

Effective Visual Aids

(c) 2018 Gates Matthew Stoner



Agenda

- Overview of using Visual Aids
- Tips to follow
- Using Presentation Software Effectively

Visual aids can enhance:

- Speaker credibility and persuasion
- Interest
- Focus attention
- Retention

“

People are not listening to us, because they are spending so much time trying to understand these incredibly complex slides

Army Secretary Louis Caldera

What's Your Point, Lieutenant? Please, Just Cut to the Pie Charts
By GREG JAFFE,
Wall Street Journal April 26, 2000



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

However, visual aids that are not used well serve as

**a
powerful
distraction**

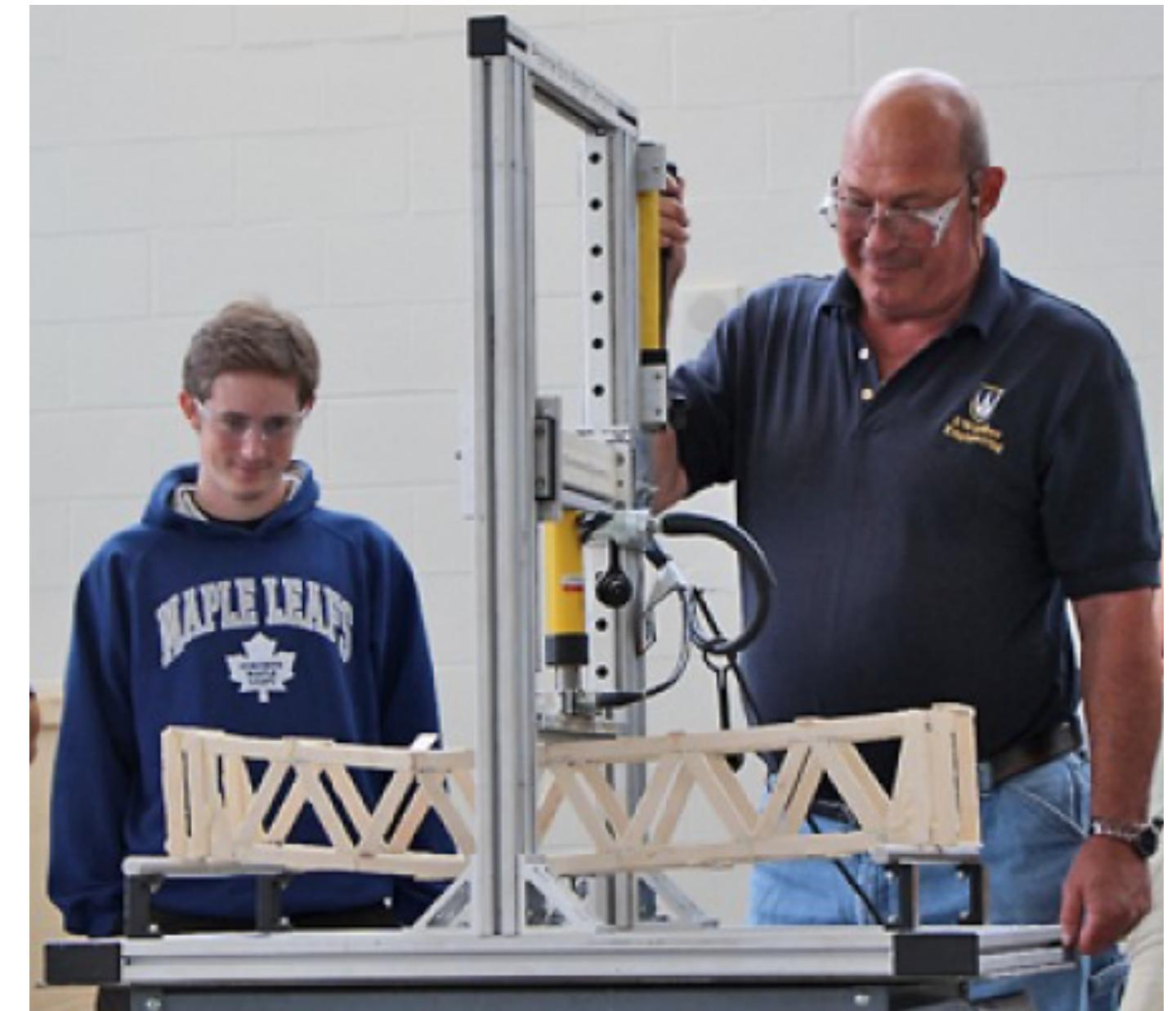


Visual Aids should be



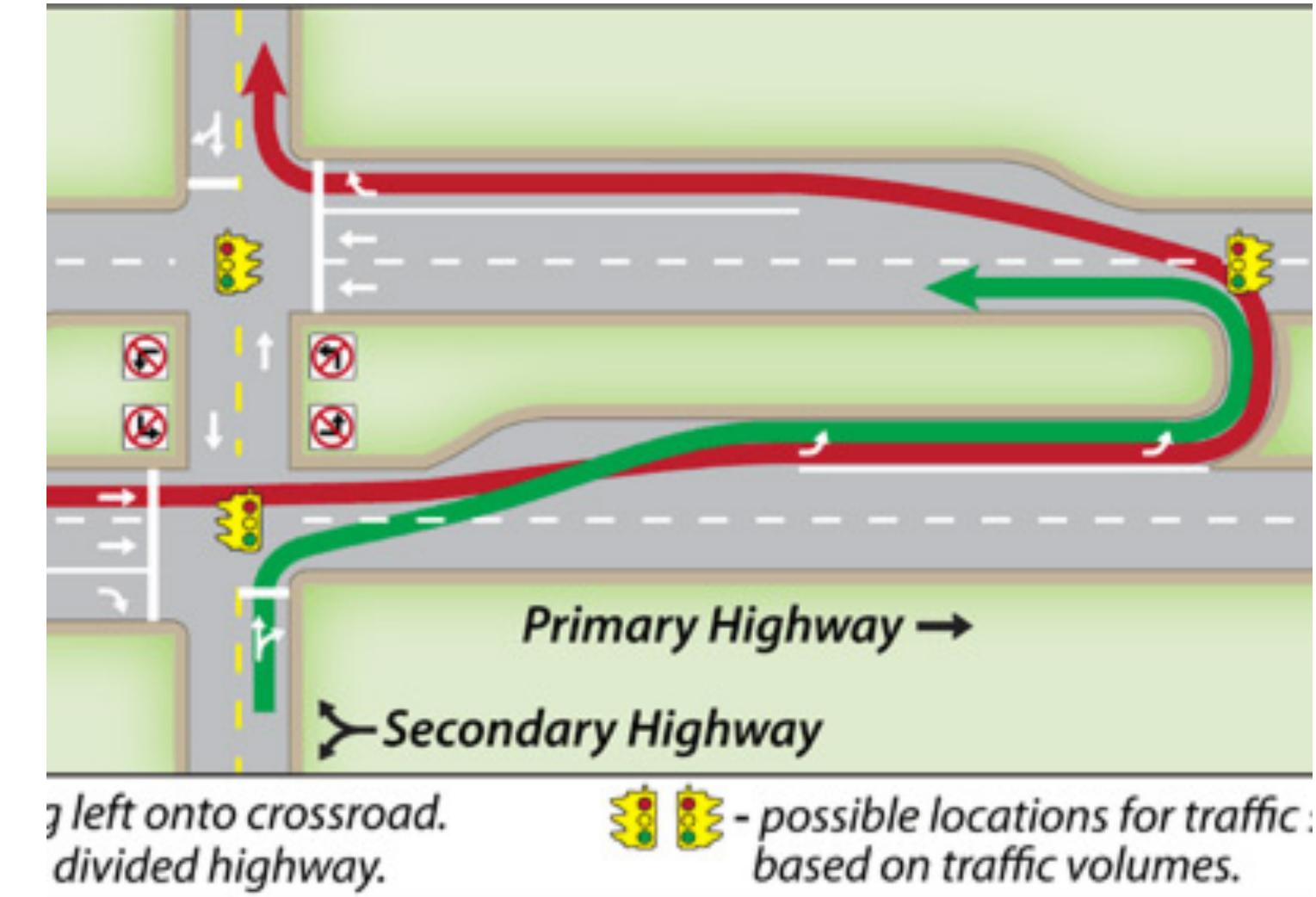
Types of Visual Aids

- Objects
- Models
- Still Photographs
- Slides
- Films and Video Clips



Types of Visual Aids

- Drawings
- Maps
- Charts
- Graphs





Tell a Story



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics



Planning



Design



Delivery



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

Planning



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Civil & Architectural Engineering & Mechanics

Can you achieve your purpose without visual aids?

- Is the gain worth the effort?
- Will it increase your audience's understanding?

What will you be presenting?

Visual aids should help you

- advance the narrative
- explain something abstract or complex
- show relationships

Where will you be presenting?



- Will you have the equipment you need?
- Will the slides project well from a computer?
- Computer - your own or theirs?

Equipment Considerations

- Some forms of visual aids require certain equipment
- Optimal conditions for projection & viewing



