New ways to look at your presentation

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This blog post is about presentations. And this usually means PowerPoint presentations, although some people do well without it[1]. Edward Tufte argues that PowerPoint can be a really bad tool to create slides[2]. But it is probably not the software, but rather the people that produce these slides that are responsible for the quality[3]. The Neurotic Physiology blog published a list of things you shouldn't do during a Powerpoint presentation[4]. But there are also many tips to create better presentations. A May 2008 *Nature Methods* editorial[5] gives ten such suggestions. Links to some more Powerpoint tips were collected in a Nautilus blog post[6] by **Maxine Clarke**. One positive example is this presentation by **Matt Wood**from the Science Blogging London conference:

How to make Friendfeeds and influence people

View SlideShare **presentation** or **Upload** your own. (tags: **science blogs**)

The Nature Network **Visualization & Science Forum** is a great place for further discussions.

Presentations can also be created online. Google Docs and Zoho Show have been around for a while now, but 280Slides[7] is a fairly new offering with a very slick interface. The advantages of these programs: slides can be created by several authors working together and slides can be easily shared. But presentations created with Powerpoint can also be shared online. Slideshare and Scribd are the most popular tools for this, and since last week these presentations can be embedded into Nature Network blog posts. By default, these presentations are public and can be seen by everybody. But they can also be uploaded as private presentations and only those that know the secret URL can see them. Presentations in the life sciences can also be uploaded to Nature Preceedings[8]. This way the scientific presentation receives a DOI and becomes citable. But Nature Preceedings has still a long way to go with currently only about 50 presentations available. Which is a bit suprising, since it looks like the perfect platform to host conference presentations.

YouTube videos or podcasts are probably the preferred format to share presentations that also include the recorded audio. Having the audio available is especially important for those presentations that have little text on their slides. Many

presentations from the TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conference[9] have been made available as TEDTalks, including this one by Neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor:

If you want to give a presentation remotely (i.e. to one or more people in a different location), you could use that feature in Google Docs[10]. Or use a full-fledged web conferencing solution such as Dimdin[11], which is free for up to 20 users and also is available as Open Source community edition.

[1] **Powerpoint to the People**

[2] **Kemp M.** PowerPoint presentations and the culture of pitch. *Nature* 2006; **doi:10.1038/442140a**

[3] **Don't hate Powerpoint; Hate the Powerpointers**

[4] **And Now, a Powerpoint Presentation**

[5] Talking points. *Nature Methods* 2008; **doi:10.1038/nmeth0508-371**

[6] **How to give a good presentation**

[7] **280Slides**

[8] **Nature Preceedings**

[9] **TED**

[10] **Google Docs – Now with Presentation**

[11] **Dimdim**