



# Improving Your Presentations

Ian Summers

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# OVERVIEW

- Icebreaker
- Oral Presentation
- Visual Presentation
- Technical Considerations
- Do's and Do Not's

# Icebreaker: Laffy Taffy

- Have some taffy!
- Read the joke to everyone with your own flair. Vary it up.
- How does the emphasis change the joke?





# **ORAL PRESENTATION**

# 3 Laws of Professional Communication

1. Adapt to Your Audience
  - a. Know and respect how they listen and learn.
  
2. Maximize Signal-to-Noise Ratio
  - a. Noise = anything that can distract the audience. Filter noise or create more signal!
  
3. Use Effective Redundancy
  - a. Tell them what you're about to tell them, tell them, tell them what you just told them.

# Verbal Presentation

- Project your voice to fit the room.
  - Especially when looking at the screen.
- Avoid verbal fillers.
  - Pause to collect your thoughts.
- Verbal emphasis is key!
  - Emphases can change meaning.
- Be aware of speed.
  - You're speaking faster than you think.

# Activity: Enunciation

- Say these things to your group.
  - “My name is \_\_\_\_\_”
  - “This is my space”
  - “This is my voice”
  - “You will remember me”
- Change emphasis (first word, verb, noun).
  - How does that change the meaning of the sentence?

# Nonverbal Presentation

- Maintain eye contact with audience.
  - Use it strategically.
- Only look at slide:
  - Transitioning to new slide.
  - Referencing data or visual on screen.
- Consider movement patterns that work for you (e.g. a triangle).
- Use gestures and avoid fidgeting.



# Speech Anxiety

## Overall

- Nervousness is invisible to your audience.
- Focus on communication.

## Techniques

- Be physically mindful.
- Do vocal exercises beforehand.
- Prepare and use note cards.
- Turn nervous energy into positive energy.

# Speech Anxiety Continued

- Know points well enough to trigger memory with key words or bullet points.
- Prepare and have notes with you.
- Don't panic or draw attention to your mistake if you mess up.
- Have fun!
  - If you're not enthusiastic about your topic, why should your audience?

# VERBAL PRESENTATION REVIEW

- Think of the 3 Laws of Professional Communication.
- Practice and preparation make perfect.
- Be aware of how you look and sound.
- Remember that nerves are only visible to your audience if you decide to show them!



# **VISUAL PRESENTATION**

# Purpose of Visual Aids

- Visual aids are for the audience, not you.
- They are intended to be **aids**.
- Ask 2 questions:
  - Does this visual help my audience better understand the content?
  - Does this visual help me better communicate the content?

# Organization

- Have an introductory slide.
- Give preview of presentation.
- Use transition slides when needed.
- Place slide with contact information last.

# Respect Your Audience

- Use only relevant images and/or visual representations of data.
- Label your slides.
- Avoid sound effects and extreme animations.
- Exercise caution with sensitive images (e.g. natural disasters, death, etc).

# Lots of Text Hurts the Eyes

Many slides that you see probably look something like this. They will use a lot of “bullet points” that serve no real function other than to act as a table of content for the talk, rather than an actual visual aid to the presentation. Or worse yet, they present the audience with a solid block of text which diverts the attention of the audience towards reading the contents of the text than listening to the presenter. Your visual aid should provide visual, rather than textual, impact because when you have too much text it distracts the audience and diverts their attention from the spoken presentation. Keep text to a minimum so that the audience's focus remains on you. By the way, what am I saying in my lecture right now???