Newton Free Library via Flickr CC



Mickipedia via Flickr CC
herzogbr via Flickr CC

Remember the person in the back row

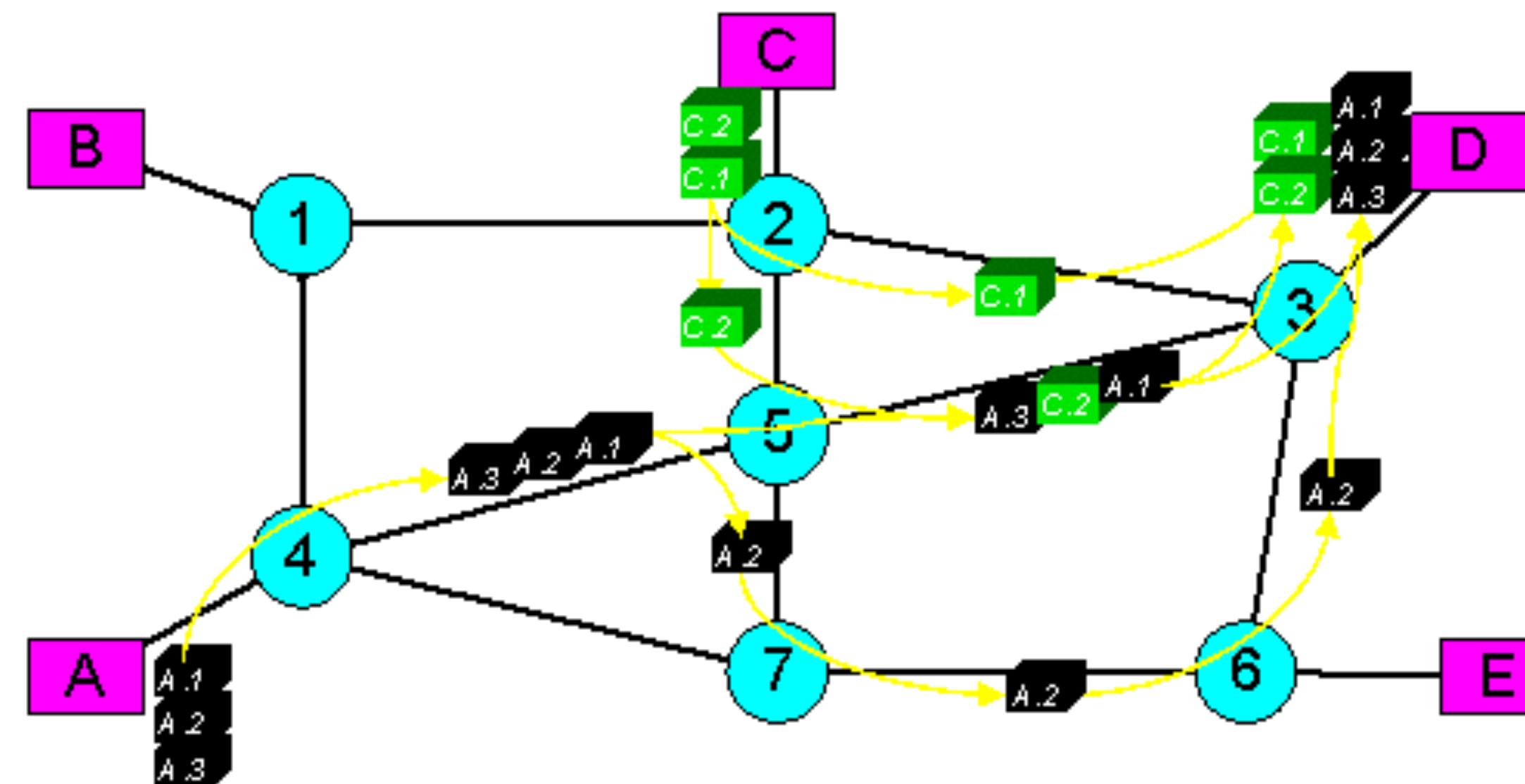


COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

Who is your audience?

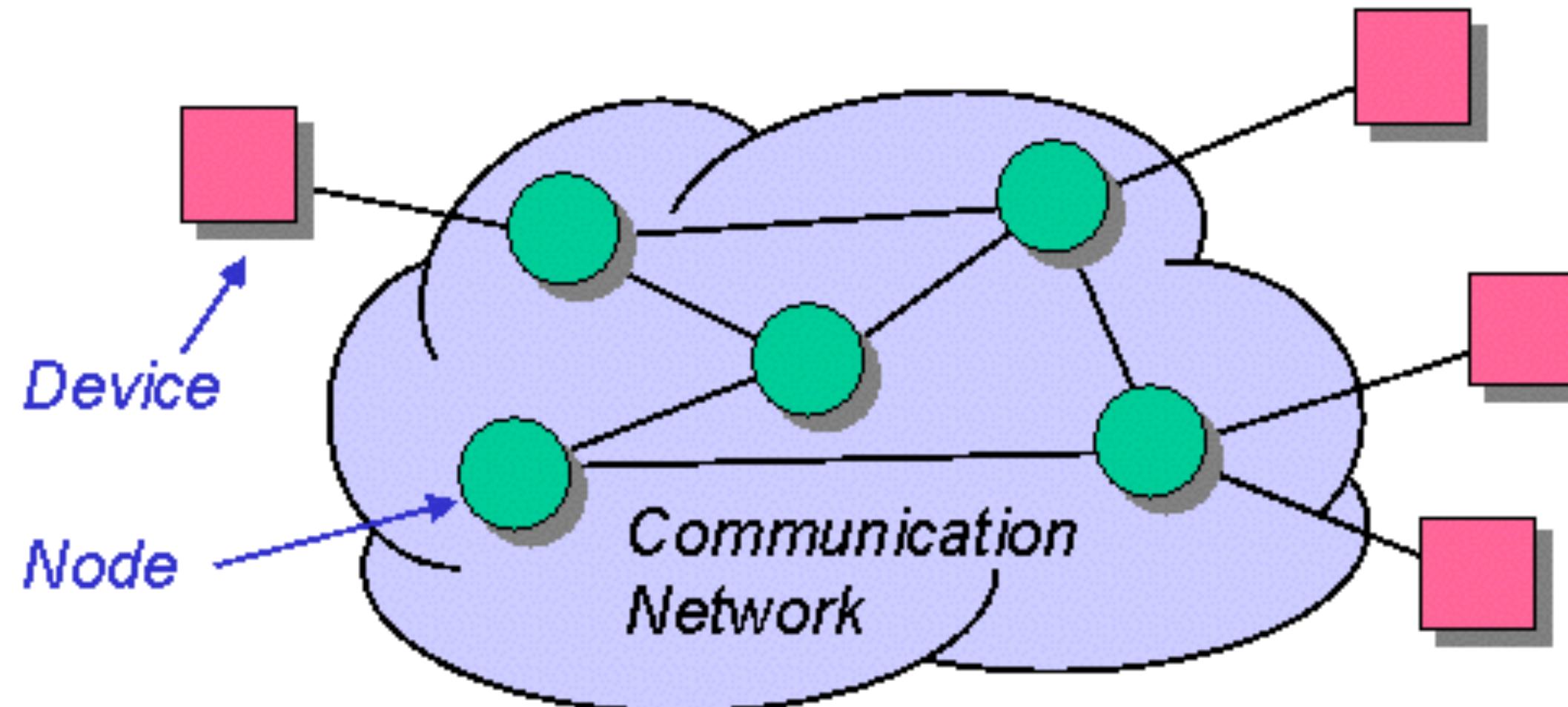
- Your audience will determine several decisions in assembling your visual aids or powerpoints, such as
 - Color
 - Depth of Knowledge
 - Language (i.e. jargon)
 - Sophistication

Engineering Audience



Business Audience

A generic communication network:



Other names for “device”: station, **host**, terminal
Other names for “node”: switch, **router**, gateway

