the interpretation can be evaluated. We need to identify:

- **educational objectives** – what we want visitors to learn;
- **emotional objectives** – what we want visitors to feel;
- **behavioural objectives** – what we want visitors to do.

It would be normal for there to be five or six objectives for each element, set out as a sentence.

Audit of interpretive resources.



Review of the quality and extent of the existing interpretation.



Developing our interpretive themes and stories.



Understanding the audience and the interpretive implications.



Selecting the most appropriate interpretive media.



At present interpretive provision across North Devon is limited in its range and appeal.

To engage with the audience and 'bring the moment alive', the following media are recommended as appropriate to present the proposed themes:

- **printed literature** including introductory guidebooks, promotional leaflets, site guide leaflets, printed self-guided trail leaflets, visitor newspapers and newsletters, giving particular consideration to providing material for children;
- **interpretive maps** to draw out local stories, traditions and distinctiveness and to involve local people in their content research;
- **audio trails**, either walking or driving, including versions for adults and children and foreign language versions;
- **for children or for families, nature and history detective trails** to encourage families to discover and learn together;
- **guided walks, cycle rides, canoeing trips, talks, lectures, activities and demonstrations** offering face-to-face interpretation at key sites, providing both novice and specialist level programmes. Consideration should be given to costumed guides and re-enactments where appropriate;
- **participatory activities** such as conservation talks, art and craft activities, photography workshops, music, film making and holiday activities for young people.

- **performing arts** including theatre (outdoor and indoor), music, storytelling, costumed re-enactment and role play to engage with young people and adults;

- **interpretive panels and marker plaques on-site identification labels** which are accessible at all times providing interpretation at the specific point of interest;

- **listening or audio posts** which introduce a multi-sensory approach to on-site interpretation/exhibitions. Local people should be involved in telling local stories;

- **viewpoint orientation, tactile models and maps** to add a multi-sensory dimension and encourage visitors to pick out features in the landscape;

- **orientation and visitor information points** at the point of entry, or 'gateway' to North Devon;

- **visitor centre exhibitions, Tourist Information Centres, visitor centres and museums** provide an opportunity to present complete stories and explore interpretive themes in greater detail;

- **boundary markers (or threshold signs)** to provide a symbolic feature at entry points to reinforce existing white on brown signage and give a sense of arrival;

- **sculpture** provides an avenue for local community involvement through "artist-in-residence" projects;

- **portable displays and roadshows** can take the messages about the area into towns, villages, shows, festivals and events, including the use of a mobile visitor centre;

- **leisure learning courses** for all ages and abilities, and based around the interpretive themes, can bring economic benefit to local communities and involve local 'experts';

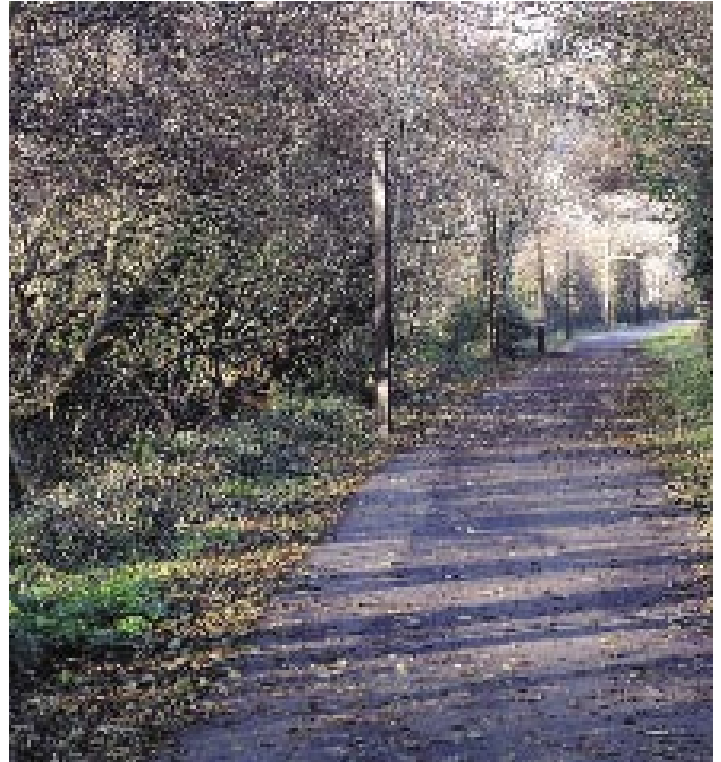
- **enhancing key websites** thereby allowing pre-planning of visitors and access to information and interpretation at a range of different levels;

- **radio, television, video and DVD**, whilst expensive, can provide moving and dramatic interpretation;

- **educational resource material** focused around the needs of the National Curriculum to enable schools and outdoor education centres to maximise the value of the area for teaching and learning;

- **posters** with stunning images and strong messages can generate a sense of place. They could be placed in key railway stations and motorway service stations to raise the image and profile of the area. If widely displayed in visitor centres, town centres and in villages they would encourage local people to acknowledge North Devon as an area to be proud of;

- **oral history project** at different sites and communities across the area, involving people of all ages and from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds telling and sharing their stories, which could be used in audio points, touch screen units and exhibitions (appropriate copyright approval needs to be sought). This could develop into a digital on-line community archive which could be held at the various visitor centres and attractions.



