TechWorks! - Museum Concept Plan **November 20, 2006**

The public programs of the CTI have an overarching theme with national, and timeless, resonance and interest. At the same time, because of the rich history of technological development in the valley, the interpretive program is site-specific, that people will have to come here to see.

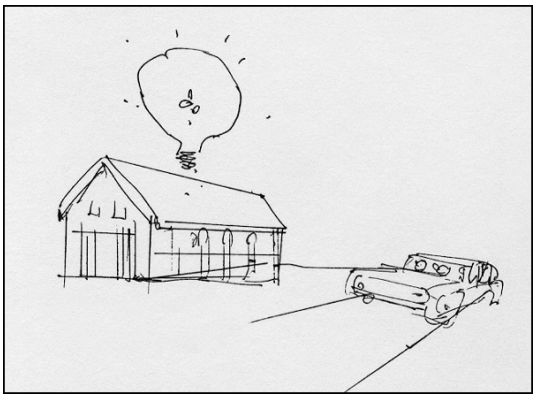
While it important that the museum remain a vehicle for collection and remembrance, its interpretive programs build on history to define stories that are educationally relevant to formal programs (school tours and seminars), and informal education. A careful balance must be maintained between stories that are too specific and too local, which risk losing the national audience, and stories that are too general, which might be told anywhere else in the country.

One of the problems the museum has (and it's a problem that most museums wish they had) is that there may be too much material to draw from, and without a proper framework, story editing may be difficult. An incredible amount of Technology came out of this area. Possibly more than any other 100 square mile area in the United States. It would seem that in it's day, the Southern Tier was in a league with Silicon Valley, Silicon Alley, or Bell Labs.

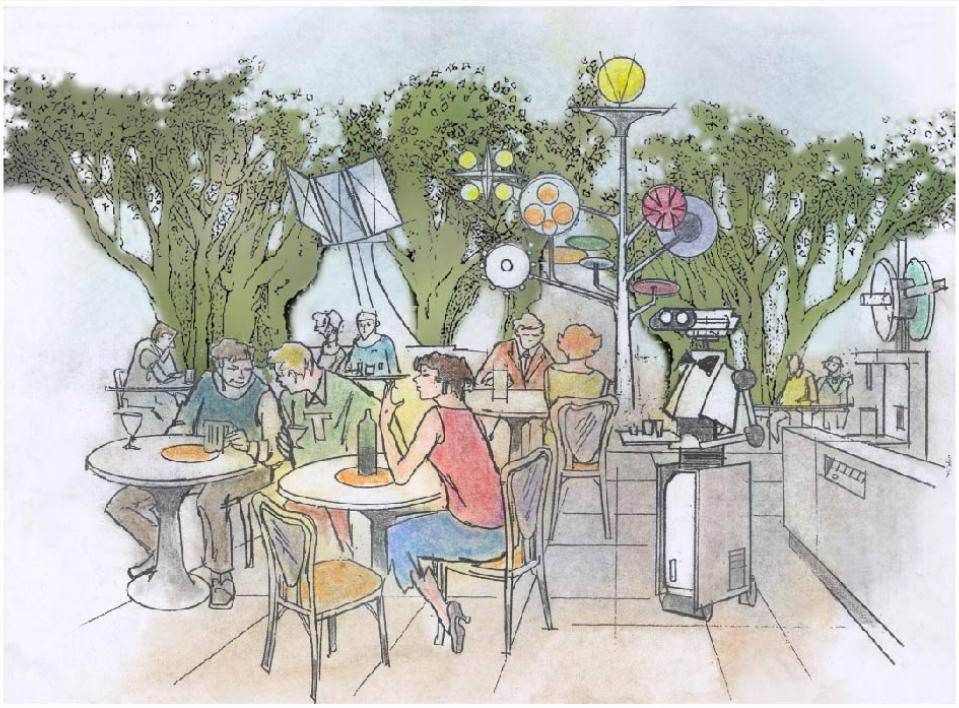
CTI is emphatically not a Science Museum. It does not focus on basic science. Its subject is Technology and Innovation: real-world, Applied Science. We think that this intersection of Creativity, Technology, and Entrepreneurship gives CTI a viable theme with a lasting, worldwide interest. And there are many significant historical examples to draw from.

Approach

From the approach roads, the CTI facility should be identified as something singular - with an icon that says "this place is special". The icon should be carried through with all of the Center's identity, from site, to gift-shop items, to stationary. And "idea light bulb", is an image familiar to almost everyone. A better icon might be a thought balloon as a recurring framework, in which we can place a “library” of sub-images, depending on topic. (Reference the Nickelodeon identity system).