How long is your presentation

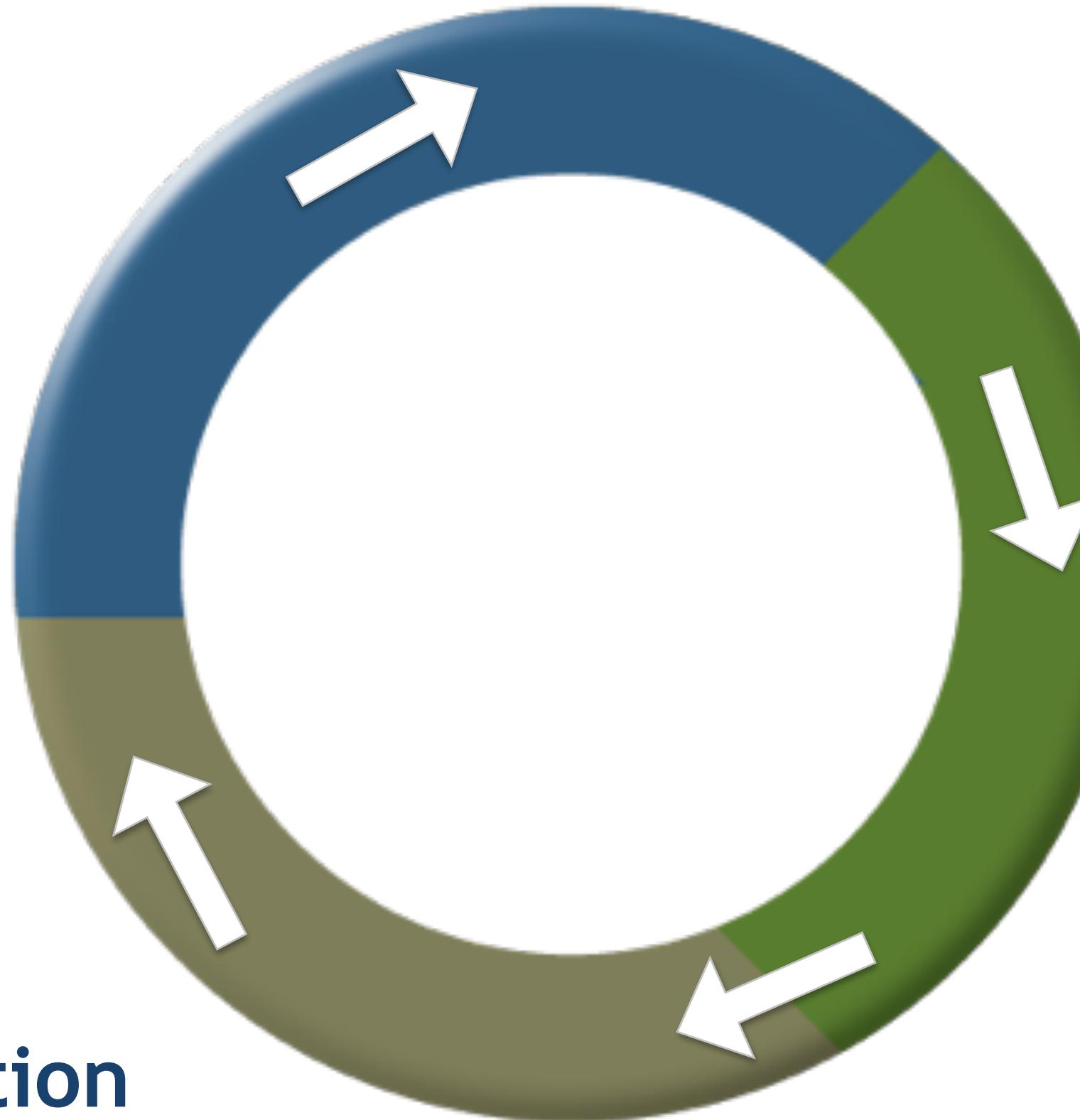
- Rule: No more than
1 slides per minute
- A 5 minute presentation should have no more than 5-6 slides or overheads
- Too many slides or visual aids is a distraction

Design

Visual Aids should

Increase
Audience
Interest

Aid Retention



Focus
Attention

Choosing a Mode for Presentation

- There are many decisions to consider in presenting a visual aid
 - Ease of use
 - Ability to adapt
 - to add information mid-presentation
 - to audience size
 - Degree of formality
 - Equipment requirements

Choosing a Mode for Presentation

- Computer
- Flipcharts
- Posterboards
- Chalkboards
- Handouts



Choosing a Mode for Presentation

Chalkboard/ Dry-erase board

- Easily accessible
- Can add to it as you present
- Less polished
- Back to audience
- Takes up time