# Text on Slides

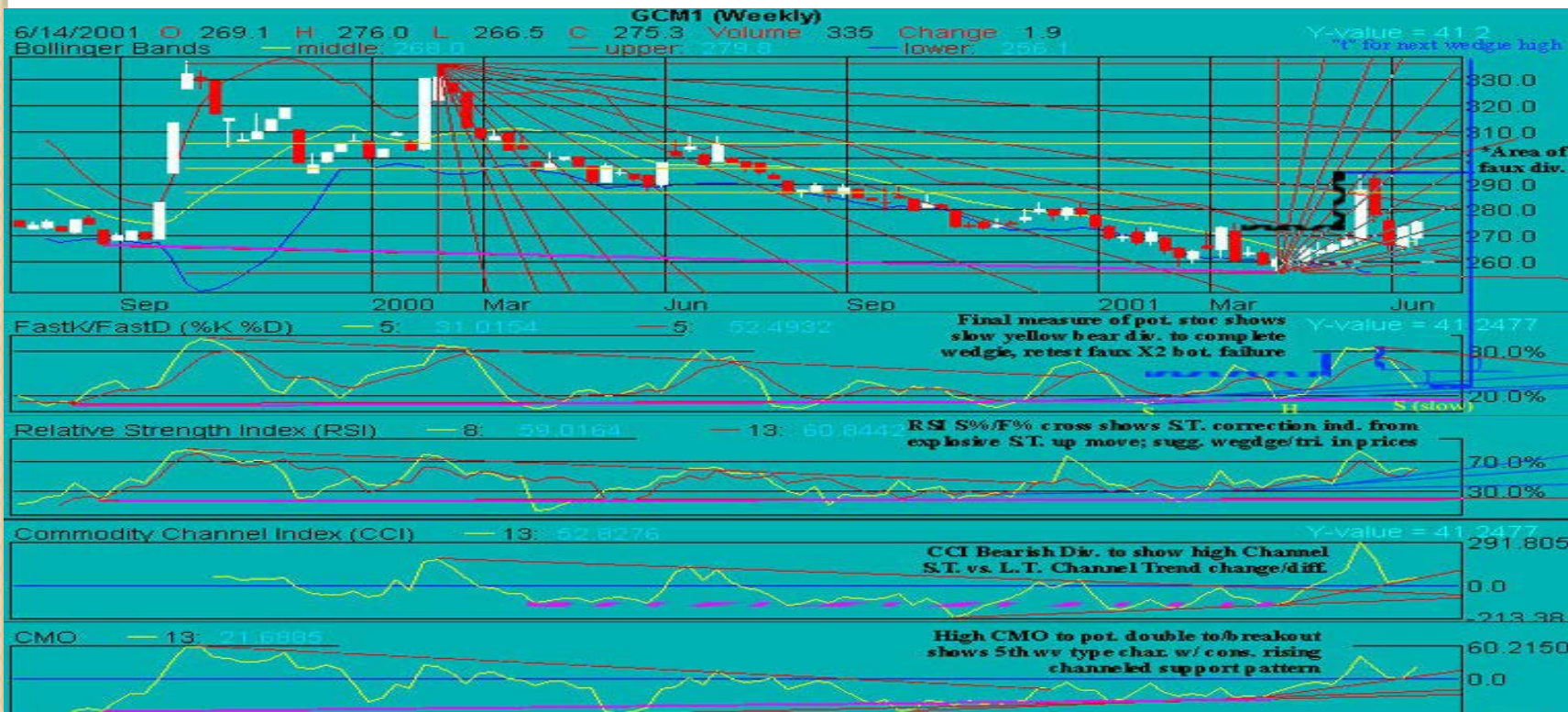
- Deploy short phrases and bullet points.
- Use same grammatical structure per point.
- Avoid fluff!
- Remember the 8 x 8 rule:
  - No more than eight words across.
  - No more than eight lines down.

# Displaying Data Effectively

- Create with specific audience in mind.
- Label important features.
- Show dimensions if needed.
- Use units consistently.
- Cite all outside contributions.
- Keep it **simple** and **clean**.

