



Effective Use of Visuals in Presentations

As educators we use presentations to teach and to share our scholarly work. But sometimes presentations fall flat or fail to connect with the audience. CPD has prepared the following Quick Tips to help you develop slideware that strengthens your message and provides for a stronger visual connection with your audience.



Figure 1: Photo by Philipp Berndt on Unsplash

Build your message first, then move onto images

Building your message should be your first step. We recommend spending considerable timing honing your message in order to answer two key questions: What is the point and why does it matter? Consider why **you** were invited to present and what **you** can bring to the audience. Once you have built your message, you can move on to how you are going to convey it. You may need images and presentation slideware, but you may not.

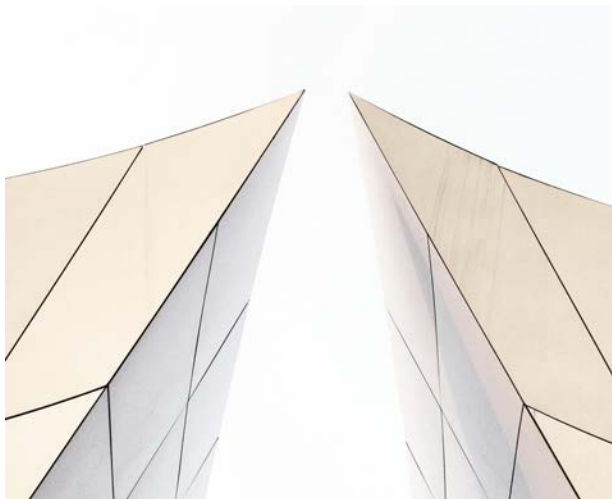


Figure 2: Photo by Ren Ran on Unsplash

Be concise

Try to resist the temptation to open up PowerPoint, Prezi or Keynote and copy and paste your main points onto premade slides. People are coming to your presentation to listen to you speak, not to read the words in front of them. Let them listen to you speak. Consider adding only one or two cueing words on your slides and build the visual display of your message through imagery instead of text.

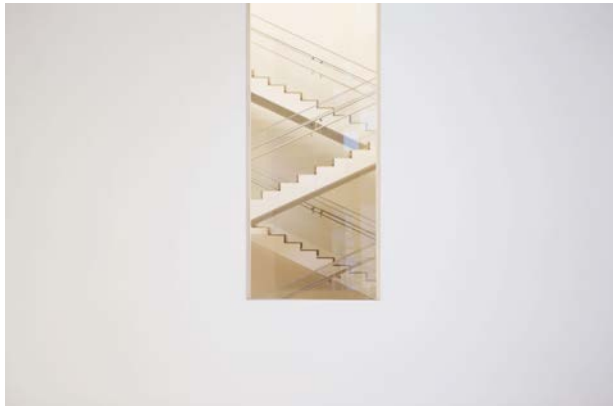


Figure 3: Photo by Todd Quackenbush on Unsplash



Figure 4: Photo by jesse orrico on Unsplash



Figure 5: Photo by Hello I'm Nik on Unsplash

Consider using a metaphor

Metaphors are used in writing and imagery to represent an idea. Representing an idea (such as growing understanding as a *rising tide*) through metaphor can complement your message, providing visual interest and reinforcing your message.

Use high quality images

High quality images are important. Why go to the effort of making a great presentation and then choose poor quality images? Steer clear of pixelated or blurry images. Use only high quality images in your presentations. For 4x3 presentations, consider 1024x768 as a good pixel size. If you're using 16x9 presentations, consider 1920x1080. If you are using Google Images or Flickr to location images, limit your search to "large" size images.

Find High Quality, Royalty Free Images:

There are a number of useful sites where you can find royalty free images. You can use options under advanced settings on Google Image Search or Flickr to find photos that you can use or modify freely. Here are some others: unsplash.com, magdeleine.co, jaymantri.com, gratisography.com, foodiesfeed.com, libreshot.com

There are some public image banks that may be of interest as well: digitalcollections.nypl.org, www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery, flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary

The University of Toronto hosts a digital media bank as well. If you sign in with your UTORID, you'll be able to access more images: mediabank.utoronto.ca/pages/home.php



Figure 6: Photo by Olu Eletu on Unsplash

Consider copyright & fair use guidelines

If you cannot find copyright-free material, familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's [Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines](#). You can use copyrighted material for lecture slides in programs but you cannot distribute them. If you use them on a course or program website, then the website must be restricted to students enrolled in the course (or authorized for use). Fair Use Guidelines recommend that you prepare one presentation for use in the lecture, and another presentation without copyrighted material for distribution.

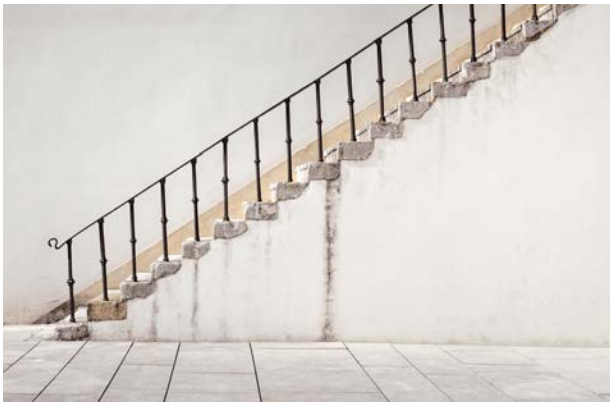


Figure 7: Photo by Samuel Zeller on Unsplash

Make sure your images are visible to your audience!

How many times have you sat in a presentation and the speaker says “sorry, I know you may not be able to see this but...”. You can prevent that from happening by making sure your images are large – use the whole slide instead of constraining them to a box. If you are using text on your images, make sure it is big enough to be read from the back of the room.



Figure 8: Photo by Maite Tiscar on Unsplash

Pare down details on other images in your presentation

If you have clinical data to present, consider what information is needed for your audience to understand it. If you're trying to present one point on a graph, ask yourself if you need to display the whole graph or could you put one number on the slide instead and speak to it? Can you simplify your categories, increase contrast, use colours or eliminate cluttering text so that when you speak about your chart or graph, your audience can immediately see what you want them to see?



Figure 9: Photo by Hannah Morgan on Unsplash

Enjoy and consider learning more:

Preparing presentations can be an enjoyable, creative experience. If you're interested in learning more, we suggest attending the annual 2-day Say Something Atelier provided by the Wilson Centre. (2017 Atelier: thewilsoncentre.ca/saysomething2017)

References

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