Setting the Tone: Garden of Ideas

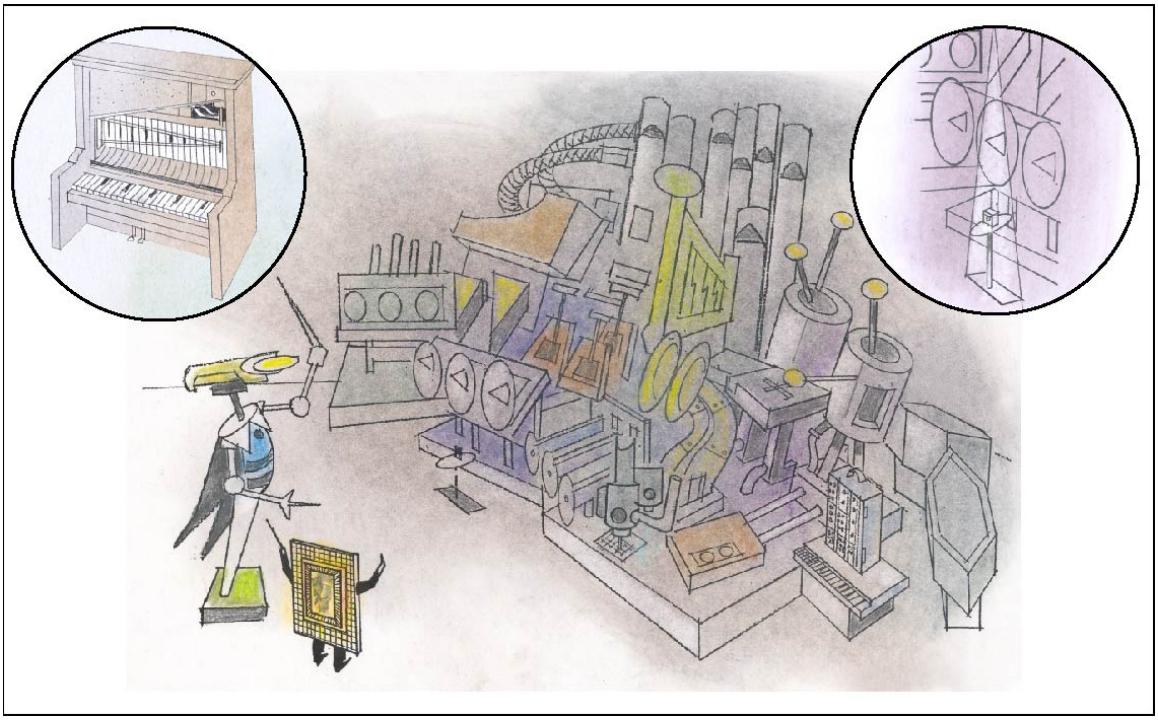


The pedestrian approach should be graceful and inviting. Many public facilities use plazas embellished with –planting to create a transition zone from the "street world" to the story-space of the institution. We use tech sculptures that have an aesthetic quality, but tell each tells an inherent "hidden" story. After a visit or two guests will become familiar with the knowledge embedded in the decision trees, plotted plants, etc. Each –"decision tree" should represent the history of a Southern Tier company, or invention. Paths untaken (by management, or the inventors) would represent unrealized branches. At some point, the decisions would bear fruit. Creativity would flower. And money might be found to grow on trees.

Reception

Here, visitors purchase tickets, and can package their experience, selecting from additional up-charge items such as guided tours and special presentations

Stating the Theme: Orchestra Works!



This is the area that tells visitors what the Center is all about. In the military, they say "tell them what you will tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you told them". This area tells them what we're going to tell them: Stories of Technology, and its genesis. The show begins with an overture played on a Link Player Piano: the mechanical musicians become more complex, until the full orchestra, conducted by a mechanical conductor (or perhaps a small, semi-conductor), leads us through an outline story of the development of technology. For the finale, the spot focuses more and more tightly, down to the final player – a teeny iPod, with rich digital sound that still fills the auditorium.

Personalizing the Visitor Experience

Technology is a complex subject. In any museum, and particularly in one that deals with this subject matter, the ideal exhibit presentation is geared to the interest and level of familiarity that the visitor brings with him/her.

The Center has an opportunity to use Technology in its presentations, and can even craft a content delivery that is specific to the interests of its visitors. In order to do this, the first necessary step is to find out what the visitors' individual interests are. Then, CTI can give the visitor a unique identifier device that they can use to activate specific storylines in the exhibits.

The specific technologies and logistics for this require some development and evaluation: if done thoroughly, and will an appropriate respect for the technological processes that it is representing, as well as embodying, we may achieve a goal that has been much talked-about, but never realized in an integrated way within the museum community.

