Good Presentations and Slideshows

We're going to look at some basic guidelines for creating good slideshows to complement a presentation. We wanted to give a little advice and guidance for creating presentations since a lot of you will be doing them for classes or even for your Div III.

Slides: Show, Don't Tell

- The very best way to use a slideshow is to have it complement, illustrate and support your talk.
- It's an enhancement, but it shouldn't replicate everything you're saying.
- Avoid having bullets, and don't read your slides!
- A good solution is to have an image on each slide and do the talking yourself.
- You may have images that relate to your project, or you can look online for copyright free material from places like Wikimedia and Google.

Your Slideshow Should Need You

You'll know that you have a good slideshow if it will make no sense to someone without you there to present it. If someone can see your slides and understand everything about your project, there's too much text and information on the slides.

Design for Visibility & Simplicity

- The text you DO have should be big. Design for the person sitting in the very back row or for someone who maybe can't see that well.
- Don't put text over an image, it makes it really hard to read. Let the text stand alone.
- Think about visibility in general and take that into account when choosing a color scheme. It's boring but the best option is often dark text on a light background.
- With transitions, less is more. Keep it simple. A dissolve or fade is nice and is actually less jarring than no transition at all.

Keep it Simple

Overall, you want to keep your presentation as simple as possible so that people can focus on your content. People have a limited amount of cognition and attention span, so you don't want to waste it on distracting graphics or redundant text.

Powerpoint

Good things about Powerpoint:
- It's easy to use.
- You can play the file on almost any computer.
- It gets a bad rap but is just a tool like anything else- it can be used for good or evil.
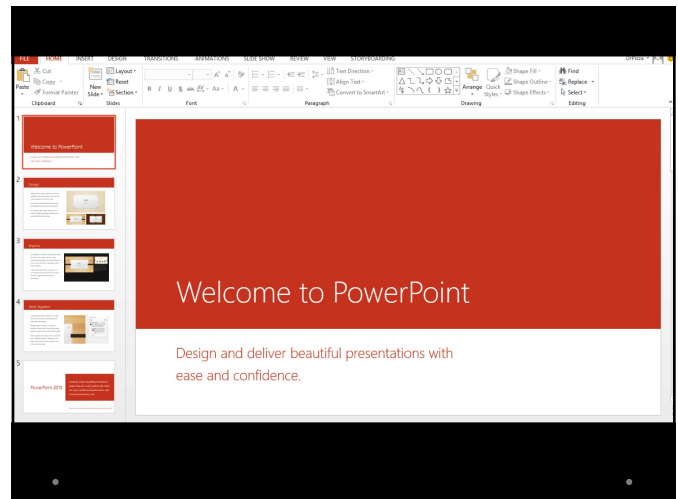
Presenter View

One great thing about powerpoint and other traditional presentation programs is that you can have something called presenter view. When you're using a projector, your slides go on the projector and your laptop screen shows something like this, where you can see notes you've made for yourself, the next slide, a timer, things like that.
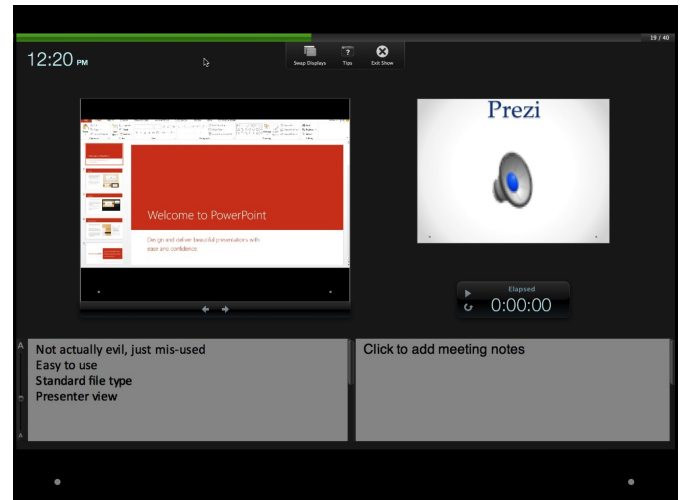
Prezi

