Use of visual aids

Visual aids help to make a presentation livelier. They can also help the audience to follow your presentation and help you to present information that would be difficult to follow through speech alone.

The two most common forms of visual aid are overhead transparencies (OHTs) and computer slide shows (e.g. PowerPoint). Objects that can be displayed or passed round the audience can also be very effective and often help to relax the audience. Some speakers give printed handouts to the audience to follow as they speak. Others prefer to give their handouts at the end of the talk, because they can distract the audience from the presentation.

i) Purpose

The aim of using PowerPoint slides is to support the points you want to make in speech. The audience will be able to follow better if they can see your key points and examples as well as hearing them. PowerPoint slides can

- Reinforce a point you have made
- Show what something looks like
- Illustrate relationships
- Show information patterns
- Present figures or graphs
- Summarise key points
- Help the audience follow passages or quotations you read aloud

ii) Design

To be effective, PowerPoint slides must be attractive and easy to read. Some basic rules are:

- Size - A4
• Use large fonts and images: Font size - maybe 20 or more depending on the size of the room you will be speaking in. A good idea is to use different sizes for different types of text: i.e. 20 for main headings, 16 for subheadings, 14 for other text.
• Fonts: Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman, Futura, Optima, Verdana, New Century, Schoolbook and Courier. Some companies impose a particular style.
• Layout should be pleasant and easy to read: horizontal/landscape layout is preferable.
• Use CAPITAL LETTERS, **bold face**, *italics*, underlining, (white on black) or shading to highlight.
• Present one key point or example per slide.
• Use headings and bullet points in preference to lines of text.
• Use strong colors and do not use too many.
• Use simple graphs in preference to tables of figures.
• Pay attention to layout. Use the centre of the slide rather than the edges.

Source: [http://ec.hku.hk/epc/presentation/](http://ec.hku.hk/epc/presentation/)