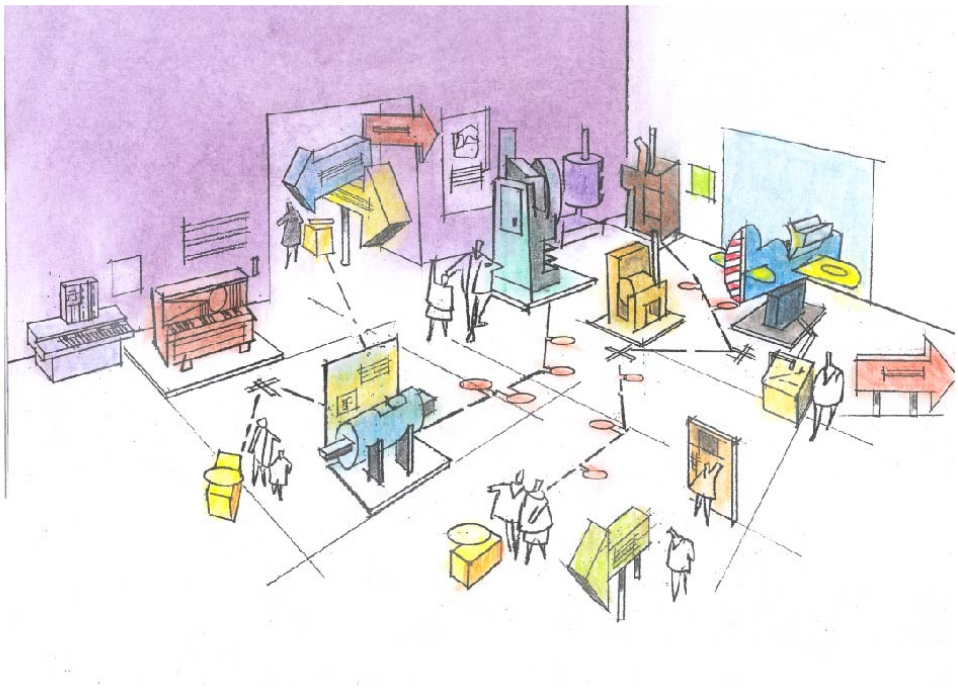
The system would be made up of several components (each testable)

1. TechWorks! Asks, Who Are You? What is the most efficient (meaning, best tradeoff between accuracy, non-invasiveness, and speed)
2. This information accompanies the visitor throughout his/her museum visit.
3. This personalized information is presented to address different pathways, learning styles and interests.
4. We will explore ways to extend the experience beyond the four walls, and create a long-term relationship with the visitor.

Connecting Exhibits and Ideas

The rest of the exhibits elaborate on variations of the theme "Technological Developments". Historical artifacts, or expositions of stories, are displayed in a web-like that maximizes visual and spatial links between topics, depending on how the subjects are developed.

Via the personalized thin-screen display system, the Center could deliver information pertinent to a visitor's individual interests - how the technology operated, how it was made, how it was marketed, or the personalities involved.



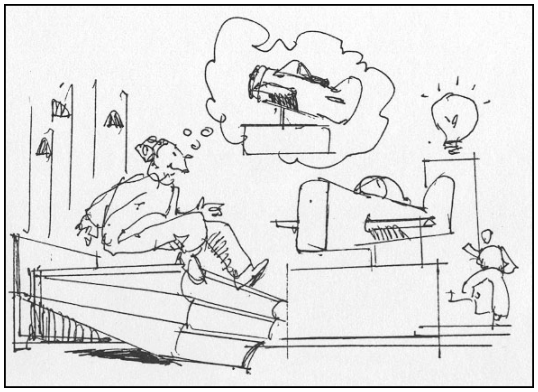
But the organization of the displays is built around their conception and development. (This information may need to be developed for some story sections, as you proceed with your oral histories and collections acquisition).

Selection of primary displays will be based on the richness of connections to other displays and presentations, as per thematic threads below:

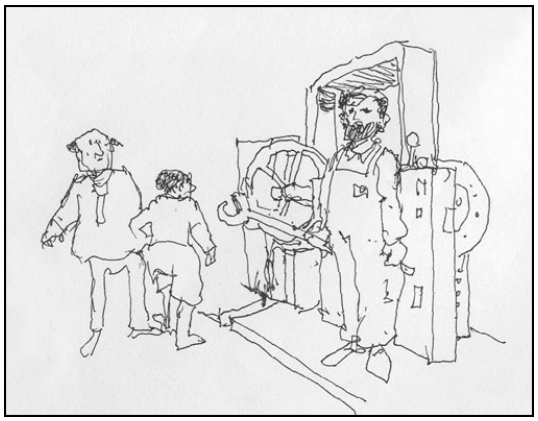
1. Automation
    - sequence and synchronization
    - feedback and control
    - measuring/sensing/optics
    - precision manufacturing
    - chemistry/coatings
    - resources (clear cold water)
2. Creative Process
    - thinking with their hands – iteratively improving through repetitive
    - making connections, evolving from past models Eureka moments?
    - systems integration – putting things together
    - scenario-testing
3. Cultural Context of Technology
    - overall business system that embraces externalities, availability of capital, to the business economics of the enterprise, to undesired affects.
    - govt. Environment conducive to tech…govt research, local supportive zoning… definition of pollution/levels of what is acceptable