- You build a prezi online on their website, and you a large free-form pasteboard instead of slides.
- You can add whatever you want to the large board, and then zoom around however you want.
- It's great for non-linear presentations where you maybe want to have a big picture and zoom in for more information.
- You can download your prezi so you won't have to rely on an internet connection on the day of your presentation which is nice.
- Downsides are that you can't get a presenter view screen, and if you're not careful it can make people a little seasick.
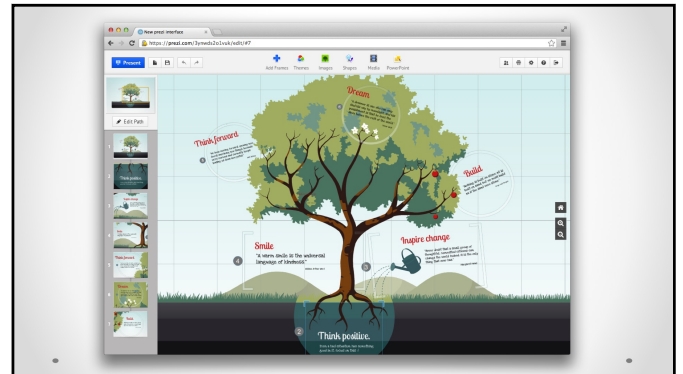
Keynote

- It's very similar to powerpoint, it maybe is just a little slicker in terms of aesthetics and design.
- You can get some very nice looking templates and transitions.
- It does do presenter notes, it also has an APP you can use for advancing your slides which is kind of cool.
- If you do use Keynote, save a copy of your presentation as a powerpoint. We're going to go into more detail on disaster preparedness, but this is one step to take in case you end up having to use a different computer that doesn't have Keynote installed.

Google Presentations

- This is part of the Google Docs/Drive suite and is good for simple slideshows.
- If you do use these I suggest saving it down to your computer so you don't have to rely on internet connectivity when you're giving your presentation.

Tips for Peace of Mind

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

- Preparation is the key to having your presentation go smoothly and also to not feeling as nervous. The less you have to worry about, the less nervous you will be.
- If this is an important presentation, you want to practice it, a lot. Shoot for literally 20 times. You wan to be so bored with it that you could do it in your sleep.
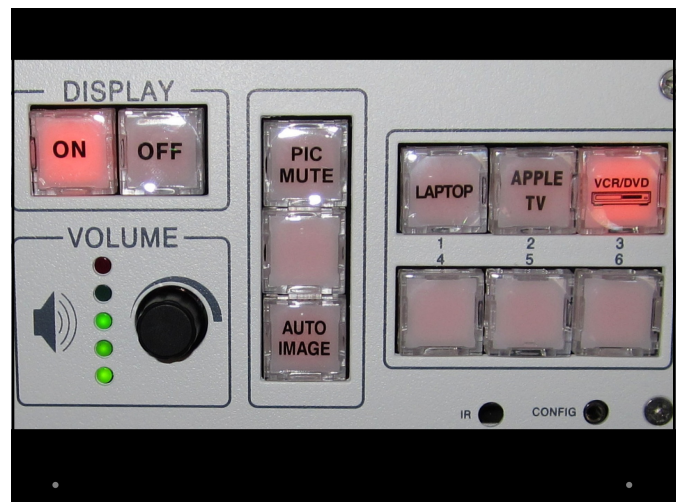
Rehearse in the Presentation Room...

Rehearse your presentation in the room where you will be giving it. This is good psychologically, but it's also important to test the projector with your computer.
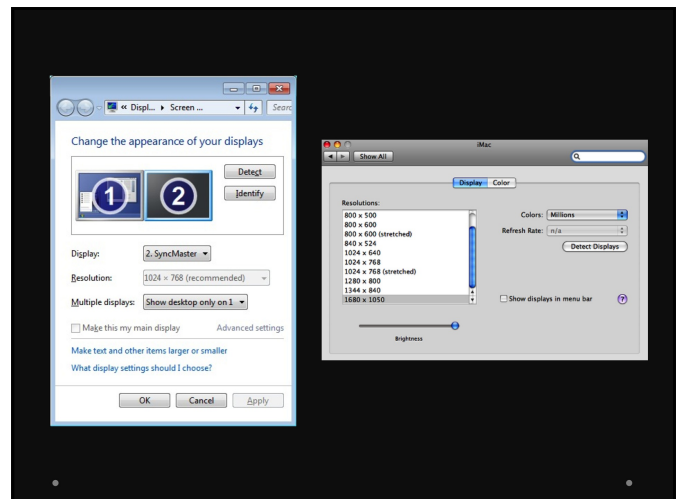

... With the Equipment

Make sure you know how to operate the equipment, and give yourself time to resolve any problems that arise.

