The Turboencabulator

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Turboencabulator

The turboencabulator or turbo-encabulator (and its later incarnation, the retroencabulator or retro-encabulator) is a fictional machine whose alleged existence became an in-joke and subject of professional humor among engineers. The explanation of the supposed product makes extensive use of technobabble.

History

The original technical description of the "turbo-encabulator" was written by British graduate student John Hellins Quick (1923-1991). It was published in 1944 by the British Institution of Electrical Engineers Students' Quarterly Journal in an article titled "The Turbo-Encabulator in Industry" by J.H. Quick, Student [1] as also noted by consulting firm Arthur D. Little in a 1995 reprint of Quick's description, and giving Quick's full name. [2]

The earliest written U.S. source may have been in 1946, in an Arthur D. Little Industrial Bulletin. An early popular American reference to the turbo-encabulator appeared in an article by New York lawyer Bernard Salwen in Time on April 15, 1946. Part of Salwen's job was to review technical manuscripts. He was amused by the jargon and passed on the description from the Arthur D. Little pamphlet. [3]

Time got with the gag, featuring the device in a May 6, 1946 issue, described as "An adjunct to the turbo-encabulator, employed whenever a barescent skor motion is required." [4] A month later a response to reader mail on the feature appeared in the June 3, 1946 issue:

If the sackful of mail we have received from you is any indication, the story of "The Turbo-Encabulator in Industry" struck many a responsive chord. Aside from those of you who wanted to be reassured that TIME hadn't been taken in, we received the customary complaints about using too much technical jargon for the layman, observations such as "My husband says it sounds like a new motor; I say it sounds like a dictionary that has been struck by lightning"; suggestions that it "might have come out of the mouth of Danny Kaye," and plaintive queries like: "Is this good?" Wrote one bemused U.S. Navyman: "It'sh poshible." To some the turbo-encabulator sounded as though it would be a "wonderful machine for changing baby's diapers." A reader from Hoboken assumed that it would be on sale soon in Manhattan department stores. Many of you wrote in to thank us for illuminating what you have long wanted to tell your scientist friends." [5] In1962 a turboencabulator data sheet was created by engineers at General Electric's Instrument Department, in West Lynn, Massachusetts. It quoted from the previous sources and was inserted into the General Electric Handbook. [6] The turboencabulator data sheet had the same format as the other pages in the G.E. Handbook. The

1. http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/freeabs_all.jsp?arnumber=5328648
2. http://www.adl.com/uploads/tx_extprism/1995_q1_29.pdf
3. A. B. Salwen, Bernard (15 April 1946). "For Nofer Trunnions". Time.
4. "Letters, May 6, 1946". Time. May 6, 1946. Retrieved March 8, 2011.
5. "Letters, Jun. 3, 1946". Time. June 3, 1946. Retrieved March 8, 2011.
6. Turboencabulator

engineers added "Shure Stat" in "Technical Features", which was peculiar only to the Instrument Department, and included the first known graphic representation of a "manufactured" Turboencabulator using parts made at the Instrument Department.

In c. 1977 Bud Haggart, an actor who appeared in many industrial training films in and around Detroit, performed in the first film realization of the description and operation of the "Turboencabulator", using a truncated script adapted from Quick's article. Bud convinced director Dave Rondot and the film crew to stay after the filming of an actual GMC Trucks project training film to realize the Turboencabulator spot. [1]

In c. 1988 the former Chrysler Corporation "manufactured" the Turboencabulator in a video spoof. [2] Rockwell Automation "manufactured" the renamed Retro-Encabulator in another video spoof in c. 1997. [3] On April Fools' Day 2013, Hank Green released a SciShow episode on YouTube entitled "The Retro-Proto-Turbo-Encabulator." [4]

The technical descriptions of all these turboencabulators have remained remarkably similar over the years.

1. "Turbo Encabulator" the Original. Retrieved 2013-12-24.
2. Chrysler Turbo Encabulator. Chrysler Corporation. Retrieved 2013-12-24.
3. Rockwell Retro Encabulator. Rockwell Automation. Retrieved 2013-12-24.
4. April Fools Episode - The Retro-Proto-Turbo-Encabulator. Hank Green. 2013-04-01. Retrieved 2013-12-24.

