

## Powerpoint Design: The Good, The Pretty, and the Really, Really Ugly

### Planning

#### Target Audience

What do you want to accomplish.

- Outline or Storyboard idea before you even start!
- Organize, Organize, Organize!
- Plan your presentation to take advantage of the attributes of the system.
  - Tons of Space
  - Color- Use it! *However, assume that at least one person viewing your presentation will be color blind. Don't use only color to demonstrate or label ideas.*
  - Graphics- Try to choose meaningful graphics and pictures, not just random clip art.
  - Sound- This is a great but make sure it's applicable and useful
  - Motion clips- Can be video or animations but don't use them just because you can!
  - Linking- Make a choice, don't just do this just because you can.

### Principles

#### Alignment

- This means left, center, or right justified.
- Choose one alignment and stick with it!
- Keep text and graphics away from the edges of the screen.
- Keep an eye out for *vertical* alignment (top, middle, or bottom) not just horizontal alignment.

#### Proximity

1. This means how close are the objects.
2. Objects and/ or text that are located close together will appear to belong together or have some relationship.
3. Use proximity to your advantage.
4. Always think about how close items are on a page and if they have a relationship.

#### Repetition

1. Repeat certain elements throughout your presentation.
2. Colors, style, illustrations, format, layout, typography, etc.
3. Repeating a color throughout a presentation is always a good way to tie a page together.

#### Contrast

This is very important! Make sure you can actually **read** the text!

The #1 mistake people make in Powerpoint presentations is making the text unreadable!

- Choose lots of contrast between the background and the foreground.

- Choose backgrounds that are simple and don't have too many elements. You want to focus on the content!
- Rule of thumb is to make a dark background behind light text or dark text on top of a light background.  
*The best for readability is always dark on light!*
- If possible test your presentation with a projector before you give it. Projectors tend to wash out colors so make sure you can still read all your text.
- Also, assume that at least one person viewing your presentation will be color blind. Lots of contrast will ensure that they will still be able to read the slides.

Contrasting elements, colors, graphics, different sizes, etc., can be used to guide your eye around the page. Look at the screen and see what catches your eye in what order.

Watch for and create your own focal points.

## Electronic Presentation Specific Design

### Backgrounds

1. Simple
2. Not too many colors
3. NEVER, EVER use a Powerpoint template that has an animation of any kind!
4. Light Backgrounds and dark text are better for readability.
5. Powerpoint has some really terrible color combinations, don't assume that they wouldn't put them in if they were not good- they did!
6. Check that the text is readable on all parts of your page.

### Text

7. Don't use a "cool font" that is really difficult to read.
8. Pick a font and size and stick with it, don't change it every screen. If your font size works for every screen except for one you need to think about whether there's too much text on that screen!

### 666 Rule or "The Devil Made Me Do It!"

9. No more than 6 words per bullet. Otherwise it's not a bullet point!
10. No more than 6 bullets per slide. This makes it difficult for your audience to read and pay attention to.
11. No more than 6 word slides in a row. BORING and, if you remember our pie chart, not very effective

### General: DO NOT

12. Use the Powerpoint to put up your notes. #2 mistake made in electronic presentations is putting too much information on your screens.
13. Don't show them what you are telling them verbatim! Just give them keywords and teasers, otherwise why should they *listen*.
14. Read your slides!
15. This is not a crutch for you not preparing for a presentation.

16. You can use your slides for order and to keep you on track but if you're going to read them why present at all!
17. Put in sound effects that either have nothing to do with your presentation or actually take away from it.
18. There is nothing more off putting than screeching car sounds in a professional presentation.
19. Sound is great if it actually adds to and is important to the presentation.
20. Use animations for titles on individual pages
21. While this may be acceptable for a title slide, after 10 slides it gets really annoying and usually breaks up the flow of the presentation.
22. Use animated cartoons
23. Powerpoint has all kinds of silly cartoons.
24. If the animation really is applicable to what you are talking about that's great! Use it.  
If it's really a stretch forget it- it's just distracting from what you're there to talk about and makes your presentation look unprofessional.
25. Stretch graphics to fit a space
26. When you need to resize graphics HOLD DOWN THE SHIFT KEY while you drag the handle. This will make the graphic resize without distorting it.
27. Graphics that are "pixilated" do not look good, or professional, even if they fit the space!
28. Arrange the space and lighting so that the only thing that can be seen is the computer, screen, projector, or everything else besides you!
29. You are presenting- not the computer! This is one of the reasons to have a great deal of contrast so that the presentation can be seen even when there's enough light to see you!
30. Use blank slides! If you don't want to mess with the projector put blank slides into the presentation whenever you want the audience to pay special attention to you!