Know your Display Settings Screen

Make sure you now how to find and use your computer's display settings as you may need to make some adjustments to have the presentation look good on the projector, or to connect to the projector at all.

Get a Dongle

If you're a Mac user, you need one of these to connect to the projector. it's called a dongle or video adapter. Each model of Mac uses a different one, so find out which one you need and buy one, or borrow one from Media services. Make sure you test it because they can sometimes break.

Don't Rely on Internet Access

- Don't rely on having any internet during your presentation.
- If you're using an online resource like a youtube video, download it.
- Likewise if you're using an online presentation tool like prezi or google, download it.
- You don't want your whole presentation ruined because the network blipped.

Use Screenshots & Screen Recordings

- If you need to show a website, take screenshots and put them in your presentation.
- This is more elegant because you won't have to exit powerpoint, find the website, etc. It also ensures the site will be available.
- If it's something interactive you need to show, make a screencast and insert it as a video into your presentation.

- If you record it ahead of time you'll know for sure that people will see what you want them to see.

Jing- Free Tool for Screenshots

For taking screenshots and making short screen recordings I like Jing- it's a free tool.

Prepare for Disaster

You also want to imagine and prepare for this happening to your computer 2 minutes before you are due to present. You are going to make this be OK.

Redundant Backups = "Bring it On"

- The way to do this is to have redundant backups of your presentations, and ideally an extra computer with the presentation loaded onto it that you can use in a pinch.
- Have the presentation file on a thumb drive, maybe online somewhere, give yourself multiple ways to get back up and running should disaster befall you.
- Saving your presentation as a PDF is also a really bulletproof way to keep a backup, you know it will work on any computer.

Back Up! Now and Always!

I hope most of you are doing this already, but you want to make sure to back up the stuff on your computer regularly while you are working. Hard drives can die at any time, so definitely get in the habit of saving things to dropbox or google docs so you can have a backup.
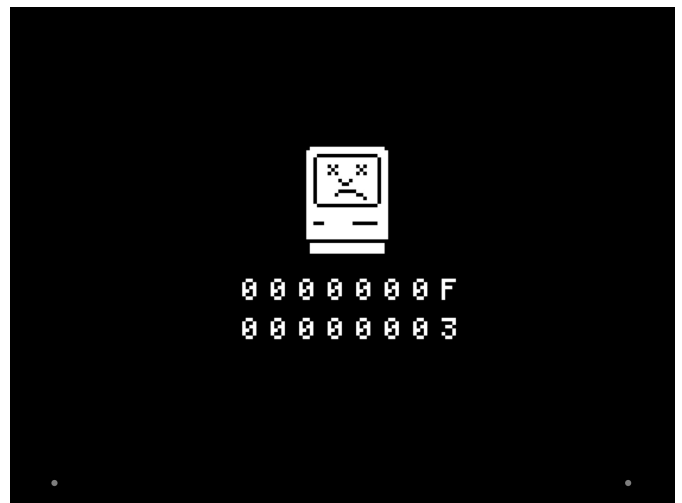
Train the Brain to Relax

You can also do some preparation work that involves training your brain to relax. There are great free podcasts available that help you set triggers for yourself to calm down, I'd also recommend taking advantage of any programs the college has going on around relaxation. It IS a stressful time but there are steps you can take that will help.

Prepare, Relax and You Will Nail It!

And finally, the upshot of all the preparation is that you are going to be able to relax, and on the day of your presentation you'll be able to sail into that room and nail it.

Good Luck!

So with that I wish you all good luck! Always feel free to contact me if you need any help- akinney@hampshire.edu.