# Visual Aids: Poor Example

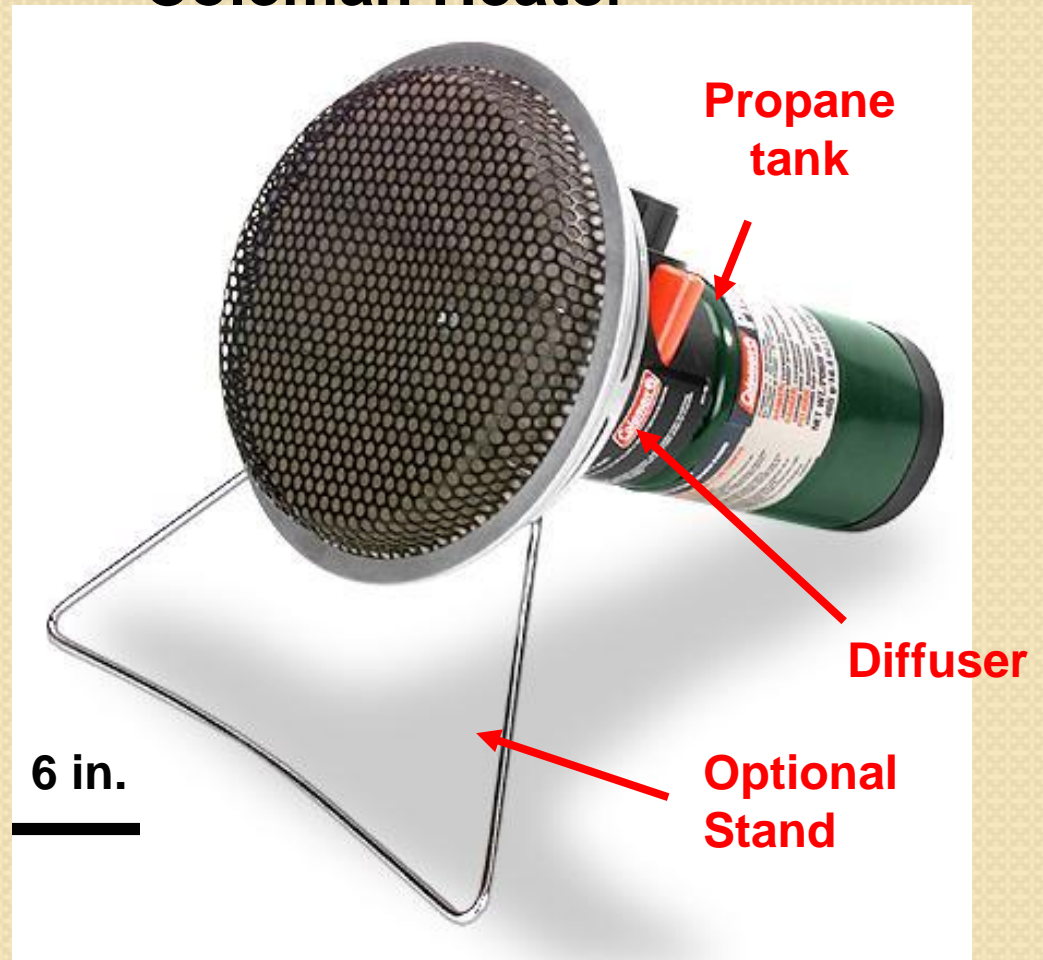
- Too much complex data for screen.
- No clear cite.
- Better as a handout than a slide.
- Not enough labels.



# Visual Aids: Model Example

- Titles on figures that are easy to reference.
- Important components of figures labeled.
- Properly cited (even if yours).

## Coleman Heater



[[www.coleman.com](http://www.coleman.com)]

# ACTIVITY: STORYTIME!

- A good presentation is like telling a story.
- Grab a children's book from the pile.
- Read to your group. Remember:
  - Verbal emphasis.
  - Visual presentation.
  - Enthusiasm.
- If it's a longer story trade off between group members or grab another book.



# **TECHNICAL TIPS**

**Too small or distorted**



Images via Stacey Overholt

**Formatted for screen**



Image via <http://bit.ly/IPN1O6j>

**Image Resolution**

# Image Resolution Continued

- Resolution = size of image and dots per inch (dpi)
- Bigger screens = higher resolution
- JPG, GIF, PSD, PNG = **raster** images
- EPS, SVG, AI = **vector** images



# Embedding Video and Audio

- Keep them short (<2 minutes).
- Use accompanying image for audio.
- Be aware of file sizes.
- Plan around internet access.
- Know if the video is supported on the presenting computer.
  - AVI, MPEG-4 – universal video files
  - MP3, AAC/MP4 – universal audio files

# Typeface

- **Serif** = includes small flourishes or strokes at the tops and bottoms of each letter.
- Prevalent on **hard copy**.
- Good with **high** resolution.
  - Examples:
    - Times New Roman, Courier New, Garamond, Book Antiqua.

# Typeface

- **Sans-Serif** = more block-like and linear.  
Does not have the small flourishes or strokes.
- Prevalent on **computer screens**.
- Good with **low** resolution.
- Also good for **dyslexic** audiences.
  - Examples:
    - Arial Narrow, Verdana, Century Gothic, **Comic Sans**.