In planning any new interpretation, it is important to **evaluate the interpretive options** available and choose the most **appropriate media** in order to communicate the **desired message** to the **perceived audience** at the **best location** within the **staffing and budgetary resources available**.

Devising a hierarchy of interpretive provision

We need to provide interpretation and supporting information and orientation whenever and wherever visitors want it. This suggests it needs to include:

- **pre-visit awareness raising** to help visitors and local people find out about North Devon in the first place and discover what it has to offer;
- **arrival and orientation** to help visitors once they have arrived, to enable them to appreciate what there is to see and do and help them to find their way around;
- **the site and visit** itself to help them understand in more detail why it is special and to help guide the overall visitor experience;
- **the departure and referral** to give visitors key messages as they leave and encourage them to come back again and visit other sites while they are in the area.



This can be developed as a hierarchy of interpretive provision as follows:

ELEMENT	POTENTIAL MEDIA
PRE-VISIT AWARENESS RAISING	Website. Well-distributed printed literature (including guide books, leaflets and publications) and image posters. White on brown tourism signage. Entrance, or threshold, signage. Clear signage to the visitor orientation and information provision. Production of curriculum-focused educational resource material. Local radio channel, to provide weather and visitor information and orientation (including introductory interpretation).
ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION	Orientation panels including area map and introduction of interpretive themes. “What’s On” panel highlighting events and activities on a fortnightly rotation. Touch-screen information points. Directional signage with tactile orientation maps. Sculptural features, to introduce interpretive themes.
DECISION MAKING POINTS THROUGHOUT AREA	Tactile orientation maps. Directional signage.

ELEMENT	POTENTIAL MEDIA
NETWORK OF TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES AND VISITOR CENTRES	<p>Interpretive display introducing interpretive themes for the whole area in an attractively-designed unit which includes free promotional leaflets and 'pay for' publications.</p> <p>Large model or tactile map.</p> <p>Audio-visual presentation of a virtual tour around North Devon.</p> <p>'What's on' display to promote forthcoming events and activities based on a fortnightly rolling programme.</p>
BUILDINGS AND FEATURES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST (INCLUDING VILLAGES, CHURCHES ETC)	<p>Marker plaques on key buildings.</p> <p>Interpretive panels (or units) at appropriate locations.</p> <p>Walking, cycling and driving trails.</p> <p>Orientation and referral to other areas and features.</p> <p>Sculptural features to introduce the interpretive themes.</p>
EXISTING ATTRACTIONS AND KEY NODES OF VISITOR ACTIVITY E.G. CAR PARKS, VIEWPOINTS	<p>Orientation and referral panels to encourage visitors to explore further.</p> <p>Interactive exhibitions.</p> <p>Events, demonstrations, participatory activities and festivals.</p> <p>Leisure learning courses.</p> <p>Interpretive elements in churches (including audio points).</p>
SUPPORTING INTERPRETIVE PROVISION	<p>Themed walking trails (with audio guide) e.g. architectural trail.</p> <p>I-Spy trail for children and families.</p> <p>Guided walks, talks and lecture programme.</p> <p>Large-and small-scale themed events and festivals e.g. Music and dance festival, heritage 'open house' weekends.</p> <p>Street theatre and costumed guides.</p> <p>Storytelling.</p> <p>Interpretive showcases in public areas (bringing museum artefacts to the people).</p> <p>Portable displays for education and interpretive outreach programmes.</p> <p>Community arts initiatives and participatory activities.</p> <p>Flags and banners with key interpretive messages in key towns.</p>
LINKAGES WITH OTHER POTENTIAL PARTNERS	<p>Educational resources produced by others.</p> <p>Churches.</p> <p>Museums.</p> <p>Public transport providers.</p>



ELEMENT	POTENTIAL MEDIA
ADDRESSING SOCIAL INCLUSION	<p>Appropriate publications.</p> <p>Education and Community Outreach Programmes, including events and ‘handling’ sessions to make countryside sites, museums, galleries and archives more accessible.</p> <p>Temporary exhibitions which involve local people in the design and development of displays.</p> <p>Programme of wide-ranging events and festivals.</p> <p>Oral history project, involving young and old people from a wide range of backgrounds.</p> <p>An on-going digital archive of images, memories, stories and artefacts.</p>

This analysis will enable you to be clear about your interpretive proposals, which should be presented in the form of a phased and costed Action Plan.

