

INTERPRETATION AN APPROACH IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Training program 2014
(26-30 May, 2014)

Trainers:

Dr. Lars Wohlers

KON-TIKI - Interpretive consultation, training and evaluation

Matthew Jones

Imagemakers Interpretive Design & Consulting, UK

Organizers:

Association of Cultural Heritage Managers

Ilka utca 46. I/3.

H - 1143 Budapest
Hungary

tel. +36(06)203659954
info@heritagemanager.hu
www.heritagemanager.hu

KON-TIKI

Interpretive consultation, training and evaluation

Trainer: Dr. Lars Wohlers
Boehmsholzer Weg 22a

D – 21394 Suedergellersen – Heiligenthal
Germany

tel. +49(0)4135-317 9948
fax +49(0)4135-317 9000
info@kon-tiki.eu
www.kon-tiki.eu

Aim of the workshop

For mission-driven leisure providers and their supporters a comprehensive, experience based design concept is increasingly important - not only for economic reasons. However, this is only possible if employees and cooperating specialists such as historians, architects, graphic designers, multimedia companies and many more can work together and have the whole experience of the visitor in mind. This education offers a compact introduction to the planning and development of interpretation on natural and cultural heritage sites.

Content of the workshop

The interpretive approach helps to see more in the situation through the eyes of the visitors.

In the first block of the training participants can learn scientifically based, practice oriented planning basics of heritage interpretation. Following that, participants will learn how to integrate frequently used communication methods purposefully, creatively and an experience-oriented way in individual projects. Finally, an introduction to visitor research and evaluation provides opportunities to develop a product potential for further optimization.

Participants of the workshop

The education targets mainly teachers of heritage-related university faculties (tourism, design, culture, archeology, history, cultural management, etc.) and other professionals dealing with natural and cultural heritage (historians, architects, cultural managers, graphic designers, live interpreters, museologists, touristical experts, urban designers, etc.).

The applicants should be motivated to provide meaningful experience to visitors of natural and cultural heritage sites.

The number of participants is limited in maximum 25 pers.

The courses will be held in English, therefore a proficiency in English is expected.

Interpretive planning

Date: 9.00 AM - 6.00 PM, 26-27 May, 2014

Location: Budapest Zoo & Botanical Garden

The objective of this session is to convey a hands-on insight into interpretive planning. Nowadays, a structured approach is as important as never before. A clear plan is indispensable in order to be able:

1. to offer visitors good, interpretive experiences,
2. to make the intended interpretive contents communicable and
3. to arrange for guidelines with regard to architects, interior designers, graphic designers, etc.

Based on knowledge of leisure needs the seminar's focus lies in the development of experiences for the visitors. After an introduction on how to identify quality contents for interpretation, the seminar also involves specific planning instruments, including:

- What are the basic expectations of the visitor to interpretive sites and products and how can they be fulfilled?
- What are the messages; what role do they play in the planning process?
- What function do images fulfill and how do they help to coherently structure the overall concept?
- How can the content be arranged, so that it is easily memorable?
- How can "head, heart and hand" be tied into a conclusive overall experience?

These and other questions will be dealt with, resolved and together accentuated in exercises during the seminar.

Workshop-flow (includes input-sequences and extensive group exercises):

1. The interpretive sphere

- *Needs of the visitor* - this part will deal with general leisure needs. Also participants will find out how these needs can be considered in interpretation.
- *Strong experiences and meaningful content* - That is what the visitor is looking for: experiences. Also it is known from research that people learn best experientially. Therefore the group will look at how to analyze experiences, here: from participants of the seminar. Participants will get an introduction into ways to determine relevant and meaningful contents.

2. The planning process

2.1. Arrival at the interpretive site

- *Welcome* - What is important to consider when you welcome visitors to a museum, a zoo, an archeological site, a national park, etc.?
- *Orientation* - Everybody wants to be safe. That is why in this workshop participants will give some extra attention to the orientation of visitors in space, time and concerning the content of a given site.



2.2. On-site

- **Message** - Based on a site's mission this is what every site needs. The workshop will clarify the components of strong messages and apply this to some practical examples.
- **Image** - Interpretation is maybe even more about feelings that it is about facts (though both are important parts). Identifying the image of a given site or presentation helps us to better communicate. Here participants will learn how to narrow down an image visitors have of a place and how to use that knowledge in everyday work.
- **Organizer** - Challenging but very effective, this is what organizers are. Participants will get examples of different organizers that help to make the content of a presentation more memorable for the visitor. They will also apply that knowledge to a real-life-example.
- **Tools** - As much as possible you should strive to develop your tools after the objectives have been determined. Participants will learn how this approach can lead to very creative tools with which to more effectively do your interpretation.