Flip Chart

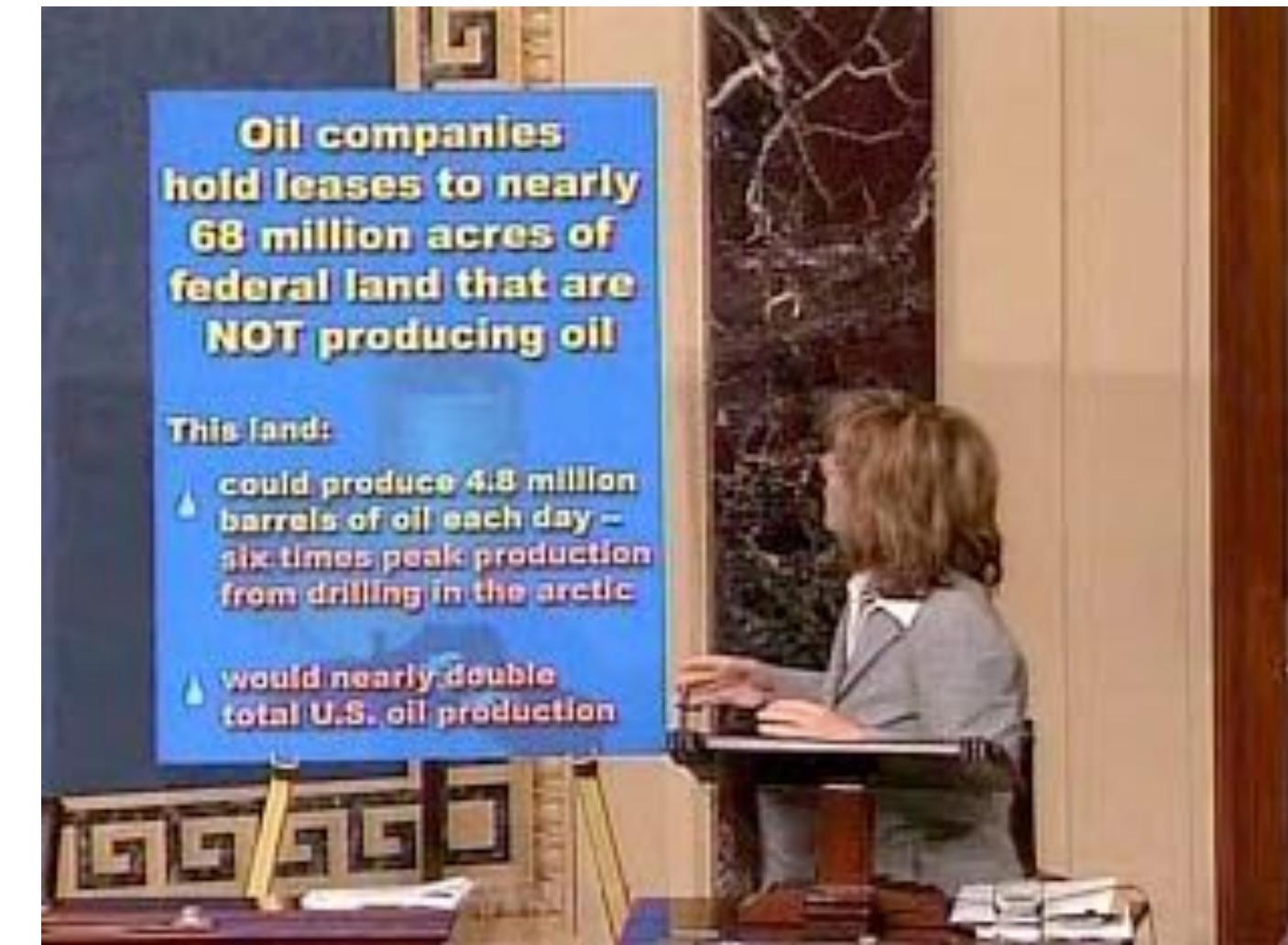
- Easily accessible
- Can add to it as you present
- Can be developed in sequence
- Less polished
- Takes up time



Choosing a Mode for Presentation

Posters

- ➊ Easier to handle than flipchart
- ➋ Easy to stow away when not in use
- ➌ Hard to work with (may fall down)