- distribution/transportation
- standards and innovation
- work Culture (training, unions, benefits, community quality of life)

4. Biography: people stories, about the inventors, workers, or users



Altogether, these exhibits will show that the critical mass of technologies in Broome County fed on one another, creating a unique synergy.



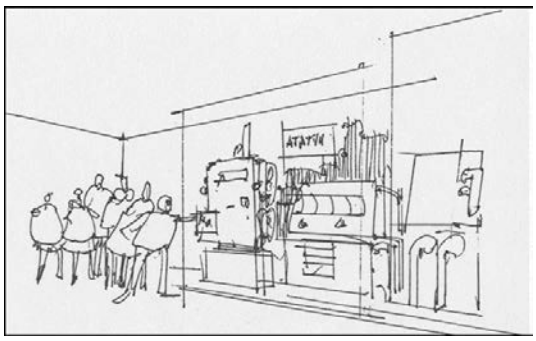
Entropy

Since things break down, and since CTI has a unique collection and opportunity to showcase things that "work", and a stated commitment to feature non-electronic interactives and working devices, the (inevitable) repair of these mechanisms can be featured as interpretation tools.

Open Storage

More materials are being collected that can be fit into the exhibits in a comprehendible way. These can be displayed in open storage cases. Information about the individual items can be displayed on interactive labels that illuminate various aspects of the items.

There may also be an opportunity to display, here or in a "science/art gallery", objects that are beautiful because of their form: an artistic/aesthetic presentation of technology.

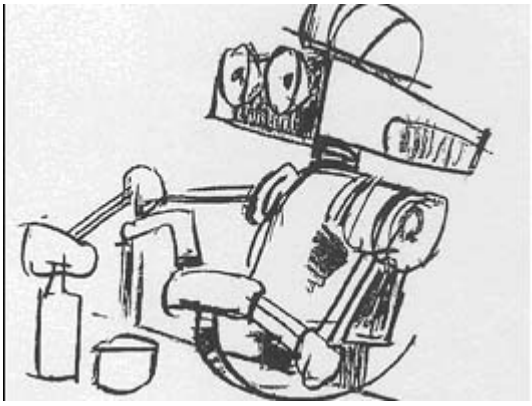


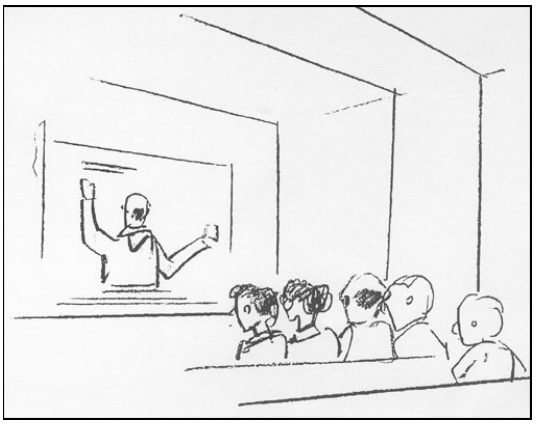
Gift Shop

With a serious development effort, the CTI Shop could create and market it's own properties, if it can establish itself as a primary source for cool technology merchandise, and create a lively internet business.

Food Service

With a visitor's stay of 1-2 hours, food service will be a much-appreciated amenity. And, for a small charge, Mr. Spigot, the robotic bar-thing, will serve you up a nice cool drink.





Auditorium

An auditorium of 108 seats can be used for public presentations, or to show introductory filmm

Classroom space

Special classrooms can be fitted with support materials that point to the collections, strengthening the link between school classes, the CTI collections, and be a place to showcase the remarkable technical and historical depth of the museum's docents.

Dynamic Donor Board

As our Donors are Dynamic, their recognition will be Dynamic as well.

Appropriate to the subject and nature of its presentations, the Donor Recognition device for CT&I is an active, dynamic tribute to our supporters, that is itself a display that celebrates the technology that the Museum commemorates.

Since the Museum is a comprehensive survey of the development of technology in the Southern Tier as it progressed from analogue systems to digital, the Board's display methodologies are a recapitulation of the progression of output technologies. Early "foundation" gifts, are recognized as permanent character displays. Subsequent gifts that support operations and ongoing interpretive programs are recognized via active, changing digital character readouts, with each gift receiving proportional display time.