Developing the Action Plan

The proposals need to be set out clearly in a table and summarised in the form of an Action Plan, which could have the following elements. A landscape format is recommended:

Action	Project Description	Priority H M L	Budget Cost	Lead Partner	Potential Funding Sources	Next Steps

The importance of maintenance and management

The same care and attention that is given to the design and implementation of any interpretation should be given to its subsequent maintenance and management. Whatever media is used there is a need to care for, and constantly refresh, the initial investment.

On-site interpretation usually has a life of five to seven years, but it needs to be regularly inspected, cleaned, repaired and renewed on a regular basis, not least because of vandalism. Interpretation needs to be seen to be cared for.

Printed materials not only need to reach the recipient but also need to be reviewed and kept up to date factually, reprinted and effectively distributed.

Guided walks, talks, events, activities, festivals and events all demand professional attention to detail in order to conceptualise, plan, manage and market them.

Websites need to be constantly reviewed and refreshed as information changes (sometimes on a daily basis) or new initiatives evolve. There should be a dedicated webmaster responsible to ensure this happens.

In making a commitment to capital investment, it is important to recognise that there is also an on-going revenue commitment.



Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are an essential part of the process of planning, implementing and improving interpretive provision. It helps us to understand if we are meeting our management objectives, reaching our target audience and getting our messages across.

Several methods are available for the evaluation of interpretation. If quantitative data is required, such as numbers of visitors attending an event, where they came from, how they arrived, how they found out about the event etc, then a short questionnaire survey will probably be the most efficient. For more detailed information, such as whether or not the key interpretive messages have been understood by visitors, qualitative analysis will be required either through focus groups or short focused interviews. Observing visitors as they move around a site, or exhibition, can also provide valuable information about how different visitors react to the presentation of interpretation.

Conclusion

The end result of the plan formulation stage is a **DRAFT INTERPRETATION PLAN**. It is important that this is circulated to all who have contributed to its formulation and also to local people who are likely to have specific views and opinions. This will secure a sense of ownership and commitment and ensure that the plan has a status and standing at the end of the day. Funders are increasingly anxious that proposals have community support, and evidence of consultation is critical to the success of funding bids.

Stage 3: Refinement

The final stage in preparing the Interpretation Plan is to take into account all the comments, views and opinions, balancing them as appropriate and producing the **Final Interpretation Plan** with plans, diagrams, photographs and Technical Appendices. Today it is normal that the end result is digitised and available on CD as well as in hard copy.

How to appoint consultants

Introduction

Writing Interpretation Plans is a specialist task no different to producing an architectural design. Whilst an increasing number of local authorities, and other organisations, are appointing Interpretation Officers, the task of writing an Interpretation Plan can take anything up to 20-30 days (depending on the size and complexity of the site or feature). Even if there is a specific officer in post, it is rare that they have the time, or skills, to write it themselves. There are a number of specialist freelance Interpretive Planners across the UK capable of taking on the task and in this section we summarise the procedure required.

Identifying potential consultants

The professional association for interpreters is the Association for Heritage Interpretation, which provides a technical journal four times per year and a newsletter bi-monthly. Membership details can be obtained from their website www.heritageinterpretation.org.uk. The web site contains a **consultancy list**, which is increasingly being used by potential clients to develop a shortlist of potential consultants. An alternative to this is to take advice from colleagues and other organisations locally who have successfully used Interpretive Consultants. Having identified a potential shortlist, it is useful to check the websites of those who have them. It is not necessary to approach more than three or four companies: any more makes work for you and wastes the time of the potential consultants. Put yourself in their shoes and do what is reasonable.

Writing the brief

- introduction to the project;
- setting the scene and explaining why an Interpretation Plan is necessary;
- explain exactly what is required:
 - (a) Interpretation Plan.
 - (b) Sketch Designs.
 - (c) Phased and Costed Action Plan.
 - (d) Education and Learning Plan.
 - (e) Timescale for the Study.
- format of the final report (how many copies). Some clients prescribe the structure of the document;
- submission requirements:



(a) Details of the team (Curriculum Vitae, Company Profile, Track Record).

(b) Methodology to be adopted.

(c) Fees and expenses.

- procurement process;
- terms and Conditions of the employer;
- basis on which the appointment is to be made;
- budget: it is important that the consultant is given an indication of the budget. All consultants can offer is time and expertise. They usually charge by the day and the level of the budget gives an indication of the number of days that you envisage the study will take. Consultants are normally invited to provide a fixed fee including travel, subsistence and production.