2.3. Departure

- **Good-bye** - as with the "Welcome" (see above) you should strive to give visitors a warm "Farewell" and try to invite them again for something different.

Interpretive text design

Date: 9.00 AM - 6.00 PM, 28 May, 2014

Location: Museum of Ethnography, Budapest

“Sorry for the long letter, but I had no time.”

It is said that the poet Goethe started a letter to a friend with this sentence. Everyone who has had the task to write an interpretive text, knows the challenge only too well. A good text needs its time.

There is a lot to consider: structure and order, linguistic simplicity, conciseness, further stimulus, legibility and the motivation to read. A simple text is really hard to formulate.

Do you know how much text you can, physically speaking, read in a given time frame? No? Let us surprise you! In this seminar, we will show you how to analyze and improve texts or how to give suggestions in terms of quality assurance.

Workshop-flow (includes input-sequences and group exercises):

1. Our reading limits (physical and psychological)

In a short introductory test participants will experience how much text you are reading in a given exhibition. Also they will get an impression of why texts are a very difficult tool to deal with.

2. Essential quality criteria of text design

2.1. Comprehensibility

- Structure and order
- Linguistic simplicity
- Conciseness
- Stimulus
- Legibility
- Motivation to read

2.2. Readability

- Viewing distance
- Layout
- Placement of texts

2.3. Text evaluation

- Theory
- Laboratory
- Real-live

After an overview of text optimization possibilities, we go into practice. In small groups you will train to develop suggestion possibilities for short texts (e.g. of leaflets and panels).

Guided tours

Date: 9.00 AM - 6.00 PM, 29 May, 2014

Location: Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism, Budapest

'Only if you were there by foot, you were really there.' (old saying)

The guided tour is the method most frequently used in informal education - and not without reason. No matter if traditionally with a tour guide, a theater pedagogic version with one or more actors, with technical-acoustic support or even a multimedia experience.

In this workshop, we consider the overall experience of a tour, which is analyzed and accompanied from registration, start and performance until the end. After the first presentation, we apply the new insights on a practical example. For this purpose, we offer a guided tour (topic depends on the location), which we can analyze together. If there are different tours available, the decision is up to the group.

Workshop-flow (includes input-sequences and group exercises):

1. Reasons for guided tours

It helps to think about the specific strengths of guided tours in order to unfold their full potential. Therefore the seminar starts with a short discussion about reasons you have for offering guided tours.

2. The personal attitude

Participants will analyze the importance of the guides' attitude towards the visitor and how it influences the communication process. An exercise will help to understand common misconceptions about important aspects of guided tours and how to avoid them.

3. The communication cascade

It's hard to get specific messages across to the visitor. But why is this the case. The communication cascade can be used as a first quick tool to analyze a given guided tour.

4. Preparing the tour

What needs to be taken into account before starting with a guided tour? Setting, clothing, meeting point, group size, the right time, important equipment - the training will go through a number of crucial preparation topics before starting the actual tour-planning.

5. Conducting the tour

The training go into the details of what to take into consideration for the three main-components of a guided tour before testing those criteria in a real tour on site:

- Introduction
- Main part
- Conclusion

Digital media

Date: 9.00 AM - 6.00 PM, 30 May, 2014

Location: Petöfi Literary Museum, Budapest

Trainer: Matthew Jones (Imagemakers Interpretive Design & Consulting, UK)

From websites to smartphone apps, digital media pervade almost every aspect of our modern lives. As a result of this fast-changing technological revolution it can be hard for the facilities to keep up and to understand and meet changing visitor needs and expectations.

The main objective of the seminar is to help participants better understand the possibilities and the limitations of using digital media within their own facility. In particular the seminar will focus on helping participants gain a deeper understanding of:

- motivational techniques and the applicability of gaming theory to the creation of successful digital visitor experiences
- the pros and cons of using different digital media
- the practicalities of briefing, appointing and working with digital designers to achieve successful outcomes

Ultimately it is hoped that this deeper understanding will help facilities plan and deliver effective digital media projects that engage visitors in their collections, their stories and their mission.

Through the day we will explore the following key questions through a mixture of presentation, discussion and interactive sessions:

- How can smartphones and other portable digital media help visitors get more from their visit to my museum or site?
- What are Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and Near Field Communication (NFC) and how can that be used to create powerful digital experiences?
- What has gaming theory got to do with creating digital experiences for my facility?
- What will digital designers need from me in order to deliver a successful digital project?