Senator Boxer website



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics

Choosing a Mode for Presentation



wfowlkes via Flickr CC

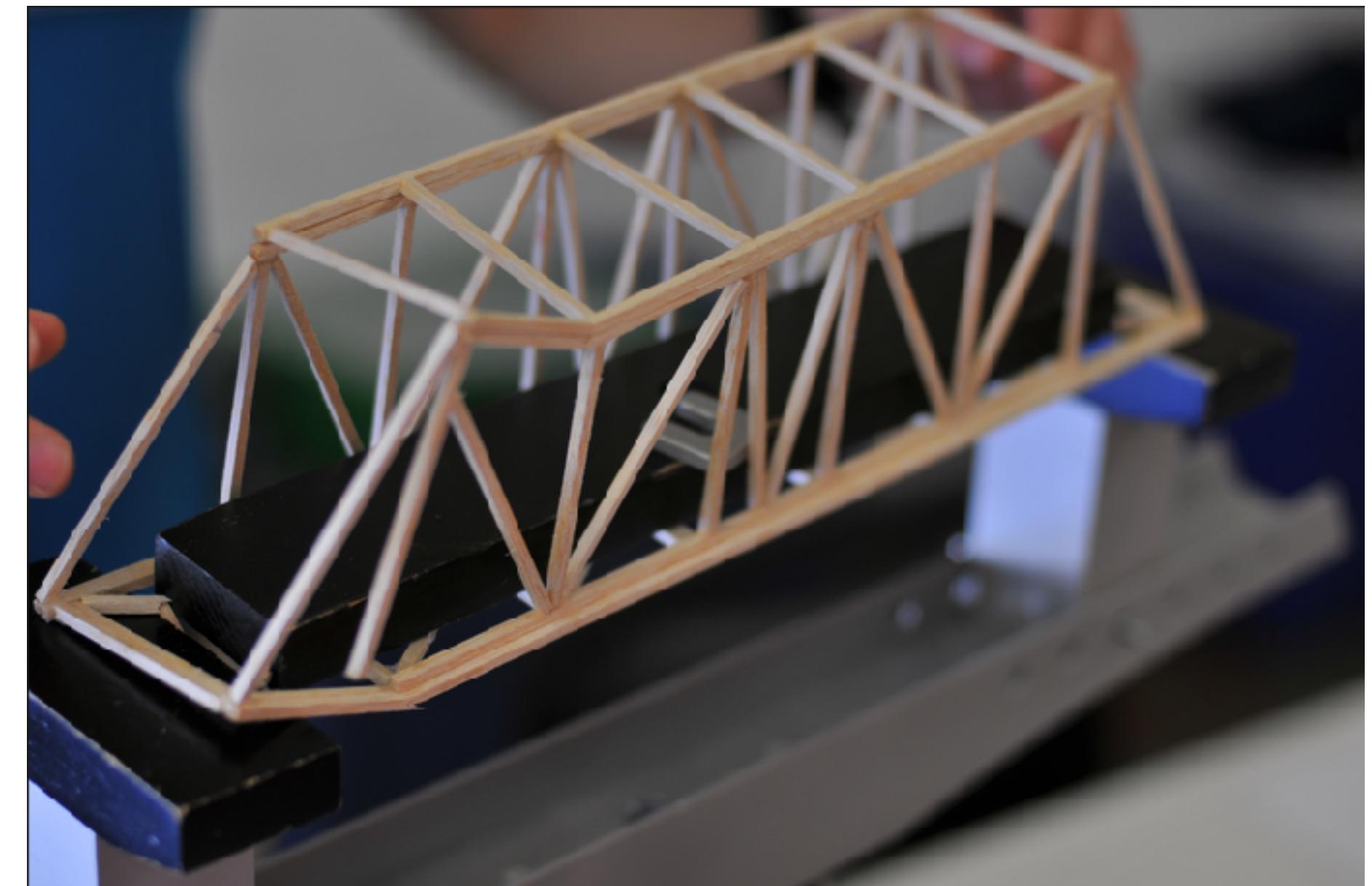
Handouts

- ➊ Reduces listeners' need to take notes
- ➋ Gives listener something to take home
- ➌ Potential distraction, depending on when you hand them out

Choosing a Mode for Presentation

Objects

- Great to illustrate what you are talking about
- Can use multiple senses
- May be difficult to show to whole group
- Can be distracting if you pass it around



Choosing a Mode for Presentation

Video

- ④ Potential equipment problems
- ④ Clip length compared to duration of speech
- ④ Viewable screen for audience

Computer

- ④ Potential equipment problems
- ④ Temptation to look at screen instead of audience
- ④ Viewable screen for audience



Summary

- Tailor your visual to the **audience** and the **occasion**
- Prepare visuals that will be **easily seen** by your audience
- Make visuals easy to handle while presenting
- Visuals should **support**, not **overwhelm** what is being said
- **Practice** using your visuals before the presentation

**Rules
to
Follow
down the digital
hole**

LIFE AFTER DEATH BY POWERPOINT

with
DON McMILLAN



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

Good Rules to Follow

- Color Contrast
- Margins
- Readability
- Font Choice

Choosing Colors



Colors do not always project the same as on
your screen

Choosing Colors

- Too much color is very distracting
- Limit yourself to 2 - 3 on colors on the same slide
- Only use color when you have a purpose or for branding/identity purposes

