

Avoiding “PowerPoint to Death”

Your brain on PowerPoint

- 1) Just how long is a person’s attention span? This article provides some insight: <http://www.ntlf.com/html/pi/9601/article1.htm>
- 2) Your brain and PowerPoint: why reading bullet points fails: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2007/04/03/1175366240499.html>
- 3) Cliff Atkinson, author of “Beyond Bullet Points” has several articles at: http://www.sociablemedia.com/resources_articles.php4 (see, esp. “The Science of PowerPoint Overload”)

Design Issues

Edward Tufte, Professor Emeritus at Yale University, has written extensively on design, scientific visualization and interface issues. His essay “The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within” is the classic, and controversial, document on the subject of ppt’s. His web site includes selections from the essay: http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/books_pp

PowerPoint Models

Traditional ppt

- 1) Alexei Kapterev’s delightful ppt on design: <http://www.slideshare.net/thecroaker/death-by-powerpoint>
- 2) John Burke’s advice on the entire presentation in addition to the ppt itself: <http://jbep.blogspot.com/2007/07/how-to-avoid-death-by-powerpoint.html>
- 3) Don McMillan’s “stand-up comedy” video: <http://technicallyfunny.com/>

Pecha-Kucha

Good for introducing material, for providing broad context or summary, for presenting your information in narrative form, or for highly visual material.

- 1) Daniel Pink’s pecha kucha article and example: http://www.wired.com/techbiz/media/magazine/15-09/st_pechakucha
- 2) And PresentationZen’s take on pecha kucha: <http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/2007/09/pecha-kucha-and.html>

Evidence-Assertion Model

Use a topic sentence (assertion) and meaningful diagrams or images (evidence) instead of bullet points: <http://www.writing.eng.vt.edu/slides.html>
This pdf sums it up nicely: http://writing.engr.psu.edu/speaking/rethinking_psu.pdf

Point, Counterpoint

Instead of competing with your ppt, try a point/counterpoint dialog. Steven Colbert, of the Comedy Channel’s “Colbert Report” fame, provides a humorous example in his “The Word” segments
You can use this method effectively to liven up your presentations and encourage critical analysis and engagement.

Open Slide

Use blank slides, or slides with a question or brief statement, then ask the group for comments or answers. Type these on the slide, then save and distribute to class. In other words, the class builds the content together.

Additional Resources

Find or share

Slideshare, a community for sharing presentations. You can find Powerpoints here on many subjects: <http://www.slideshare.net/>

Images

Google images or, better because it has “Creative Commons” licensing so you are covered as regards copyright: <http://flickr.com>