

Senior High School

Home of the Golden Tornado



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Preparing a Multimedia Presentation

Multimedia presentations have come a *long, long* way since I was in high school.

A multimedia presentation in 1970-something meant cutting colorful pictures out of magazines, or, if you were lucky enough to be artistic, drawing your posters. If you were really lucky, your school might have a slide show projector and you could pay a photo store to convert your photographs into slides. If you wanted a music

soundtrack, you hunted down a boy on the AV staff and borrowed a record player for the class period. 🎧

I know that's hard for anyone born into the "PowerPoint era" to understand. One thing I can say about my good, old-fashioned method is that presenting with those limited supplies made you FOCUS on the content of your presentation, not on the flash and dazzle, which really is the most important thing to do.

As a student of the 21st century, you have so many elements to choose from to make your multimedia presentation exciting, enlightening, and engaging to others. Digital photos, sound files, podcasts, digital posters, charts, graphs, infographs, digital slide shows, music, videos, animation - it's easy to be overwhelmed by the choices you have.

Any of those can transform a flat, boring presentation into a dynamic and exciting one without a lot of effort on the part of the creator/presenter.

This lesson will look at what you need to do *before* you begin putting together your presentation.

Consider the Content

Not every presentation should be created the same way. Some topics don't work well with flashy animation or an upbeat soundtrack. Some topics require only a few, well-placed and well-selected types of multimedia to help you make your point.

Don't make the mistake many students do and think that if you add enough flashy multimedia and other bells and whistles it will disguise half-baked research. It will not, and your teachers and professors will see right through your attempt. Just like in the movies, great special effects do not disguise a horrible story line or script.

When you begin your presentation, you should pretend as if you will have nothing but TEXT, a.k.a. *your words*, to make your point. Your text or YOUR words is *information*. The information you so thoroughly (right?) researched. These words - this information - is the foundation of your presentation. Strong information creates a *strong foundation* for your presentation. Weak information...well, you know the rest 🙄.

Create an Outline

Just like when you write a research paper, you should begin a multimedia presentation with an outline.

Your outline should contain a listing of your research main

points, with all of the sub-points you plan to make. Write your outline down, and then put it aside for a few days before you look at it again. Sometimes this can help you identify weak spots that might make your presentation confusing to others.

Once you have your outline completed, go back and look at it again, but this time, look for places where you can insert multimedia. Remember, multimedia should *enhance* your presentation material, not replace your information. Here are some points to ponder as you review your outline for multimedia placement, according to *digitalliteracy.com*:

- Would a photograph or other type of illustration make this point easier for the audience to understand?
- Would a chart, graph, infograph, map, or diagram help clarify the points you want to make?
- Will adding these multimedia elements help the audience have a better understanding of the topic?
- Will adding this multimedia help engage the audience and help hold their attention?

You should have answered yes to all of those questions before adding your multimedia.

Develop Your Presentation

Okay, so now that you've decided where you want to place the multimedia, it's time to decide what *type* would work best for each spot to help you make your research point. Let's look at what types you might consider:

- Digital posters
- Handouts
- Charts and graphs
- Maps
- Flyers
- Photos
- Clip Art
- Diagrams
- Slide shows (like PowerPoint)
- Video clips
- Audio clips (like speeches, news stories, etc.)
- Sound and music

You should make a note in your outline where you intend to specifically place each multimedia item. Allow enough time to accommodate your multimedia elements. You may find you need to trim videos, crop photos, etc. to fit into your presentation time frame, slide limitation, etc.

Practice!!

If you do not practice your presentation with all of your multimedia elements in place, your presentation will look awkward and will leave you frustrated and frazzled.

Practice makes perfect! You need to see how much time your multimedia adds to your presentation, and work through smooth transitions between the multimedia and your information. It's also easy to forget when you planned to distribute handouts, etc., when you are nervous, so practicing several times before your actual presentation can help you remember when you want to stop, etc. Practicing will hopefully alleviate uncomfortable pauses while you fumble to start a video, or click the mouse because practice will enable you to move smoothly through your presentation. Uncomfortable pauses can be embarrassing for you, but it can also give your audience time to become distracted by something else. And that's never a good thing!

If you don't have someone to practice in front of, try to record yourself on video (use your phone!) and then watch it back later. This will let you see if you are saying "uh", or "like" or "you know" or any other words repeatedly.

Plan B - When You're Off the Grid

It is always a good idea to have a back-up plan in case some of your technology fails. Hopefully, if you are presenting a PowerPoint or other digital presentation, your teacher or professor will be understanding enough to allow you to present another time, but that may not always be the case.

If you've researched the topic well, you should be able to stand and present even without the multimedia elements. Remember, your information is the foundation of your presentation, and foundations can stand alone.

120 Campus Lane
Butler, PA 16001
Site Map

(724) 214-3200

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