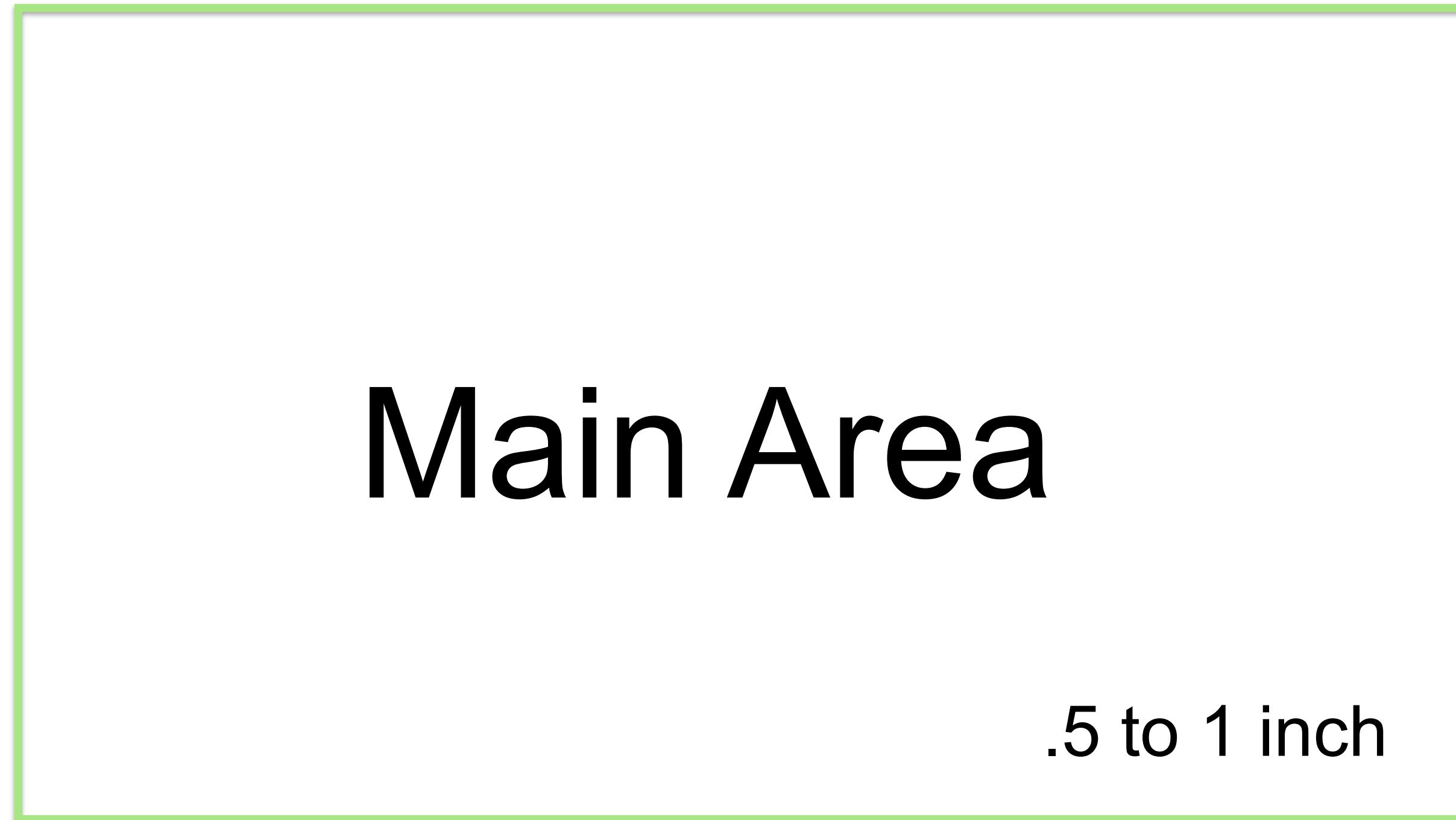
Backgrounds

- Fancy backgrounds with low contrast might not project well
- Too much “noise” can be distracting between the content and the graphics
- Some of the basic backgrounds don’t look professional or appropriate for business context

Margins

Title

.5 to 1 inch



.5 to 1 inch

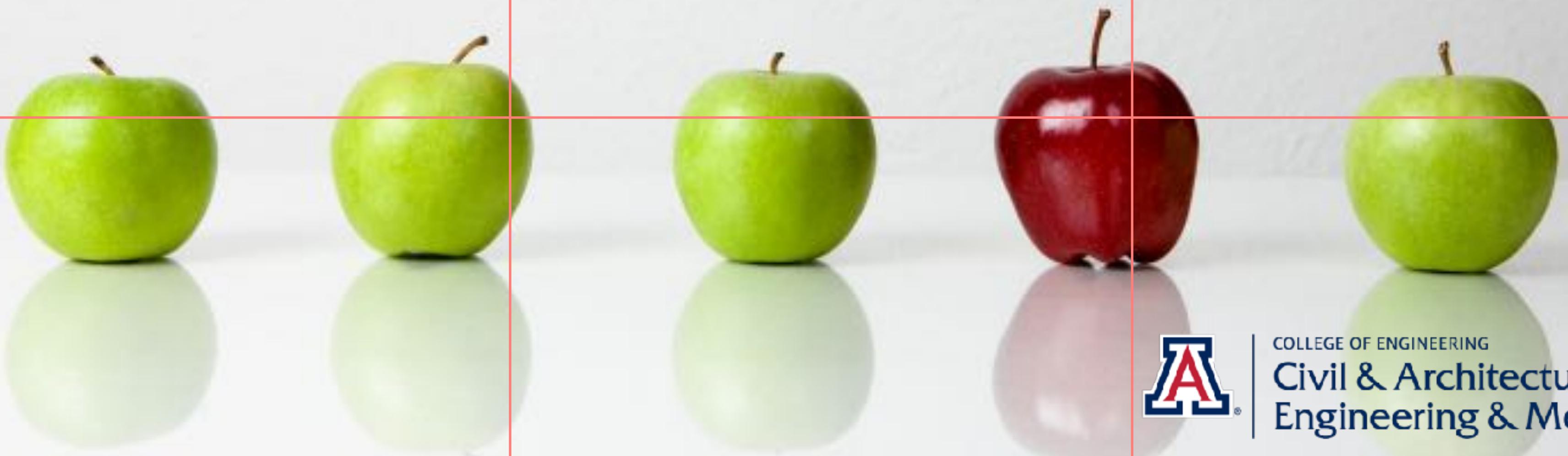
.5 to 1 inch



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics

The Rule of thirds

The Rule of thirds



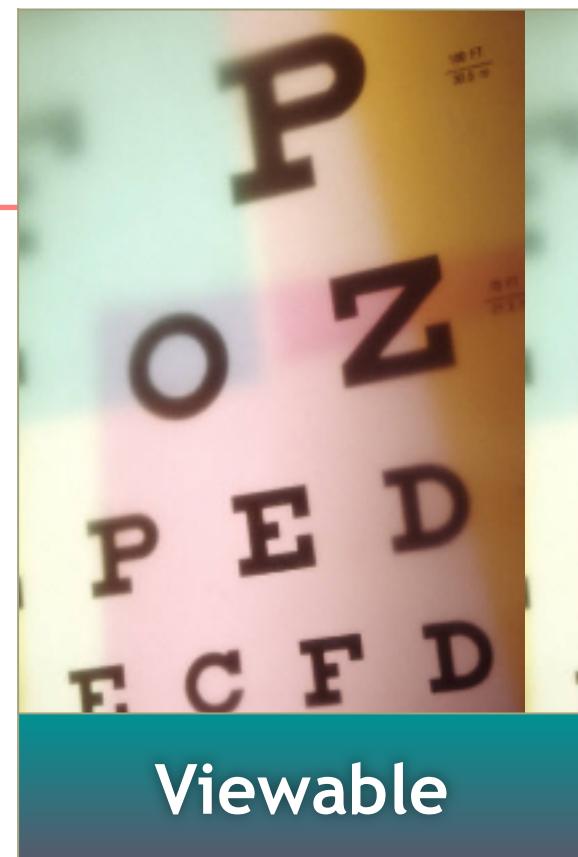
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

The Rule of thirds



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics

The Rule of thirds



Viewable



Simple



Relevant



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics

Establishing a Focus

- No more than 4 bullet points
- 25-35 words
- Rule: Less is More
- Use color to highlight and draw attention to important words

