

Communicating technically to the non-technical - Part 2

by Dave, March 2009

In a previous post, I talked briefly about some of our principles when dealing with technical communication in everyday conversation. Naturally, the context in which we approach such a task is framed by who we are - web developers striving to help agencies build better websites for their clients. In this post, I'll be expanding on that topic by looking at what some other people with different perspectives have to say. For part one of this series, see [Communicating technically to the non-technical, Part 1](#)

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Mary Fensholt: the power of analogies

<http://www.allbusiness.com/services/business-services-advertising/4252188-1.html>

Just as we discussed building a framework of understanding so the audience is not initially overwhelmed with a concept, Mary Fensholt at allbusiness.com proposes using analogies as a spring board into, in her context, a technical presentation.

"For an analogy to work, however, it must use something the listener already knows about as a springboard for comparison. If the listener isn't familiar with the components of the analogy, it won't work. That's why the best analogies use familiar, everyday things as a starting point."

She suggests using traffic as a good, common analogy to build rapport. Everyone hates traffic.

Jan D'Arcy: speak to the audience

[Communicating Complex Technical Information](#)

This excerpt is really interesting, and really warrants a read. Jan echoes Albert Einstein's famous quote, "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler". She points out that while understanding is our goal, our primary job is the communication of information. If that information becomes too watered down, it is useless. As she concisely puts it,

"Model communicators illuminate and give insight; they don't dilute scientific and technical information. They don't talk down to the audiences, rather they feel that the scientific concepts should be available to everyone."

This tracks very closely with our core principles as a service company.

Commoncraft.com: emphasising the benefit

http://www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english

One barrier block to any type of communication is a lack of interest on the part of the audience. In this video, the presenter takes a technical concept, and in a lighthearted way, literally illustrates the benefits to the average user.