



**THE  
“WHERE’S  
THIS GOING?”  
TECHNIQUE**

### **Where’s This Going?**

Walking on stage at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, TV magician Paul Zenon made his opening remarks, gestured with his beer, and referenced the little piece of lime in the bottle’s mouth. “Where’s this going?” we thought...

It was vaguely reminiscent of the time we saw a documentary series about a suspected multiple murderer! As the second episode reached its cliffhanging final moments, the camera did something quite unexpected, causing one of the team to wonder aloud, “How’s this going to end?”...

Similarly, when Tony Hancock borrows a book from the library in the much-loved Hancock’s Half Hour episode ‘The Missing Page’, it infuriates and haunts the lugubrious comic to discover the final page is missing. But in absence of knowing ‘who dunnit’, Hancock himself begins to speculate...

At this point you might yourself begin to wonder where this Info Sheet is going – and that’s rather the point! One of the least used creative techniques of which we know, is also one of the simplest and most fruitful... It is simply to ask yourself where someone else’s work might be going next!

### **Isn’t that plagiarism?**

No, absolutely not. When you get into the habit of letting your mind wander and become curious about something you’re seeing or hearing, you very often come up with ideas that are very different from those belonging to other people... If, though, it *is* a similar idea – don’t use it!

### **What about the beginning part?**

Well, let’s go with the Paul Zenon example from earlier. When we saw this magician talk in quite specific terms about his beer, we had the idea that he might lower the bottle to his side and, when he lifted it up later, discover it was now not beer at all, but water – and in a different bottle altogether! In reality, though, he did nothing of the kind: he simply made a joke about beer!

### **And so?**

So far as we know, the idea for that magic trick is completely new: a bottle of beer is casually shown and then – without cover – somehow turns into a bottle of water, complete with a totally different label. Setting up *that* idea doesn’t in any way depend on what Mr. Zenon does. Indeed, the only similarity is that they both start with beer! In other words, it’s a *completely* different idea.

### **How is this a technique I can use?**

The important thing to understand is that it’s a case of developing the habit of letting your mind wander *just enough*. You don’t want to find yourself unable to follow the plot of a TV show, play, film, or whatever, because your mind is so distracted by forcing the thought!

*“The service at DMI has always been top quality” Chris Gowing, Seven Stones*

Rather, you need to routinely ask yourself one of a few questions:

- Where is this *going*?
- How's this going to end?
- What *might* happen next?
- What would I do if I didn't do *that*?

Then, of course, jot down your answers in your ever-present notebook!

### Ever wondered *how* curiosity killed the cat?

If so, perhaps you won't need much encouragement to find out more about this sort of thinking when we suggest that the *Where's This Going?* technique has its roots in good-old-fashioned curiosity... As it happens we've already touched on the importance of this in another Info Sheet: take a look at our Leonardo da Vinci sheet here: [www.dmiproductions.co.uk/info](http://www.dmiproductions.co.uk/info)

### More, More, More!

Like many creative techniques, this habit tends to feed itself. But you can also use it with other people when you have just the germ of a new idea! Start explaining your thought to someone else – it can be someone creative... It can be someone you know well... It can be a total stranger if you're persuasive! Given their boundless imaginations, it can even be a child.

At some point, before you complete the picture of your idea, stop explaining it. Then say: "I appreciate you might not know where this is going, but if you had to guess, what do you think would happen next?"

### The Guessing Game:

You might wonder why we word the question in this way! It's because if you just ask people where they *think* the idea is going, or what *they would do* next, it seems to put more pressure on them; it feels like there is a right or wrong answer... Asking for a guess makes it all seem like it matters less.

### Opposites:

Finally, you may not know *The Opposite Technique*, but you can read about it here: [www.dmiproductions.co.uk/info](http://www.dmiproductions.co.uk/info)

When you combine this with *Where's This Going?*, you'll often find you can generate two or more ideas from every person with whom you speak – and that's on top of your own ideas. Give it a go and see what happens!