MAP™ for Presentation Slides

Three steps to clear + intuitive information design

Main Point

Decide your main point & supporting points
Give each a concrete & concise headline
Link points to exhibits & cut what's not critical

Arrange

Group in space, plus only 1-2 colors
Try to display information in 2D tables
Convert lists into 3 categories at most

Clear + Intuitive Final Design

Overwhelming Original Design
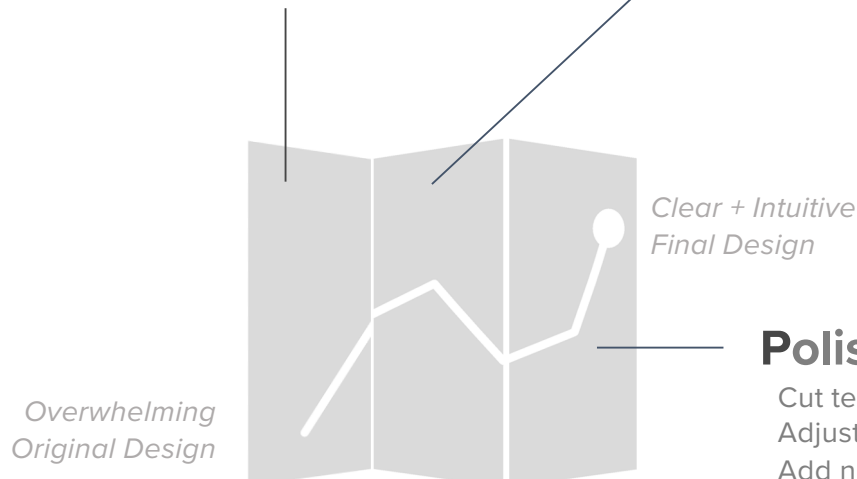
Polish

Cut text & clutter, turn text to visuals
Adjust detail level & guide the eye
Add negative space & alignment
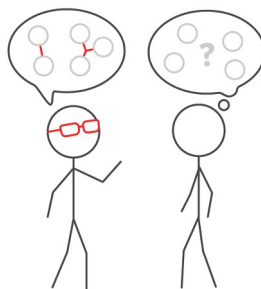
Solicit Feedback

When providing a critique:
Talk-Aloud first,
  then critique afterwards
Critique the design,
  not the person

When receiving a critique:
Critique is a gift,
  so smile, nod, thank
Set a low bar for
  misunderstandings

Overcome your Curse of Expertise

Professor Steven Franconeri

Northwestern Psychology

Kellogg School of Management
Computer Science | Design
(by courtesy)
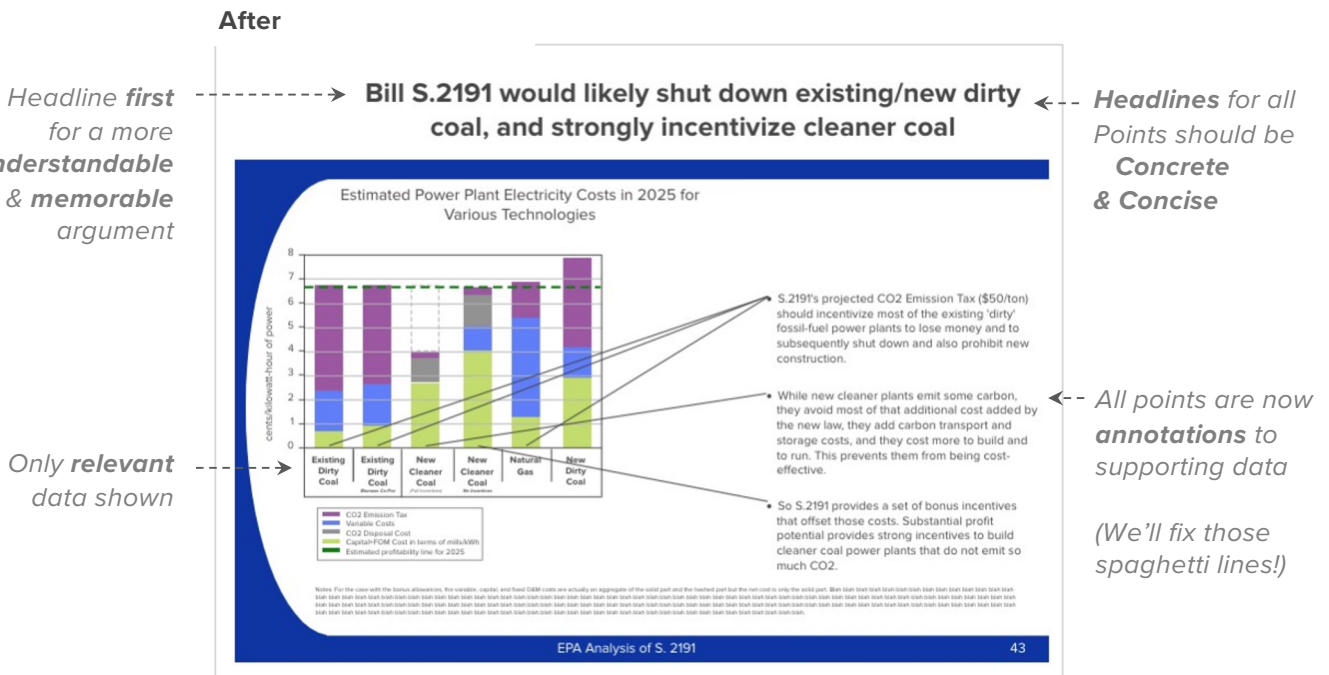
Linkedin.com/in/
  stevenfranconeri

