“How to Design and Effective Presentation”

Transcript

[*One speaker:*]

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Hi my name is Paulina Maldinado and I am a Communications Design Specialist at the Center for New Design in Learning and Scholarship at Georgetown University. Today I’m going to be talking about how to design an effective presentation. Some key tools and basic rules will help your audience remember your message. Visuals, as an essential part of your presentation, will add interest, excitement, and, most importantly, will keep your audience engaged throughout. Basic design rules will teach you what works best for digital format and how to maintain a neat layout. New media will help you deliver and share your ideas and thoughts to your audience in an effective manner.

So let us pose the question: what is the difference between print and digital design? In designing for digital, we must keep in mind that your presentation is going to differ, depending on many factors, such as screen projectors, lighting, and your room settings. Potentially, there are some factors that will be difficult for you to plan, including lighting, the projector and room settings, etc. But you can be prepared regardless by following some basic design rules.

The first design rule is “less is more.” By reducing everything into the essential on your slides, you are giving your audience a much more engaging and easy-to-follow layout. Be generous with white space to give a touch of elegance to your overall presentation and be clear with graphics and messages so the reader doesn’t have to look all over the slide to find the useful information.

The second rule to keep in mind is the eight second rule. Remember that you have eight seconds to hold the audience’s attention per slide. Thus, you will need to limit the amount of information in each of your slides. Visually, your slides should engage the audience and relay a message with requiring a great deal of reading. Remember, eight seconds only.

Another rule for content is the six-six rule, which means that you have six lines per slide and six words per line. Keep your main points brief and relevant. Ask yourself: would you read that content?

Typeface is the second most important thing in your presentation after graphics. You must be able to read and recognize the typeface clearly. There are good and bad typefaces for digital design. In this example, sans serifs versus serifs. You can see that the left column of sans serifs makes a much cleaner and easy to read paragraph. Keep three typefaces per presentation: one for your headers, another one for your content, and the last one for display. Be consistent and keep your content typo free. Helvetica, as an easy and free typeface for digital, is your best option if you are not sure what design works best for digital. Helvetica has readability, is widely used on logos, posters, street signs, and more. Helvetica was created in 1957 by the Swedish designer Max Miedinger. It is one clear and neat option to make your typography look modern and readable on the screen.

Now let’s talk about size. Do a test. Walk away from your computer to the other side of the room and look to your screen. Can you read your text? 36pt is readable, no matter if you are in the very front of the room, or all the way in the back. So be conscious of your small type. Reverse text will help you highlight your main points. In the example to follow, you will learn why reverse text is important. In this example, what jumps out to you first? You aren’t clear, correct? It can be the text, or the frog. This is when reverse text can help. The black background helps to make your point more clearly by guiding your eyes: first to the title, and then to the image.

Colors and backgrounds. In digital design, you have to be extra careful with what colors you use, since they will change in vibrance and tone when projected. Try to maintain solid colors and stay away from background images since they are distracting.

Photos. Your message can be even more powerful with a strong photograph. Images speak louder than words, so why keep using clipart? Make sure your photographs are at least 150DPI. And for color correction and chopping, take advantage of online editors. They are free, they will help you to color-correct your images, and you don’t need to download anything. Everything is online for you. *[Words on Screen: Picnik, Splashup, Pixlr, Pixenate, Snipshot, LunaPic, FotoFlexer, and 10000 more…]*

Visualizing data. Usually tables and complex data graphics work well on print, but for digital we need to simplify our data and make our graphics concise and clear. The first thing an effective graphic must have is clear type. Notice the big title and labels. The next is simple graphics. Note the simple bars to compare China and United States. Also, color. The red and white are the prominent colors while the green sits in the background. To finalize, note the background. Choose a solid color that doesn’t interfere with the design.

Limit your information. As seen on this graphic, data with numbers are placed in the main circles. Be creative. This example shows columns made out of bubbles. The whole design is colorful, simple, and gets the message across effectively. Data should support and strengthen your message. Keep the data clear and concise.

In the second part of the presentation, I’m going to talk about the integration of new tools and media for PowerPoint and Keynote.

Integration of media. What media will I be discussing? I’m to talk about new media for PowerPoint and Keynote, a new social media that can also help you. We know that both PowerPoint and Keynote can handle high resolution video, as long as they are played from your local computer. Also, podcasts and other audio files can be played directly from your presentation. *[Voiceover example: A local cow has an exceptional milk day. It’s the Onion Radio News, this is Doyle Redlund reporting.]* However, there are certain tools in PowerPoint that can add more interest and make your overall presentation most effective. In PowerPoint, you should always add a narration on top of your slides, if you intend to distribute you presentation online, especially. The example that follows will show you how this is done and how it looks. *[Voiceover example: The requirements for doing this are simple: you need a Windows computer with Microsoft PowerPoint, a recent edition, Windows Movie Maker that comes pre-installed on most Windows computers…]* This video was taken from YouTube and it shows you how voice narration works. For Mac users, Keynote makes this process very simple. You should write down what you want to say per slide and record your voice straight from Keynote. Convert the file to a movie and you’re done.

Acrobat. Converting your presentation into a PDF will be the smartest way to share your information. PDFs will embed your videos, audio files, graphics, photographs, and typefaces into a single compressed file. Please check out our Acrobat 9 portfolio video for more information and tutorials on how to us this tool.

Another way to share your presentation is by converting your presentation into Flash. By converting your PowerPoint or Keynote into an SWF file, you add accessibility, compatibility, interaction, and you reduce the file size. There are several websites that offer plugins for PowerPoint and Keynote that will help you with this easy step. Check out our TLISI blog for links to the websites in this presentation and please don’t be scared of all the new software and tools. All of them are very user friendly and most of them have tutorials that will teach you step by step how to use them to achieve the results you are looking for.

Using Social Media. YouTube and Slideshare can help you share your files. Slideshare has the capability to switch your Keynote files into PowerPoint and can display movie files as well.

Points to remember. The first point to keep in mind is that PowerPoint and Keynote are just tools that you have the ability to enable. They should support and make your presentation stronger. The second point to keep in mind is to remember that everything is a visual message. Using strong graphics in your slides will make your message more effective. Also, take the extra time to make your presentation aesthetically pleasing. Of course, it is always useful to mention your resources and say “Thank you.”