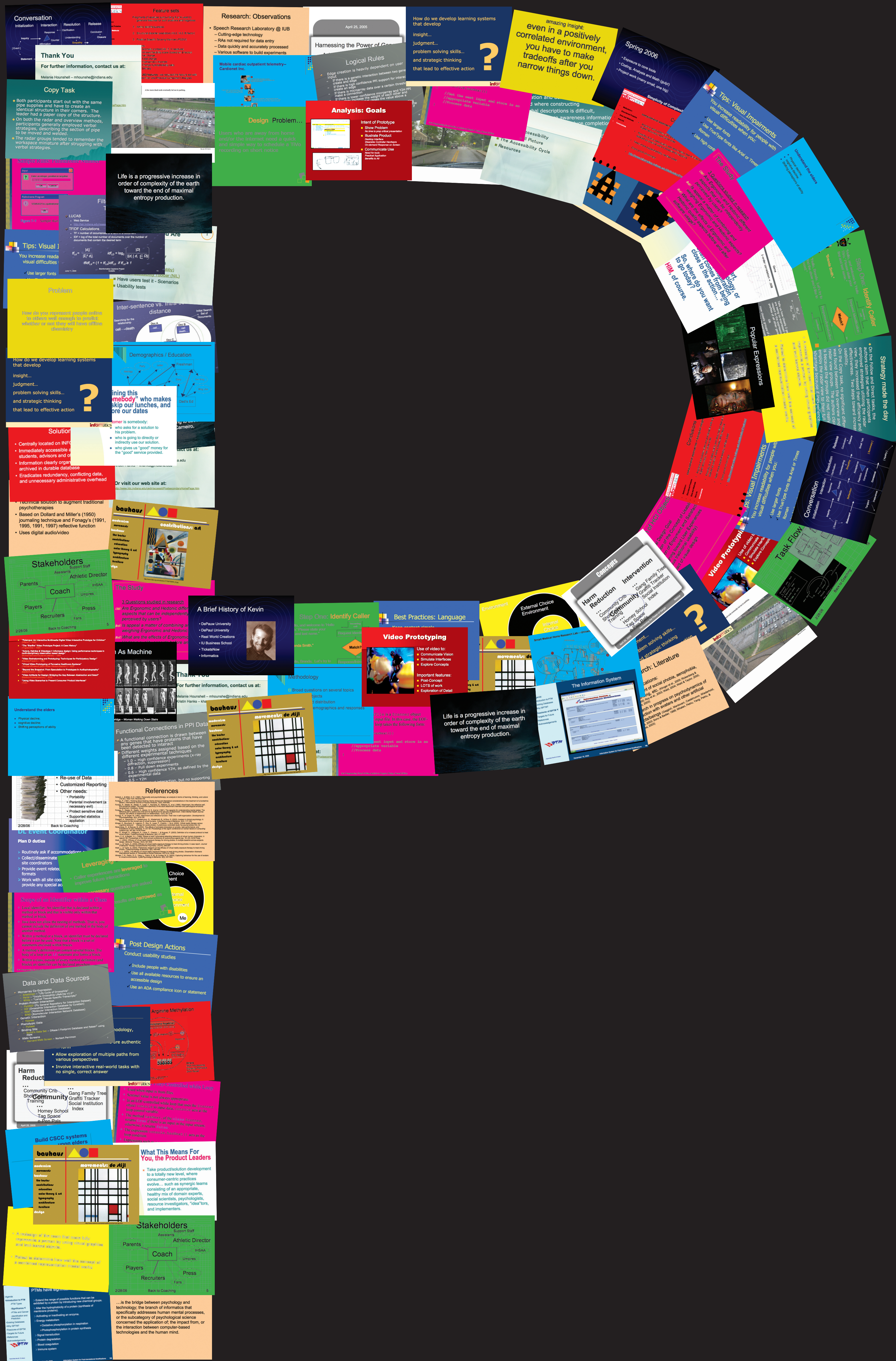


PREPARE • PROJECT • PRESENT

Using Technology to Encourage Effective Presentations



Presentation History

For many years, oral speeches were the predominant means of projecting a message from one person to many others. As technology has progressed, we've seen advances in display technologies, from chalkboards to slide projection to overhead projection. Today, Slideware tools like PowerPoint are the main tool used in preparing for and carrying out oral presentations.

Slideware is Disliked

Slideware packages give complete control over the design of visual aids. However, this freedom has not led to improved presentations. A study carried out as part of this project found that presenters and audiences are bored by presentations today, and believe that tools like PowerPoint "encourage laziness" and "cripple [a presenter's] ability to think independent of technology."

Changing the Culture

Presentation practices today are based on conventions brought about mainly by technology. Audiences and presenters have been trained to expect Slideware to dominate the presentation arena. The way we think about presentations must move away from software-driven slideshows to a situation where the audience expects to be engaged by, interested in, and able to retain the presenter's message.

Moving Forward

Utilizing designs manifested in this project, tools that help presenters assess the audience, evaluate performance, and encourage other positive presentation practices will lead to improved presentations. However, the responsibility does not solely belong to presenters. Audience members must demand great presentations and not settle for boring slideshows. Together, we can learn a lot, but only if we make the effort.

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