Becise.com
Automate everything in this packet!

Main Point
for Presentation Slides

Decide main point & supporting points
Give each a concrete & concise headline
Link points to exhibits & cut what's vague or useless

Cut *irrelevant visual*

Before

Headlines for Main Point & Supporting Points are not concrete, not concise

Near-Term Power Plant Economics with CO2 Allowance Costs

Cut *(weave into relevant points)*

Good luck *figuring out what data support each of these!*

Negative what? Find another way to show it

Cut *Irrelevant Data!*

After

*Headline **first** for a more **understandable** & **memorable** argument*

Bill S.2191 would likely shut down existing/new dirty coal, and strongly incentivize cleaner coal

*Headlines for all Points should be **Concrete & Concise***

*Only **relevant** data shown*

*All points are now **annotations** to supporting data*

(We'll fix those spaghetti lines!)

Arrange
for Presentation Slides

Group in space, plus only 1-2 colors
Try to display information in 2D tables
Convert lists into 3 categories at most

Before
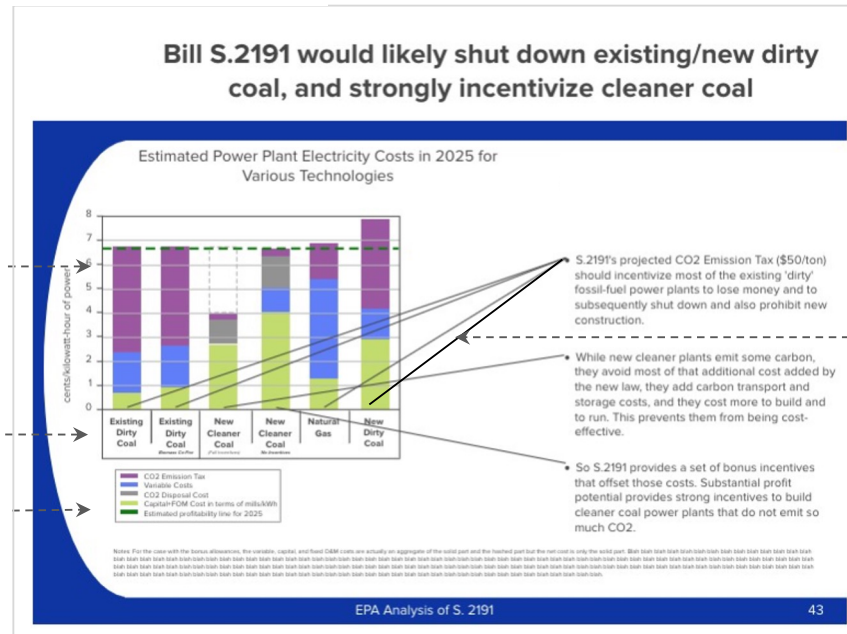

Why is this green?
***Greyscale* it**

Chaotically **sorted**

Legend kittens,
& **too many color**
mappings (over 2)

S.2191's projected CO2 Emission Tax ($50/ton) should incentivize most of the existing 'dirty' fossil-fuel power plants to lose money and to subsequently shut down and also prohibit new construction.

While new cleaner plants emit some carbon, they avoid most of that additional cost added by the new law, they add carbon transport and storage costs, and they cost more to build and to run. This prevents them from being cost-effective.

So S.2191 provides a set of bonus incentives that offset those costs. Substantial profit potential provides strong incentives to build cleaner coal power plants that do not emit so much CO2.

