

## Effective Design of Visual Presentations

03/09/09, v1.e

### **INTRODUCTION** [2 min] (George Rogers)

Intro instructors George Rogers (graphic designer) & Gail Sobel (PowerPoint instructor & consultant)

Goal: Explain and discuss common visual presentation design problems and offer some tips

Note 1: What we present today broadly applies mainly to PPT slides (or transparencies) and handouts

Note 2: Time today does not permit demos of PowerPoint step-by-step actions as in courses or books

Questions welcome at any time

### **TEXT & LAYOUT DESIGN** [25 min] (George Rogers)

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Windows** and **Mac** computer platform compatibility; become informed and stay alert
- **Readability**: Most visual presentations include text one means to be read.  
**TIP**: Don't use so much it distracts the audience from what your say.

#### HISTORY WORTH MENTIONING (1000 BC -> 2000 AD: 3000 years) [4 min]

- Our alphabet evolved through Phoenicians (phonetic, one sound = one symbol, easy to learn)  
Greeks (added vowels)  
Romans (further refined it and exported it via Latin to Empire)
- Common to all three was ALL capital letters; no lower case
- Lower case letters first began to be used in about the 9<sup>th</sup> century under Charlemagne's rule
- Movable type (invented over period about 150 years) expanded literacy beyond the elite
  - China (~1050 - 1300 AD): clay and later carved wood
  - Korea (~1375): first metal type
  - Germany (Gutenberg ~1450): first alloyed metal type; he replicated contemporary script of his day.
- SKIP AHEAD ~ 500 Years
- Graphics-based personal computer (1975)
  - Enabled desktop publishing and spawned explosion of font designs

#### TEXT DESIGN:

Font is (usually) comprised of the alphabet, numbers and special characters PLUS attributes:

A – Category (Serif or Sans Serif)

B – Function (Display: meant for larger sizes & Text: meant for smaller sizes)

C – Size (measured in points: 1/72-inch)

Visual hierarchy: Relative importance of slide/page's info (functionally = outline format)

D – Style (plain, bold, italic, bold italic, capitals, colors, underlining, shadows, effects ... animation)

**TIP**: Limit selections to 2 – 3. Consider readability, message mood & computer platform.

Bullets: Use words and short phrases, not sentences. Apply the "6 x 6 Rule."

Line Spacing: Use sufficient line spacing between text bullets – a readability issue

Text Boxes: Make wide enough to avoid unintended text-wrap due to cross-platform font issues

## LAYOUT DESIGN:

Slide Motif: Your slide show's visual motif (background): templates of colors, patterns, arrangements

Black slides: An easy trick allowing slide show pauses without distracting screen content.

White Space (the Designer's canvas):

Content: Text and Objects (mainly images)

Arrangement: Seek a balance between slide-to-slide uniformity and (audience-losing) "boring"

Visual clutter: Don't overload the white space like an office bulletin board.

White space = visual "breathing room." Audience "sees" your message but still "hears" you.

## **IMAGES, LINKS & SPECIAL EFFECTS [25 min]** (Gail Sobel)

(See Gail's separate PPT slide show)

## **GUEST DESIGNER SHOWCASE [10 min]** (facilitated by George Rogers)

- 1 - (*Courtesy of*) Dave Eyman: Selected PPT slides of his animated military battle maps. (Wkshop Sess'n 2A)
- 2 - Doug Cooper: Selected PPT slides from upcoming CFS course: Creole Culture. (Workshop Session 3A)
- 3 - Comments, idea sharing, "What works for me" and discussion from participants as time permits. (2A & 3A)

## **RELATED THOUGHTS [3 min]** (Gail Sobel)

### **DON'T OVERLOOK DELIVERY ISSUES:**

- a – Your slides are NOT your presentation. What YOU SAY is!
- b – Be familiar with your presentation
- c – DON'T read your slides to the audience (#1 Dave Paradi Survey complaint: 67%)
- d – If you are USING PowerPoint, know HOW to use it and the presentation equipment.

## **WRAP-UP [5 min]** (Gail Sobel)

### **GOOD PRESENTATION DESIGN IS ABOUT REACHING & HOLDING YOUR AUDIENCE**

- 1 – Your main design tools: TEXT and LAYOUT
- 2 – Consider adding interest and emphasis to your presentation with IMAGES, LINKS & SPECIAL EFFECTS.  
**TIP**: Choose what will HELP REACH YOUR AUDIENCE. Don't use bells and whistles just to be cute!
- 3 – Unlike math, the presentation design problems usually have many solutions. One size doesn't fit all.
- 4 – We hope today we've increased your awareness of new possibilities for designing good presentations.
- 5 – On the Workshop Day Resource CD, you will find today's slide shows, augmented with additional slides, plus other material our limited time precluded being covered.
- 6 – Final questions and answers?

## **CRITIQUE [5 min]** (George Rogers)

- 1 – Now we need YOUR help by giving us your feedback to guide future versions of this workshop.
- 2 – Please complete the **Participant Instant Feedback** Evaluation form. Leave it at your seat, and someone will collect it for subsequent CFS use. Your suggestions are ALL welcome!
- 3 – After Session 2A take a break, and be at your next workshop by 10:45. After Session 3A join us for lunch.