Appointment of consultant

Appointment can be made on the basis of:

- interviews;
- the written submission and fee quotation.

This largely depends on the size of the contract, complexity of the project and whether initial design is involved. The most important thing is that the client feels entirely happy that they can work with the consultant selected. Building up a working relationship is critical on both sides. The best results come when the client becomes involved and works with the consultant to achieve the objective.

Monitoring progress

It is usual for there to be:

- a commissioning meeting;
- a progress meeting at the end of the fact-finding stage;
- a presentation/workshop at the Draft Final Report stage;
- a presentation following satisfactory submission of the Final Report.

It is also usual for there to be stage payments:

- 35% upon commissioning;
- 35% at Draft Final Report Stage;
- 30% upon satisfactory completion.

This depends on the approach adopted by the commissioning agency.

End result

Interpretation Plans are the product of a lot of hard work. The consultant is expected to provide a Final Report based on the initial brief. Very often the brief does not incorporate everything that is required, or new evidence gives a different slant to the work. The best results are achieved by a good working relationship and flexibility on both sides.

Appendix A: Pros and cons of different interpretive media

MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
<p>Boundary markers as symbolic feature at entry point to reinforce sense of arrival and welcome.</p>	<p>Reinforces sense of arrival.</p> <p>Develops awareness of extent of site for visitors and local people.</p> <p>Generates awareness and recognition of image and identity.</p> <p>Can encourage local community involvement through “artist in residence” project.</p> <p>Can influence attitudes and behaviour.</p>	<p>Can lead to clutter and be visually intrusive.</p> <p>Need highways and planning permission.</p> <p>Need all agencies concerned to sign up to identity.</p>	<p>Local residents.</p> <p>Visitors.</p> <p>Cyclists, walkers, riders, canoeists.</p>
<p>Use of sculpture and public art, including interpretive benches, or elements of the hard landscaping of car parks.</p>	<p>Can encourage people to use their senses and take more notice of their surroundings.</p> <p>Potential to be multi-sensory, tactile and attractive.</p> <p>Potential to convey strong messages.</p> <p>Can focus attention on key features in the landscape.</p> <p>Can encourage local community involvement through “artist in residence” project.</p> <p>Could make use of poetry.</p>	<p>Need careful planning and management to ensure work has interpretive focus and not artistic indulgence.</p> <p>Can be visually intrusive and detract from significance of a designated site.</p> <p>Would require Scheduled Monument Consent within SAMs.</p> <p>Potential to attract vandalism.</p> <p>May need on-going maintenance unless temporary installation.</p> <p>Can appear ‘parachuted in’ if not in harmony with, or inspired by, the significance of the place.</p> <p>Perhaps more appropriate in car parks rather than adjacent to significant features.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors.</p> <p>Local people through “artist in residence”.</p> <p>Young people.</p> <p>Special needs visitors.</p>



MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
<p>Information and Communication Technology.</p>	<p>Well designed high-tech displays can be great fun and do attract attention.</p> <p>Computer technology can provide visitors with a flexible non-linear platform that allows them to chose what interests them and how far to follow an individual story. They can print out their own tour route and information at a local information point.</p> <p>The same digitised content can be carried by different media - like a website, computer interactives and wireless PCs - and be linked to collections and curatorial databases.</p> <p>Computer technology can provide a `virtual' platform for visitors to use at home, or in school, or for a virtual-reality tour of a sensitive or inaccessible site.</p> <p>It enables the visitor to manipulate digital images to show how something might have looked, how it worked or how it was made. For example, it would lend itself well to reconstructing alternative views of the use of a hillfort, early industrial sites in use, etc.</p> <p>It can be highly interactive and creative with the potential only limited by the user's imagination (and budget).</p> <p>Computer hardware can keep track of visitors' preferences thereby automatically providing the user with evaluation data.</p> <p>It has good flexibility, with different content delivered to different audiences from the same piece of equipment.</p>	<p>Hardware, programming and content can all be expensive.</p> <p>Computer technology dates quickly.</p> <p>Computer technology can get in the way of experiencing the 'real thing'.</p> <p>ICT can be expensive to maintain and run.</p> <p>If it breaks down you can be left with no back-up and disappointed users.</p> <p>ICT can end up excluding people who are not comfortable using it.</p> <p>Specialist suppliers can go out of business, leaving you with a bespoke system that cannot be serviced or upgraded.</p> <p>The use of new technology is often in the hands of technology experts who end up driving the process.</p> <p>Additional security may be needed to protect equipment from theft and prevent computer viruses and 'hacking'.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors.</p> <p>Special-interest visitors.</p> <p>Young people.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p> <p>'Silver surfers'.</p>

MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
<p>Introductory guide books.</p> <p>Promotional leaflets.</p> <p>Site guide leaflets.</p> <p>Printed self-guided trail leaflets.</p>	<p>Very flexible: can be produced as free sheets or glossy guidebooks to suit all tastes and pockets.</p> <p>Can be used on-site or taken home to read later.</p> <p>Can use text, contemporary and historical images to bring site, building or feature to life.</p> <p>Free from problems of vandalism.</p> <p>Can be made weatherproof for use outdoors.</p> <p>Can attract sponsorship to reduce cost.</p> <p>Can communicate stories through text and illustration, which cannot be seen on site.</p> <p>Can be used as marketing tool away from site.</p> <p>Easy to produce in a variety of languages.</p> <p>Can be used as a pre-visit planning tool.</p> <p>Can be re-used or recycled.</p> <p>Can be produced at a variety of levels to suit all ages, knowledge level and ability, e.g. large print or children's versions.</p> <p>Can be updated relatively easily if details change.</p> <p>Trail routes can control visitors' movement around sites.</p> <p>Can include tactile maps suitable for people with visual impairment.</p>	<p>Research, script-writing and image-searching is time consuming.</p> <p>Need outlets in order that leaflets are available when visitors want them.</p> <p>On-site dispensers are expensive and prone to vandalism.</p> <p>Not necessarily always accessible.</p> <p>Only as good as opening hours of sales/ information outlet.</p> <p>Need-to-know market for realistic print runs.</p> <p>Need dry storage space.</p> <p>Need to establish effective distribution and stock-management network.</p> <p>Can be expensive to distribute.</p> <p>Difficult to agree common house-style between various organisations for area-based publications.</p> <p>Can create litter problem on sites.</p> <p>Can create the wrong impression, or lead to disappointment, if images or design style is not right.</p> <p>High capital outlay upfront with income generation over long period from sales. Need mechanism to redeem money from a range of outlets.</p> <p>Structured trails provide a formal route which some visitors may not like.</p> <p>Relies on the written word, which may not be accessible to some people, e.g. those with visual impairment or English as a second language.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors: important for pre-visit decision-making and use onsite.</p> <p>Activity visitors.</p> <p>Specialist interest.</p> <p>Families.</p> <p>Young people.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p> <p>Local people for reference material of local interest and for sharing with family and friends who visit.</p> <p>Special needs visitors.</p> <p>(NB must include appropriate access information).</p>

MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
<p>Visitor Newspaper (Tarka Visitor, etc).</p>	<p>Can offer seasonally-relevant information and visitor orientation.</p> <p>Gives sense of welcome and involvement.</p> <p>Potential for more in-depth interpretation of local subjects.</p> <p>Visitor management tool with articles on local problems and issues.</p> <p>Can encourage local community involvement through submission of articles.</p> <p>Can include guided walks and seasonal events programme.</p> <p>Can include details of accommodation and offer local businesses advertising space.</p> <p>Can include detailed maps.</p> <p>Can be cheaper to produce than glossy publications.</p>	<p>Researching and editing content is time consuming.</p> <p>Needs effective distribution and top-up management.</p> <p>Needs dry storage: can be bulky.</p> <p>Need to develop contact or mailing list for audio version.</p> <p>Relies on the written word, which may not be accessible to some people eg. those with visual impairment or foreign visitors.</p> <p>Audio version could be produced: local radio station may be willing to sponsor or produce at minimum cost).</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors.</p> <p>Local residents, to keep them in touch with current issues and events.</p> <p>Children (if a special children's version is produced).</p> <p>Could be promoted and distributed through schools.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p> <p>Activity and specialist interest for specific features and events.</p>
<p>Interpretive map.</p>	<p>Provides locally distinctive interpretation.</p> <p>Encourages positive involvement and input from local community by sharing stories and reminiscences, photographs, poetry, etc.</p> <p>Offers visitors a true local flavour of an area.</p> <p>Focuses closely on the interpretive themes of the area.</p> <p>Can be used on site or taken home for future reference.</p> <p>Can be of interest to all ages.</p> <p>Can include tactile maps suitable for people with visual impairment.</p>	<p>Research and managing community involvement is time consuming.</p> <p>Quality publication can be expensive.</p> <p>Needs effective distribution network and top-up management.</p> <p>May need to charge to cover costs: need mechanism to redeem money from range of outlets e.g. could be supplied to local shops, pubs, village halls, local information points, camp sites, libraries and TICs.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors to provide orientation and local flavour of the area or site.</p> <p>Local residents through direct involvement.</p> <p>Children (if a special children's version is produced). Could be a 'colour-in yourself' version of main leaflet.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p>

MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
<p>Self-guided audio trails: walking or driving.</p>	<p>Can bring theatrical dimension and animation to trail (can include memories of former workers).</p> <p>Provides freedom of exploration with opportunity to stop en route.</p> <p>New technology more reliable and flexible.</p> <p>Accessible to people with visual impairment.</p> <p>Allows visitors to pick and choose which information they want.</p> <p>Can be hired at operating surplus.</p> <p>Can use local company to produce guides.</p> <p>Can be produced to suit different ages and knowledge levels, so that family can enjoy the site and route together.</p>	<p>Need outlets for sale or hire to be open when required by visitors.</p> <p>Management issues, e.g. possible theft of units, although most are made to be inoperable for other uses.</p> <p>Can also use deposit system which deters theft.</p> <p>Large initial capital outlay.</p> <p>Driving trails encourage use of car and are not necessarily seen to be sustainable.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors looking for touring route and places of interest.</p> <p>Specialist visitors looking for more in-depth topic interpretation.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p> <p>Special needs visitors, especially visually-impaired and less mobile. Route and descriptions would act as a virtual tour.</p> <p>Children (if special children's editions are produced).</p> <p>Local people through oral history input.</p>
<p>Guided walks or cycle rides.</p>	<p>Provides personal face-to-face interpretation.</p> <p>Leader can set level to suit audience.</p> <p>Brings out sense of place with immediacy.</p> <p>Effective communication with a group of people.</p> <p>Can involve local experts.</p> <p>Cheap and effective if use volunteers used.</p> <p>Can include costumed guides and theatrical element.</p> <p>Can be linked to bus or train timetables for start/finish points.</p> <p>With training, monitoring and evaluation can achieve and sustain a high standard.</p>	<p>May only be cost effective on staff time if charge made.</p> <p>Guide training essential.</p> <p>Staff/volunteers may need first aid, health and safety and risk assessment training, and insurance.</p> <p>Need to be innovative to attract new participants. If not careful can only attract 'groupies'.</p> <p>Party size critical: 15 ideal maximum to maintain effective communication on walk or ride.</p> <p>Totally reliant on quality of guides, their knowledge and ability to communicate.</p> <p>Ongoing evaluation essential.</p> <p>Management and promotion can be time consuming and expensive, especially if bookings have to be taken.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors looking to learn more about a specific site or feature.</p> <p>Specialists. Routes and themes need to cover a wide range of subjects.</p> <p>Local people through content input and as guides.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p> <p>Young people.</p>

MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
<p>Nature detective or I-Spy trails for children and families.</p>	<p>Same as self-guided trail although can introduce element of interactivity by encouraging users to collect crayon rubbings on marker posts.</p> <p>Encourage family to discover and learn together, and children to look around them and use their senses to experience the place.</p> <p>Marker posts can be tactile and help to interpret the route without need for trail leaflet.</p> <p>Could provide “Time Team” type detective activity backpack (or wildlife detective backpack) which could be hired from various visitor centres. Could include family activities, templates, identification cards, stories.</p>	<p>Leaflets only available when outlets open.</p> <p>Marker posts can be prone to vandalism.</p> <p>May need to produce seasonal trails to ensure wildlife content relevant at all times of year.</p> <p>Leaflets can cause litter problems (can be overcome by charging small price for leaflet).</p>	<p>Children in family group.</p> <p>Children in education group.</p> <p>Special needs visitors.</p> <p>Local children can work on devising and illustrating trails.</p>
<p>Participatory activities e.g. art and craft activities, conservation skills such as field archaeology, conservation management, hedge laying, woodland management and ecology etc.</p> <p>Photography, music or film-making workshops, holiday play schemes etc.</p> <p>Could be based at any visitor centre, countryside site or attraction.</p>	<p>Creates sense of involvement and ownership.</p> <p>Provides face to face interpretation.</p> <p>Encourages people of all ages and abilities to work together and learn from each other.</p> <p>Can be geared to any age or ability, e.g. can be multi-sensory and can be accessible to all.</p> <p>Provides exciting and memorable learning experiences.</p> <p>Helps people to understand more through ‘doing’.</p> <p>Helps personal skills development and could lead to qualifications.</p> <p>Can provide valuable outreach interpretation.</p> <p>Can introduce multi-cultural themes.</p>	<p>Need to buy-in skills of qualified and trained leaders, which can be costly.</p> <p>Management and promotion can be time consuming and costly e.g. dealing with bookings.</p> <p>Leaders need first aid, health and safety and risk assessment training and insurance.</p> <p>May need to make a charge to cover cost of materials, which could make it inaccessible to some.</p>	<p>Local people and those on specialist-interest holiday/weekend breaks.</p> <p>Younger children, for play schemes and art and craft workshops.</p> <p>Teenagers, for art, craft, photography, music, film-making workshops etc.</p> <p>Current non-visitors (all ages and ethnic background) by adding different dimension to encourage them to visit.</p> <p>Special needs visitors by adding new multi-sensory dimension.</p>

MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
<p>Performing arts including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre. • Music. • Poetry readings. • Storytelling. • Costumed re-enactment. • Role play. 	<p>Excitement, fun and a memorable experience.</p> <p>Attractive to all ages and interests with range of media.</p> <p>Face-to-face interpretation, which can be geared to response and involvement of audience.</p> <p>Can bring out the true “sense of place” by introducing local folklore and legend.</p> <p>Can be historical or contemporary.</p> <p>Excellent way of bringing heritage to life.</p> <p>Can be a one-off event or linked to a series of community, or school-based, participatory workshops.</p> <p>Builds on, and acts as a focus for, existing local talent.</p> <p>Of equal interest to visitors and locals.</p> <p>Can be valuable management tool dealing with sensitive issues through humour.</p> <p>Can be multi-sensory and accessible to all.</p>	<p>Organisation and management is time consuming before, during and after the event.</p> <p>Require location capable of accommodating needs of audience and performers, e.g. space, toilets, refreshments, car parking, power supply.</p> <p>May need police involvement for traffic management.</p> <p>Need input from professional individuals or companies, which can be expensive, unless local Amateur Dramatic Society or local college would take it on.</p> <p>Admission charges may be needed to cover costs, which could deter some visitors.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors looking for events and entertainment.</p> <p>Short-break visitors if package built around an event.</p> <p>Local people.</p> <p>Current non-visitors (all ages and ethnic background) by adding a different dimension to encourage them to visit.</p> <p>Children and teenagers.</p> <p>Special needs visitors.</p> <p>Education visitors, if appropriately themed.</p>
<p>Interpretive panels.</p> <p>Marker plaques.</p> <p>On-site identification labels.</p> <p>Listening posts (audio points).</p> <p>Viewpoint orientation.</p> <p>Tactile models or maps.</p>	<p>Accessible at all times.</p> <p>Provides interpretation at the point of interest and therefore available to casual visitors, who have not picked up leaflet, been to TIC or other visitor information point.</p> <p>Encourages visitors to stop and look at particular view, feature or building.</p> <p>Can be located anywhere (within constraints of site or building management).</p> <p>Can have relatively long life expectancy (if manufactured to high standard to minimise risk of fade or vandalism).</p>	<p>Can be intrusive in the landscape if not carefully designed and sited.</p> <p>May require landowner’s or planning consent.</p> <p>Easier if sited on public land.</p> <p>Potentially vulnerable to vandalism and fading.</p> <p>Need to be replaced or repaired as soon as damage occurs to maintain image.</p> <p>Need careful siting to ensure they are visible and accessible (on desire line) without causing congestion, clutter, or hazard to wheelchairs, pushchairs or to the visually impaired.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors for orientation and referral.</p> <p>Local people, if involved in input and includes regularly changing the notice board.</p> <p>Children within family groups.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p> <p>Special-needs visitors.</p> <p>Special-interest visitors.</p>

MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
	<p>Can introduce drama and personal interpretation through audio points.</p> <p>Capable of introducing three-dimensional tactile and interactive element with multi-sensory appeal.</p> <p>Can incorporate weatherproof display cases for regularly changing the information or notices.</p>	<p>Research, design and manufacture are time consuming (can take up to 6 months).</p> <p>Can be expensive to produce.</p> <p>Require on-going maintenance, e.g. painting and cleaning.</p> <p>Have finite life of around five to seven years.</p>	
<p>Orientation and Visitor information points (ie. not purely interpretive).</p>	<p>Help visitors to plan their visit at point of entry, e.g. car parks, attractions, major roadside laybys, bus and rail stations, shopping centres.</p> <p>Unlimited access unlike Tourist Information Centre or visitor centres.</p> <p>Ideal points of contact to put across key messages, eg. main interpretive themes.</p> <p>Provide referral on to other places of interest to gain further information.</p> <p>Use of annotated map helps visitors understand the scale and character of the site or area.</p> <p>Can be designed to include a display case for regularly-changing information, e.g. Events.</p>	<p>Can be prone to vandalism.</p> <p>Require on-going maintenance.</p> <p>Potential clutter and hazard, unless suitably sited.</p> <p>Sometimes require planning permission.</p> <p>Can have limited life-span because of need for information changes.</p> <p>Challenge to design attractive panel which can be changed frequently and cheaply.</p> <p>Need well-designed and attractive map, which people can understand and read quickly and easily.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors.</p> <p>Activity visitors: help to locate best places for activities.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p>
<p>Visitor centre Exhibitions and museum displays.</p>	<p>Museums exist “in perpetuity” and, as such, have a key role in the upkeep, etc, of displays and materials.</p> <p>Ability to present complete story and explore themes in greater depth than with other media. Provides referral to more remote/inaccessible sites.</p> <p>Provides comfortable surroundings for visitors to browse and learn at leisure away from problems of bad weather.</p> <p>Provides draw and focus for visitor’s attention.</p>	<p>Help visitors to plan their visit Requires a building or covered accommodation.</p> <p>More expensive than other media.</p> <p>Requires a management structure, staffing, cleaning, maintenance, etc.</p> <p>Only available when staff are on site.</p> <p>Expensive to develop, change or extend.</p> <p>Need sound business plan based on thorough market research and realistic visitor projections to secure long-term viability.</p>	<p>Day and staying visitors.</p> <p>Local people.</p> <p>Children in family groups.</p> <p>Education visitors.</p> <p>Specialists.</p> <p>Visitors with special needs.</p>



MEDIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	TARGET AUDIENCE
	<p>Can provide multi-media approach aimed at all ages and abilities.</p> <p>Can provide a new, use for a redundant historic building or new purpose-built venue.</p> <p>Brings orientation, interpretation, information and education services together.</p> <p>Provides face-to-face contact between visitor, staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Could involve the local community in management/ staffing/operation.</p>		

Appendix B: Bibliography

The key authorities in the field of interpretation are:

Interpreting our Heritage by Freeman Tilden

University of North Carolina Press ISBN 0 8078 4016 5

Environmental Interpretation: A Practical Guide by Sam Ham

North America Press Golden Colorado ISBN 1-55591-902-2

The Past is a Foreign Country by David Lowenthal

Cambridge University Press ISBN 0521 29480 0

Listening to Nature by Joseph Cornell

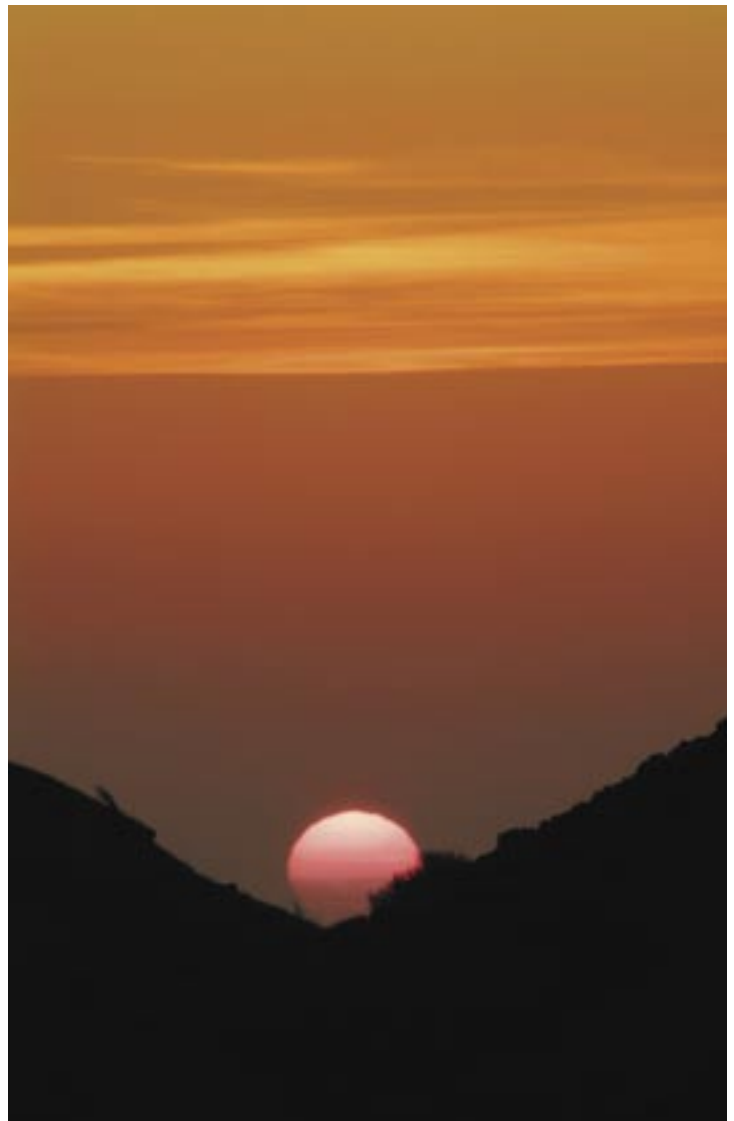
Dawn Publications ISBN 0 916124 35 5

Sharing the Joy of Nature by Joseph Cornell

Dawn Publications ISBN 0 916124 52 5

Interpreting for Park Visitors by William J. Lewis

Eastern Acorn Press ISBN 89062 079 2





NORTHERN DEVON
Coast & Countryside
Service