Be one with emptiness



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics

A tale of two styles.... Microsoft v Apple



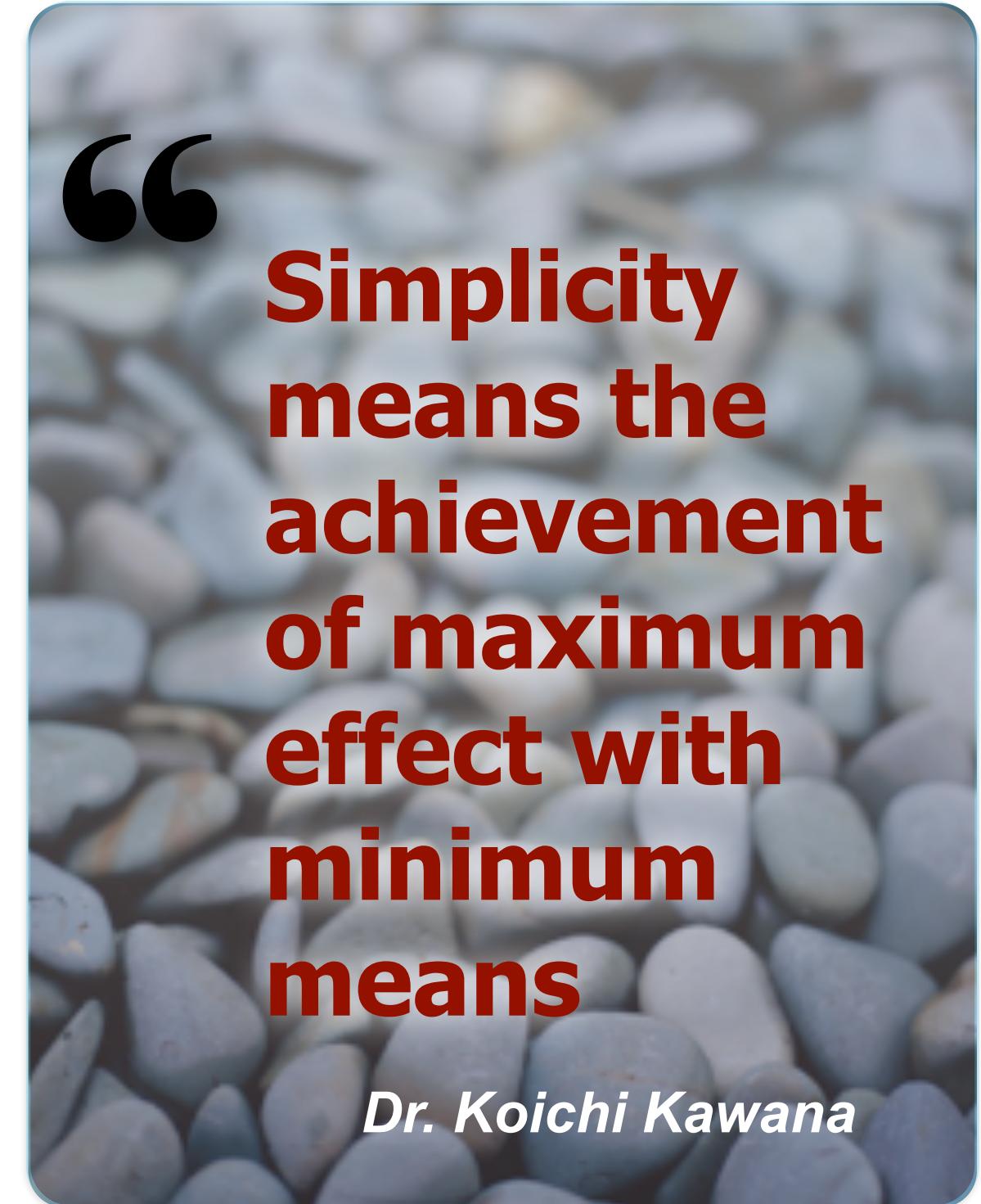
from PresentationZen.com

A tale of two styles....

Microsoft v Apple

Key Differences

- Less is more
- Don't confuse the audience
- Naturalness



**Simplicity
means the
achievement
of maximum
effect with
minimum
means**

Dr. Koichi Kawana



http://presentationzen.blogs.com/presentationzen/2006/01/contrasts_in_pr.html

Readability

- Large font sizes
- Bold main points
- Two or three subpoints
- Initial caps
 - DO NOT USE ALL CAPS
 - or all small letters either

Font Choice

- Different fonts for titles and main text
- Some fonts display better than others
- Use standard fonts

Some Examples



Arial Black



Times New Roman



Verdana



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics

Motion

- Animation features are often misused and overused (such as transitions effects)
- Some animations sophomore for business audiences
- Limited use can be quite effective

Things to Avoid

- Distracting animations
- Sounds
- Too many graphics
- Eye candy
- A slide for every point

Delivery



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

Don't speak to the visual

- Maintain eye contact
- Know the content so you don't have to read it



Visibility

- Make sure the visual aid can be seen by the audience
- Don't block or obscure visibility
- Control lighting conditions for optimal viewing (if possible)

Pacing

- Pace shouldn't be rushed
- Give the audience time to absorb your visual aids



Summary

- ④ Do not **obstruct** audience member's view of your visuals
- ④ **Speak to the audience**, not the visual (it can't hear you anyway!)
- ④ Display visuals only when referring to them to prevent distraction
- ④ Effectively transition with visuals, don't let it consume your activity

When Presenting Powerpoints

- Practice, Practice, Practice
- Save the file in two places (flash drive, email, web server)
- Save the file in an older format (ppt v pptx)
- Print mini slides for yourself
- When something can go wrong,

**Be Heard,
Not Read**



Resources

- Presentation Zen (book and blog)
- Slide:ology (book)
- TED Talks (www.ted.com)
- iStockPhoto (www.istockphoto.com)
- slideshare (www.slideshare.com)