Workshop-flow (includes input-sequences and group exercises):

1. Putting the 'X factor' into the visitor experience (or Message + Media +? = Meaning).
Presentation, group exercise, follow up discussion and feedback sessions exploring the application of gaming theory to the creation of memorable and engaging digital experiences.
2. The pros and cons of digital media
Presentation, group exercise, follow-up discussions and feedback sessions exploring the pros and cons of different types of digital media and their application to museum and heritage settings.
3. How to brief and appoint a digital designer
Presentation and discussion session exploring the process of briefing and appointing a digital designer to your project.
4. The digital design and development process
Presentation and group exercise looking at requirements and expectations for client and digital designer.

Visitor Studies

Date: 9.00 AM - 6.00 PM, 23 June, 2014

Location: Central European University, Budapest

How do we know that the project is successful? Most informal learning institutions that offer interpretation measure their success almost solely by the number of their visitors. We believe that this is not sufficient.

Sites that take their responsibility towards society seriously, have to find appropriate ways to evaluate their work differently than merely by counting guest numbers. Or do you know a school whose success depends on the number of students?

Nowadays evaluation is important to provide potential sponsors with appropriate information about your performance. But even if there is no need to provide information for sponsors, visitor studies are necessary to guarantee high quality interpretation.

This workshop provides you with a hands-on overview of possible applications and tools for modern visitor studies.

In addition to an

- introduction to the basics of visitor studies
- we practice using several tools in small groups, e. g.
 - written and oral interviews,
 - visitor observations and
 - text evaluation

Workshop-flow (includes input-sequences and group exercises):

1. What is evaluation in terms of visitor studies?

1.1. Visitor research and what is it worth for? - This is important in order to achieve the financing of an evaluation. If you cannot explain what it's worth for you will certainly get no resources to do it.

2. Simple and complex methods

2.1. Overview – a world of options - Often people think that it is too complicated and time-consuming to do an evaluation. This might be the case for certain instruments but you can still do a lot of very helpful investigations using easy to develop evaluations-tools.

3. Requirements for a successful evaluation

3.1. Representativeness - it needs to be made sure that you get a "picture" of the average visitor, not just of a specific segment.

3.2. Validity - the evaluation instruments are being used have to do the expected job. Therefore certain aspects of this social research situation have to be kept in mind, otherwise there will be mis-interpretations of the results.



3.3. *Reliability* - If you can not repeat the results of a given evaluation it is likely that there has been a mistake in the preparation of the study which is why you need to give this aspect some extra attention.

4. Interviews and Observations

These are standard evaluation tools. Participants will get an introduction and if possible they will develop a quick set of those tools for a host-site and apply them (depends on enough visitor traffic during the day of the seminar).

5. Evaluation in the day-to-day-business

What does it take to establish evaluation in everyday interpretation work? The workshop group will discuss experiences from participants and how to develop an evaluation-culture in a given site with respect to staff and financial resources.

Excursions

The second part of the training consists of study visits to two interpretive sites in the area of Budapest. The aim is to apply more extensively what the participants have learnt during the seminars. Each excursion lasts two days (including one day travel to and from the site and one day workshop in Budapest).

Excursion-flow (includes input-sequences and group exercises):

1. Experiencing the site from the visitors' point of view

The group will travel to the site in the morning and visit it in a regular visitor situation.

2. Backstage-information

After approx. 1h the group will gather and get an introduction to the site, its development, mission, resources and current challenges including a tour of the site by a staff member who has experience with the interpretation of the site.

3. Group work

In small groups the participants will develop a catalogue with the major interpretation challenges of the given site (e. g. concerning the mission, welcome situation, orientation, message, experiences for visitors, text situation, personal interpretation, evaluation, fundraising options, marketing, etc.). The criteria-lists for interpretation, as developed during the seminar week will serve as a guideline for this work.

At the end of the day each group will do a short presentation of its findings and recommendations.

4. Result of the excursions

The result will be a short, concerted report for the host site concerning its interpretation and options for the future. The participants will take away first-hand experiences how to analyze the interpretation of leisure sites and how to develop recommendations for improvement.

Excursion 1

Date: 9.00 AM - 6.00 PM, 24-25 June, 2014

Location: 1st day: Pomáz, Nagykovácsi puszta - cistercian handicraft manor, archeological site
2nd day: Central European University, Budapest

Excursion 2

Date: 9.00 AM - 6.00 PM, 26-27 June, 2014

Location: 1st day: Százhalombatta - Matrica Museum and Archaeological Park
2nd day: Central European University, Budapest

KON-TIKI, interpretive consultation, training and evaluation

About us

Interpretive planning – instead of brainstorming

Visitors mainly come to a facility in order to have rich experiences. And that's great! Why? Because communicating through rich experiences is the most productive form of communication.

What is needed are creative ideas, no doubt. But those are not enough, because at the end of the day the facility's mission has to be fulfilled. What's often neglected is the structure behind the creativity.