***Vertical* bars**
tough to
annotate

Greyscale everything

Then you get **1-2 colors**
at most, as 'frosting'

After

Legend is now
labels in **space,**
colors
limited to 1-2

Stack rotated to
horizontal

Bars sorted to be
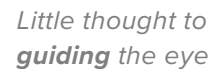**grouped** by points

***Horizontal* bars**
easier to
annotate

Polish
for Presentation Slides

Cut text & clutter, turn text to visuals
Adjust detail level & guide the eye
Add negative space & alignment

Before

*Bad **alignment***

Bill S.2191 would likely shut down existing/new dirty coal, and strongly incentivize cleaner coal

***Cluttered** background*

Estimated Power Plant Electricity Costs in 2025 for Various Technologies

	Fixed Costs	Variable Costs	CO2 Disposal Cost	CO2 Emission Tax	

Estimated profitability line for 2025

Natural Gas
Existing Dirty Coal
Existing Dirty Coal *Biomass Co-Fire*
New Dirty Coal
New Cleaner Coal *Full Incentives*
New Cleaner Coal *No Incentives*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
cents/kilowatt-hour of power

***Too much detail,** combine these two*

Add ***negative space***

*Axis has **too much detail,** reduce #ticks*

S.2191's projected CO2 Emission Tax ($50/ton) should incentivize most of the existing 'dirty' fossil-fuel power plants to lose money and to subsequently shut down and also prohibit new construction.

While new cleaner plants emit some carbon, they avoid most of that additional cost added by the new law, they add carbon transport and storage costs, and they cost more to build and to run. This prevents them from being cost-effective.

So S.2191 provides a set of bonus incentives that offset those costs. Substantial profit potential provides strong incentives to build cleaner coal power plants that do not emit so much CO2.

*Little thought to **guiding** the eye*

Notes: For the case with the bonus allowances, the variable, capital, and fixed O&M costs are actually an aggregate of the solid part and the hashed part but the net cost is only the solid part. Blah blah.

EPA Analysis of S. 2191   43

*Too many **words,** this is better*

After

Bill S.2191 would likely shut down existing/new dirty coal, and strongly incentivize cleaner coal

*Better **alignment***

Fixed Costs	Variable Costs		More $	Less $	
			Makes $	Loses $	

Natural Gas
Dirty Coal *Similar: Biomass Co-Fire*
New Dirty Coal
New Cleaner Coal *No Incentives*
New Cleaner Coal *Full Incentives*

0 2 4 6 8
Cost to produce power in 2025 (cents/kilowatt-hour)

*Nice **negative space***

Axis has reasonable detail

***No clutter** in background*

S.2191's projected CO2 Emission Tax ($50/ton) should drive most existing 'dirty' fossil-fuel power plants to **shut down** ... and also **prohibit new construction.**

While new cleaner plants avoid most of that cost ... they add carbon transport and storage costs ... and they cost more to build and to run. **This prevents them from being cost-effective.**

So S.2191 provides a set of bonus **incentives** that offset those costs. Substantial profit potential provides strong incentives to **build cleaner coal** power plants.

***Guides the eye** with **larger fonts, left/top order, color/bold, visuals, & animation** (Space font sizes by 150% e.g., 12, 18, 28, 42)*
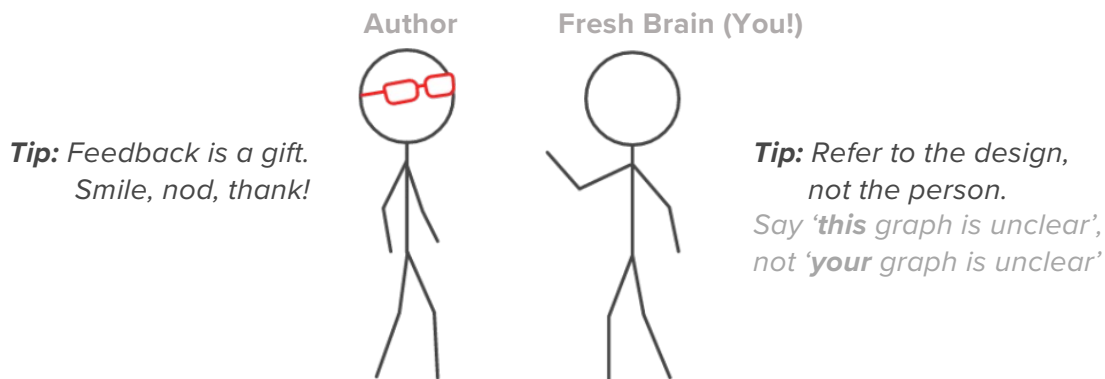
experception™

ACTIVITY

Recruit a Talk-aloud:
Slides / Data Stories, or Dashboards

1. **Find** a slide / data story (a data-heavy slide), or dashboard that you created, or know well.
   Choose one of at least moderate complexity that you suspect could be clearer for an audience.

2. **Ask** a colleague or family member for a few minutes of their time.
   Explain the purpose of a talk-aloud, and that they will be your 'Fresh Brain'. *(zombie voice optional)*

3. **Ask** them to focus on their **experience** of exploring the design,
   and to name anything that is even *slightly* unclear
   and to inhibit giving suggestions (until the end).