# Font

- The size of the typeface.
  - 12 pt.
  - 24 pt
  - 36 pt
  - 48 pt
  
- For PowerPoint presentation you want to use a font of 24 or larger for main text.
  - Cite text should be in 12 or 14 point

# Backgrounds

- Keep the background color constant.
- If you use color, limit the number of colors you use to **no more than four**.
- It is easier to read dark colors on a light background.
  - Light neutral colors (e.g. white, beige, ivory, taupe, gray) make best backgrounds

# Colors

- Bold/ bright colors **emphasize** important points (yellow, red and orange).
- Soft colors **de-emphasize** less important areas of the presentation (such as background colors).
- Colors should not **wash out** or **clash**.

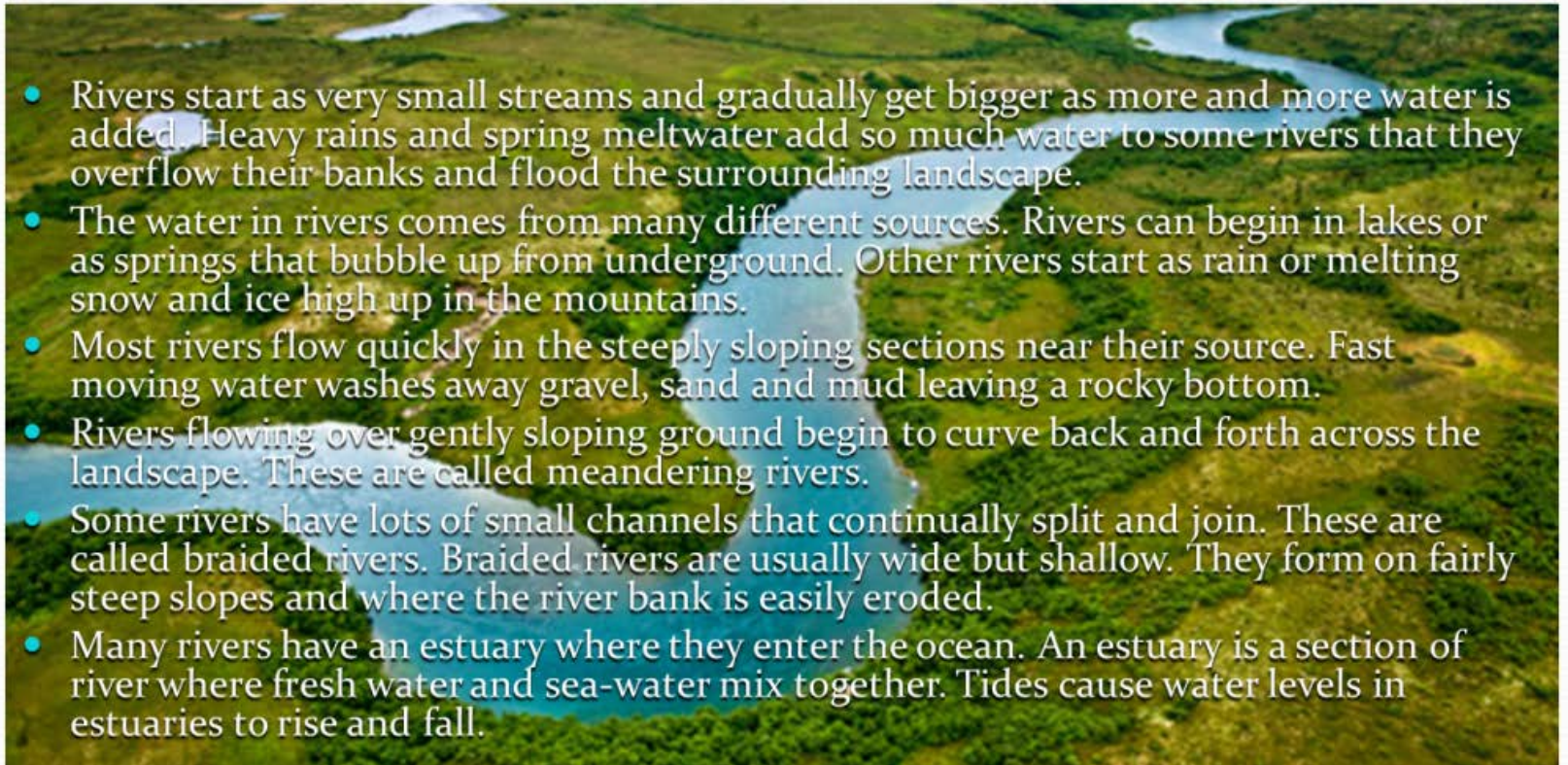
# Rule to Background and Color

- What may look fine on a computer screen can be an eyesore on a larger projection screen!
- It is a presentation, not a design contest

