CC0001

Inquiry and Communication in an Interdisciplinary World

Student's Course Guide: Supplementary Activities for Unit 9

AY 2021/2022
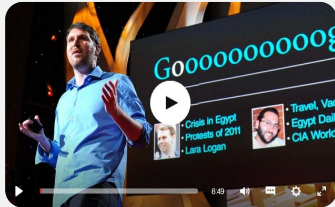
Activity S9.1
Preparing Visual Aids

Using visuals can add interest to your presentation and help you communicate your ideas. Watch the following Ted Talk video, paying attention to the slides used. What do the presenters choose to write out? What fonts and images are used? As you watch, fill out the table below.

Eli Pariser: Beware online "filter bubbles"
https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles/transcript?language=en

Elements	Observations
Text	
Fonts	
Colours	
Visuals and Images	
Layout	

In groups, share with each other which slides, visuals, colours, and fonts you found most and least effective. Brainstorm on how you might include visuals to complement your own presentation.

Text

When deciding on the text for your slides, limit the amount of words.

- Don't reproduce your presentation script. Cut words you don't need.
- Consider the 3-second rule. Ask yourself if the audience can process a slide's message within three seconds. They should be able to quickly ascertain your message before turning their attention back to the presenter.
- Remember to check spelling and grammar.

Below are two examples of slides used by Bill Gates. During his Windows live presentation, his slide contained too many bullets and words. However, in his 2010 Ted talk, he moved away from using bullet-filled slides with "mostly photographs and very few words" (Gallo, 2014).

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Source: Karia (2015)   Source: Gallo via Forbes

Fonts

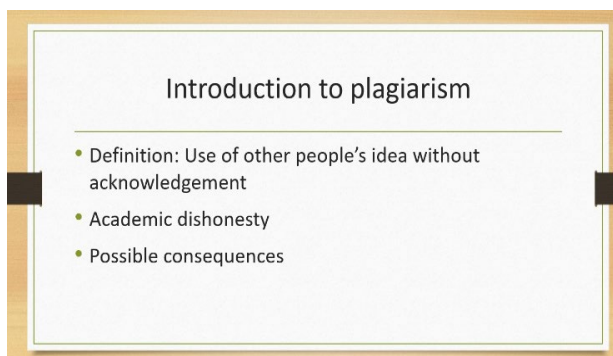When you use text on slides, it's important to use the right font.

- Keep to a maximum of two font types. For example, on the title slide, you could use one font type for the title and another font type for the subheading.
- Besides size, fonts vary in thickness (light, regular, and bold) as well as other attributes such as italics. These variations provide options to create a visual hierarchy in the text.
- The size of the font should be large enough for the person sitting farthest away from you to read clearly.

In the slide from Kemp-Robertson's (2013) TED talk, font size is used to draw attention to the most important element of the slide:
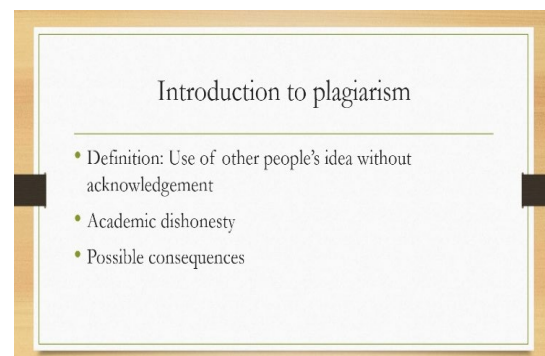

Source: Paul Kemp-Robertson's via TED

- Consider sans serif (instead of serif) fonts. This makes for easier slide viewing.

(sans serif)   (serif)

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- Choose professional fonts. For better clarity, you should avoid fonts that are too artistic (e.g. comic or cursive fonts) unless these fonts relate to your presentation topic.

Colours

The impact of visuals is greatly increased by colour.

- The less-is-more rule also applies to the use of colour. Choose a limited palette of three to five colours.
- Ensure there is a clear contrast between text and background colour. Neutral colours like black and white may be suitable for backgrounds.
- Use a highlight colour to emphasise key words.