   Here's my initial gut reaction.
   Here's where my eyes go, and what's going on in their head.
   Here's where my eyes go, and what's going on in their head ... and **repeat for ~2 minutes.**

Author   **Fresh Brain (You!)**

Tip: Feedback is a gift.
Smile, nod, thank!

Tip: Refer to the design,
not the person.
*Say '**this** graph is unclear',*
*not '**your** graph is unclear'*

4. **Thank** your Fresh Brain!
   List the ways that your Fresh Brain helped you see your own design differently.
   Ask if you can return the favor by giving a similar talk-aloud on one of their designs.
   If they agree, switch roles, and repeat steps 1 & 3 above for their example.

5. **Reflect** on the experience with your colleague.
   Was it helpful to:
     ... aim your comments at the design instead of the person?
     ... set a low bar for misunderstandings?
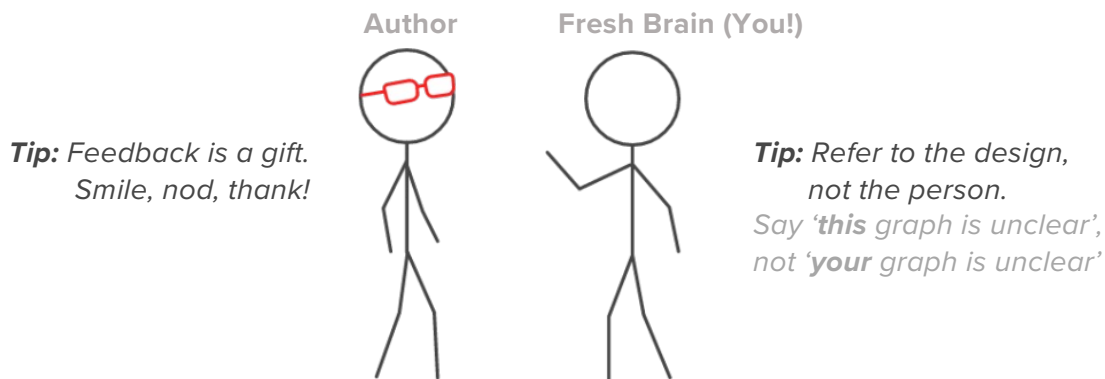   *... have the receiver rabidly nod, smile, and thank during your feedback?*
   Was it difficult to inhibit suggestions for improvement until the end?

ACTIVITY

Critique a
Slide / Data Story, or Dashboard

1. **Ask a colleague** to find a slide / data story (a data-heavy slide), or dashboard that they created, or know well. It should be one of at least moderate complexity, and they should suspect that it could be clearer for an audience. **Explain** the importance of doing talk-alouds and critiques for creating clear presentations, and that you will serve as their 'Fresh Brain'.

2. **Give** their design a 2-minute talk-aloud**,** using the previous page ('Recruit a Talk-Aloud') of this guide.

3. **Critique** the design by discussing each MAP rule. The next page contains the list of rules for **slides / data stories**, and the final page contains modified rules for **dashboards**. You may also want to have the summary handouts handy from the sUperCab or EPA redesigns.

Author   **Fresh Brain (You!)**

Tip: Feedback is a gift.
Smile, nod, thank!

Tip: Refer to the design,
not the person.
*Say '**this** graph is unclear',*
*not '**your** graph is unclear'*

4. **Reflect** on the experience with your colleague.
   Start with the same prompts listed in the 'Recruit a Talk-Aloud' Activity Handout, then add...
   Did you agree with each critique?
   Which were most helpful?
   What was difficult to hear?

5. **Thank** your colleague for their time!

ACTIVITY

Critique a
Slide / Data Story, or Dashboard
(There is a different handout for Dashboards)

Main Point

The main point is easily identifiable.
Complex information is divided into supporting points.

Main and Supporting Points have concrete and concise headlines.

Exhibits (bullets, graphs, tables, etc.) are clearly linked to relevant points.

Text exhibits are relevant, precise, and concrete.

Arrange

Information that goes together is grouped in space (exhibits to headlines, legends to labels, bullets to annotations).

There are 1 to 2 colors at most, and they are used thoughtfully.

If applicable, information is laid out in 2-dimensional tables or spaces.

If applicable, lists of more than 3 items are categorized into 3 groups at most, and are thoughtfully sorted.

If applicable, there are vertical lists instead of circular organizations (including using bar graphs instead of pies).

Polish

Text exhibits are concise (low word count).

Clutter (excess visuals, background colors, boxes, lines) is minimized.

When possible, text is replaced with visuals (graphs, tables, diagrams).

The eye is guided consistently by font size, left/top priority, color or bold text, visuals, animations.

Sections are separated with generous negative space, not lines or boxes.

Elements are obsessively aligned.