# What's Wrong With This Slide?

## How Rivers Are Formed

- Rivers start as very small streams and gradually get bigger as more and more water is added. Heavy rains and spring meltwater add so much water to some rivers that they overflow their banks and flood the surrounding landscape.
- The water in rivers comes from many different sources. Rivers can begin in lakes or as springs that bubble up from underground. Other rivers start as rain or melting snow and ice high up in the mountains.
- Most rivers flow quickly in the steeply sloping sections near their source. Fast moving water washes away gravel, sand and mud leaving a rocky bottom.
- Rivers flowing over gently sloping ground begin to curve back and forth across the landscape. These are called meandering rivers.
- Some rivers have lots of small channels that continually split and join. These are called braided rivers. Braided rivers are usually wide but shallow. They form on fairly steep slopes and where the river bank is easily eroded.
- Many rivers have an estuary where they enter the ocean. An estuary is a section of river where fresh water and sea-water mix together. Tides cause water levels in estuaries to rise and fall.

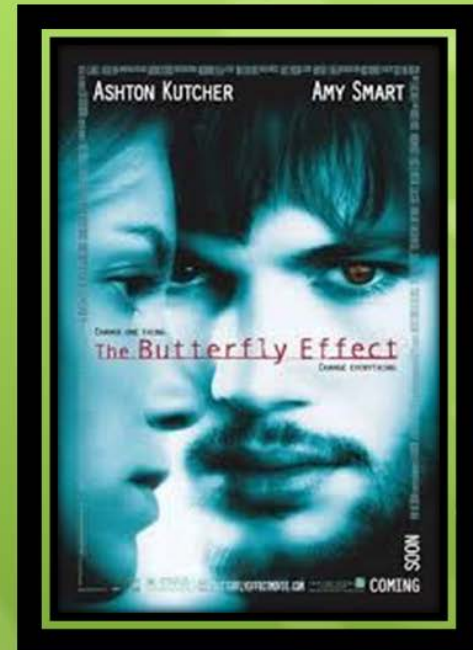




# What's Wrong With This Slide?

## The Butterfly Effect

- A 2004 Sci-fi Thriller
- A young man blocks out harmful memories of significant events of his life. As he grows up, he finds a way to remember these lost memories and a supernatural way to alter his life.
- Starring Ashton Kutcher & Amy Smart





**DO/DO NOT**

# Do: Practice and Prepare

- **Rehearse** with the slides.
  - Use presentation screen if possible.
- **Time** the presentation.
  - Pick slides to skip if you go long.
- **Know** your technology.
  - OS platform, internet, and file support
- **Remember** Murphy's Law.
  - Have a backup plan.

# Do Not: Distract Audience

- **Give** handouts at end of presentation.
- **Keep** presentation aid visible only while using it.
- **Avoid** disruptive colors and animations.
- **Minimize** nervous tics (e.g. fidgeting, pacing) while speaking.
- **Check** personal appearance before presentation!

# VISUAL PRESENTATION REVIEW

- Visual aids are for the audience, not you.
- PowerPoint cannot compensate for poor presentation and organization skills.
- Simple is better than distracting.
- Always remember technical aspects.
- Prepare for Murphy's Law.

# Questions?

Ian Summers

Doctoral Candidate/Research Fellow

Department of Communication

[ian.summers@utah.edu](mailto:ian.summers@utah.edu)

Department of Communication  
Languages & Communication Bldg.  
255 S. Central Campus Dr., Rm. 2400  
Salt Lake City, UT 84112



# Activity: Verbal Fillers

- Someone in the group take out a stopwatch.
- Tell the group a story about yourself for 30 seconds.
- Everyone else in the group records how many verbal fillers were said:
  - Um, like, yeah, you know, right, okay, etc.
- Who had the lowest total?

# Activity: Nonverbal Communication

- Line up in alphabetical order by your middle name.
  - If middle names begin with same letter, go to next letter (e.g. Aaron, Adam, Alan)
- You are not allowed to speak.
- Were you successful?