Conclusion

This chapter addresses both the role and value of using visual aids, including slideware, objects, audio and video clips, and demonstrations. They should be used only when they help to clarify or enhance your spoken words or will help your audience remember your message.

Be sure that any visual aid you use adds to what you are saying. Slides should be brief, easy to understand, and complement your message. Objects and slides should not be revealed before you begin talking about them, lest your audience become distracted from your point. Remember that people cannot read your slides or handouts at the same time as they are listening to you.

When designing slides make sure they are clear and visible to the entire audience. Contrasting colors with consideration for common color blindness should be used. Screen-friendly fonts of sufficient size to be read from the back of the room are extremely important. Avoid clutter on your slides and leverage the power of white space, aiming always for simplicity and impact.

Practice your presentation with your visual aids, remembering to allow time for your audience to read any new text you present. Be prepared to continue in a professional manner should your visuals falter or fail. The ease with which you implement your visuals and move past any problems demonstrates your professionalism and bolsters your credibility.

Effective selection, design, and implementation of visual aids will increase your audience’s attention and help to vanquish “death by PowerPoint.” It will make you and your message clearer and more memorable, which will help you to achieve your primary goal: an audience that understands and connects with your message.
Review Questions

1. Other than slides, list three types of visual aids that can be used in a presentation and give an example of each.
2. What are the ways that visual aids can benefit a presentation? Harm a presentation?
3. Describe the benefits of white space in design.
4. Explain the different purposes and content of handouts as compared to slide shows.
5. List and explain two considerations when using color in your slides.
6. Discuss the pros and cons of having a large amount of text on a slide.

Glossary

Color Palette
The selection of colors that are used throughout a single project.

Complementary Colors
Colors on opposite sides of the color wheel, such as red and green.

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A designation by the copyright holder of an image or other work that it can be reused. The license identifies what specifically is allowed under what conditions and what credit must be given.

Exploded View
A picture or diagram where an object appears disassembled so the viewer can see the component parts in proper relationship to each other. They are used to show how things fit together and how parts interact to make a whole.

Greyscale
An image that has all the color information removed and replaced with appropriate shades of grey. These images are sometimes referred to as black-and-white.

Line Art
Simplified drawings made only of solid lines without color or shading. They are useful for showing the basic shape and construction of complicated objects.

Pixelation
The blurry appearance of images which are enlarged on a computer beyond their resolution. This often occurs when a small image is stretched to cover an entire slide.

Prezi
A newer type presentation software that allows for non-linear presentations and is more graphically oriented rather than text oriented.

Rule of Thirds
A layout design grid that divides a page into nine equal squares. Placing or aligning content along the grid lines creates a more powerful image.

Sans Serif Font
A type face whose characters do not have the small lines or flourishes at the end points of letters. Sans serif fonts include Arial, Helvetica, and Tahoma.
Serif Font
A typeface whose characters have small lines or flourishes at the end points of letters. Serif fonts include Times New Roman, Georgia, and Palatino.

Silhouette
A simplified image of a person or object created from the outline of the image and filled in with a solid color, usually black.

Slide Deck
A term that refers to all the slides in a slideware presentation. It is a more generic term for PowerPoint slides.

Slideware
The software used to display digital slide shows. Examples of slideware include Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple iWork, Keynote, Google Drive Presentation, OpenOffice Impress.

Watermark
A noticeable image or graphic in an image that is placed there primarily to prevent reuse of that image by identifying the owner of the copyright. Often found on online images, it is designed to let you preview the image before you purchase it, at which time, the watermark is removed.

White Space
Empty space in your design that helps direct the viewers' attention to the parts of the slide that really matter. Use of white space can help reduce clutter on your slide.

Z Pattern
The natural tendency of people from English-speaking countries, among others, to view images in the same way that they read text, that is, left to right, top to bottom. This results in the eye tracking along a Z-shaped path through the image.

Visual Aids: References

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Contributors and Attributions

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