Typical technical descriptions

Bud Haggart video script

For a number of years now, work has been proceeding in order to bring perfection to the crudely conceived idea of a transmission that would not only supply inverse reactive current for use in unilateral phase detractors, but would also be capable of automatically synchronizing cardinal grammeters. Such an instrument is the turbo-encabulator. Now basically the only new principle involved is that instead of power being generated by the relative motion of conductors and fluxes, it's produced by the modial interaction of magneto-reluctance and capacitive diractance.

The original machine had a base plate of pre-famulated amulite surmounted by a malleable logarithmic casing in such a way that the two spurving bearings were in a direct line with the panametric fam. The latter consisted simply of six hydrocoptic marzlevanes, so fitted to the ambifacient lunar waneshaft that side fumbling was effectively prevented.

The main winding was of the normal lotus-o-delta type placed in panendermic semi-boloid slots of the stator, every seventh conductor being connected by a non-reversible termie pipe to the differential girdle spring on the "up" end of the grammies.

The turbo-encabulator has now reached a high level of development, and it's being successfully used in the operation of novertrunnions. Moreover, whenever a forescent skor motion is required, it may also be employed in conjunction with a drawn reciprocation dingle arm, to reduce soinasoidal repleneration.

It's not cheap, but I'm sure the government will buy it. [unfurls $750,000,000 price tag]

Time article

The following quote is from the Time article. General Electric, Chrysler and Rockwell Automation use many of the same words. [1]

Work has been proceeding in order to bring perfection to the crudely conceived idea of a machine that would not only supply inverse reactive current for use in unilateral phase detractors, but would also be capable of automatically synchronizing cardinal grammeters. Such a machine is the "Turbo-Encabulator." The original machine had a base-plate of prefabulated amulite, surmounted by a malleable logarithmic casing in such a way that the two spurving bearings were in a direct line with the pentametric fan. The main winding was of the normal lotus-o-delta type placed in panendermic semi-boloid slots in the stator, every seventh conductor being connected by a nonreversible trem'e pipe to the differential girdlespring on the 'up' end of the grammeters.

Forty-one manestically spaced grouting brushes were arranged to feed into the rotor slipstream a mixture of high S-value phenylhydrobenzamine and 5% reminative tetryliodohexamine. Both of these

1. a b Salwen, Bernard (15 April 1946). "For Nofer Trunnions". Time.

liquids have specific pericosities given by P = 2.5C * n^{6.7} where n is the diathetical evolute of retrograde temperature phase disposition and C is Cholmondeley's annular grillage coefficient. Initially, n was measured with the aid of a metapolar refractive pilfrometer, but up to the present date nothing has been found to equal the transcendental hopper dadoscope. Undoubtedly, the turbo-encabulator has now reached a very high level of technical development. It has been successfully used for operating nofer trunnions. In addition, whenever a barescent skor motion is required, it may be employed in conjunction with a drawn reciprocating dingle arm to reduce sinusoidal depleneration.

Retroencabulator script

Here at Rockwell Automation's world headquarters, research has been proceeding to develop a line of automation products that establishes new standards for quality, technological leadership, and operating excellence. With customer success as our primary focus, work has been proceeding on the crudely conceived idea of an instrument that would not only provide inverse reactive current for use in unilateral phase detractors, but would also be capable of automatically synchronizing cardinal grammeters. Such an instrument comprised of Dodge gears and bearings, Reliance Electric motors, Allen-Bradley controls, and all monitored by Rockwell Software is Rockwell Automation's retro-encabulator.

Now basically the only new principle involved is that instead of power being generated by the relative motion of conductors and fluxes, it's produced by the modial interaction of magneto-reluctance and capacitive diractance. The original machine had a base plate of pre-famulated amulite surmounted by a malleable logarithmic casing in such a way that the two spurving bearings ran in a direct line with the panametric fan.

The line-up consisted simply of six hydrocoptic marzel vanes so fitted to the ambifacient lunar wane shaft that side-fumbling was effectively prevented. The main winding was of the normal lotus-o-deltoid type placed in panendermic semiboloid slots of the stator, every seventh conductor being connected by a non-reversible tremie pipe to the differential girdle spring on the up-end of the grammeters.

Moreover, whenever fluorescent score motion is required, it may also be employed in conjunction with a drawn reciprocation dingle arm, to reduce sinusoidal depleneration.

The retro-encabulator has now reached a high level of development, and it's being successfully used in the operation of milfer trunnions. It's available soon, wherever Rockwell Automation products are sold.

Dodge video - 1997 on YouTube