In short: Experiences in interpretive facilities need, for example, to be connected with meaningful messages and images.

For more than 10 years we have been developing interpretive plans. During this time, we have developed a range of powerful instruments to help create and structure rich experiences.

Whether interpretive consultation, analysis or planning - we offer seamless services to fit the needs of our customers!

Professional Training – instead of “oral tradition”

In interpretation there is a tendency to qualify via an “oral tradition”. This means that new staff members learn about interpretation through colleagues who have already been doing the job for quite a while. If we consider the requirements which have to be fulfilled in other educational professions (e. g. teacher training), this is an astonishing fact.

We believe that in the developing field of interpretation, comprehensive training is needed. This is the only way to professionally communicate the meaning of our natural and cultural heritage in the long run.

Visitor Studies/Evaluation – instead of counting numbers of visitors

Receiving a lot of visitors is a desirable goal. Often though, the number of visitors is misunderstood as the only measure of success.

But what else can signal the “success” of a site? Who are the visitors, where do they come from and how can they be reached? What are the best ways to communicate with them? And what do the visitors “take away” at the end of the day?

Questions upon questions! The more the management knows about the guests, the more precisely can the offered experiences be adapted, the higher the probability that the site is successful!

From target group analyses in the development phase of the project, via tests of test concepts, to summative evaluations, we are at service when it comes to listening to the visitor's “voice”.

Please contact us for further information info@kon-tiki.eu

Association of Cultural Heritage Managers (ACHEM)

The Association of Cultural Heritage Managers was founded in 2012 by young professionals working in the fields of cultural and natural heritage management across Hungary. Our background varies from archaeology, architecture, history and art history, to ethnography, education, law, economics, pedagogy and landscape architecture.

Our specialists are engaged in the management of some of the most prestigious sites, such as the ICOMOS World Heritage Early Christian Catacombs in Pecs, or the World Heritage Candidate Fort Monostor in Komárom.

The aim of the association is to build a platform for professionals of different areas involved in heritage management and preservation in Hungary, giving them opportunity not only to learn from each other and work with each other but supporting this process with vast international network and expertise.

Contact:

web: <http://www.heritagemanager.hu>

e-mail: info@heritagemanager.hu

Post address: H-1143 Budapest, Ilka u. 46. I/3.

Dr. Lars Wohlers



1989-1994

- Studies of Cultural Applied Sciences, Leuphana University Lueneburg/Germany

1991

- Co-founder and since then board member of the Institute for Earth Education Deutschland e.V. (IEE) (www.earth-education.org).

1995 – 2006

- Leuphana University Lueneburg, Institute for Environmental Communication
- Scientific Assistant, 2000 doctoral thesis about informal education in German national parks
- Teachings and research concerning interpretation, visitor studies, environmental consultation and Earth Education. Various Research trips to USA, Canada and Britain.

Since 1996

- Member of the Visitor Studies Association (VSA), the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) and European Association for heritage Interpretation

Since 2003

- Founder and Director of KON-TIKI – Office for interpretive planning
- Interpretive planning, trainings and visitor studies for various institutions (museums, zoos, water parks, environmental organizations, protected areas etc.) in various European countries (Germany, England, Italy, Netherlands, Latvia).

References (examples):

- Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU)
- Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research
- Association of the Water Tower Lueneburg
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust/England
- Biosphere Reserve Bliesgau/Saarland
- Forces of Nature Visitor Centre /Sylt/Schleswig-Holstein
- Foundation for National Natural Heritage (NABU)
- German Association of Wildlife Parks (DWV)
- Greenpeace Germany
- Hainich National Park/Thuringia
- Latvian Museum of Natural History/Latvia
- Natural History Museum Natureum Niederelbe
- Steeghs Advise/Netherlands

Matthew Jones

Current position

- Lead Consultant with Imagemakers Design & Consulting
- With Imagemakers for 13 years

Qualifications

- BSc Hons degree in Geography;
- MSc in Rural Resources & Environmental Policy
- Responsibilities and experiences with Imagemakers
- Core skills are in creative copy and script writing, conceptual 'ideas' and interpretive planning
- Responsible for delivery of a broad range of projects in a variety of settings (e.g. historic sites, heritage buildings, museums, tourist attractions and visitor centres, urban parks and gardens)
- Has planned and delivered multi-faceted projects involving a broad spectrum of traditional and innovative digital interpretive media
- Has authored numerous interpretation plans and strategies
- Has delivered numerous public engagement events and workshops



Matthew Jones

Project Manager & Consultant

Imagemakers Interpretive Design & Consulting

Devon Office: +44 (0)1837 840717

Web: www.imagemakers.uk.com