In the example below, Eli Pariser used a solid dark background which keeps the text readable. In addition, he used white and light blue text that contrasted with the background to make the text easily readable.
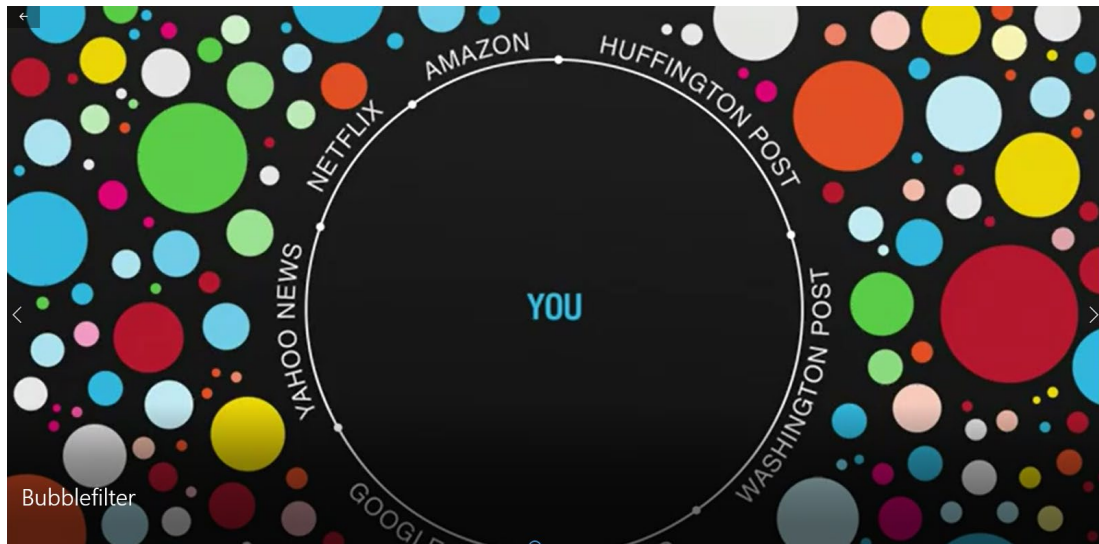

Source: Eli Pariser via TED

Visuals

Graphics and images are useful in helping your audience understand your topic better.

- If you are describing a complicated process, using an image is a good way to help your audience understand each step of the process.
- Since an image is worth a thousand words, ask yourself if an idea could be demonstrated visually. If it can, then replace the chunk of text with an image.

Eli Pariser used the following visual to demonstrate his claim of how one is living in a world of information filtered by large organizations.
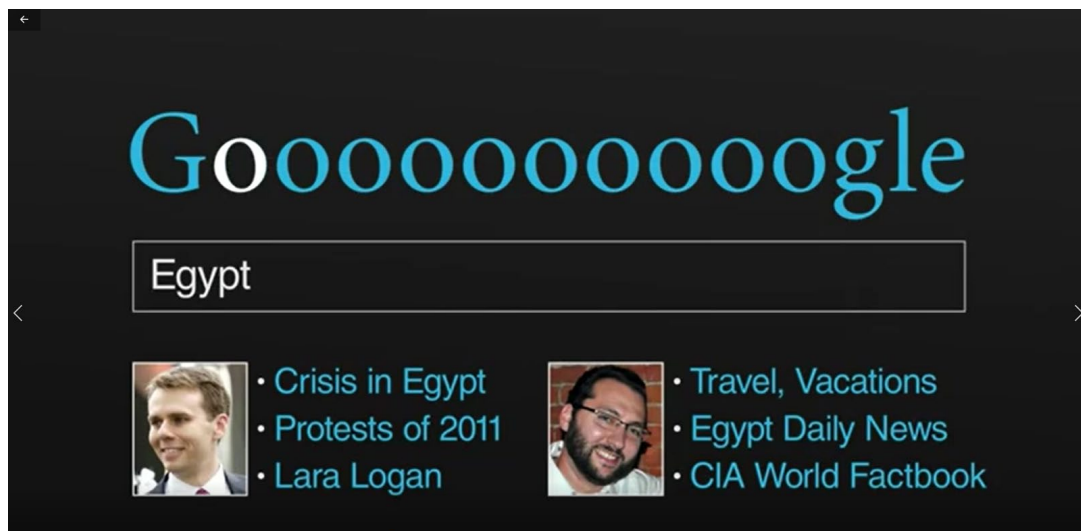
Source: Eli Pariser via TED

Layout

Each visual should convey a specific idea, claim, or topic.

- Keep to one message per slide.
- When working on layout, make sure that all elements look neat and organised.

Here's an example from the Bubble Filter TED talk in which all the images and text on the slide are aligned and connected:

Source: Eli Pariser via TED

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Activity S9.2
Sharpen your Slide

Complete the following:

(1)   Design your slide using the elements discussed above so that it sharply conveys one key message.

(2)   Draw up a list of Dos and Don'ts for slide design based on your evaluations.

Elements	Dos	Don'ts
Text		
Colours		
Visuals		
Layout		
Others		

Reference

Gallo, C. (2014, Feb 7). How Bill Gates Radically Transformed His Public Speaking and Communication Skills. Forbes.   https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallo/2014/02/07/how-bill-gates-radically-transformed-his-public-speaking-and-communication-skills/#1efd37df4330

Karia, A. (2015). *How to Design TED Worthy Presentation Slides*. California, US: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Kemp-Robertson (2013,June). Bitcoin. Sweat. Tide. Meet the future of branded currency. [Video file] Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_kemp_robertson_bitcoin_sweat_tide_meet_the_future_of_branded_currency/transcript?language=en