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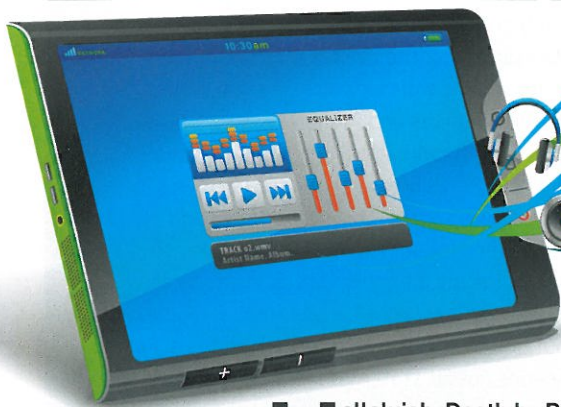
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WORDS CAMERON COOPER

A BETTER EXPERIENCE



**NEW ANIMATION AND
AUDIOVISUAL TOOLS
MAY MEAN THE END OF
DEATH BY POWERPOINT.**

Hallelujah. Death by PowerPoint may well be in the last stage of rigor mortis. For all those conference attendees who have had to sit through dull presentations featuring hundreds of unfathomable slides, the news will be welcome.

In its place is a new line of animation options, audience-engagement tools and audiovisual features.

Blake Harris, Director of Sydney-based creative production company Triumph Leisure Solutions (TLS), comments that demand is on the rise for tech-smart presentations at conferences.

"What we do with a lot of our clients is take them through that transition from PowerPoint to animated you-beaut, high-end productions," he says. "We move them out of PowerPoint into proper video presentations that are fully animated and that sing and dance and engage the audience."

HOW YOU SAY IT

The popularity of such sophisticated video and animation products has also led to TLS creating television commercials for its clients, who increasingly understand the importance of clever branding content. Harris has no doubt that better conference presentations help companies connect with employees or customers.

"If you capture your audience and you've got them sitting down in a room, what you say to them is really important," he says. "[But] how you say it is often just as important."

Dermot Crowley is a Director of Adapt Training Solutions, a corporate training company that helps businesses improve productivity through the smarter use of technology.

Crowley says if presenters must use slide technology such as PowerPoint, they should keep their

on-screen points to a minimum and later distribute more complex information via handouts.

However, Crowley believes innovative presentation tools such as Prezi are the way to go. This web-based presentation editor can be used on a computer or tablet and enables presenters to access text, images and videos in a non-linear format so they can flick from subject to subject, rotating images and zooming in and out to explore the relationship between concepts.

"So rather than going on a linear track of point number one, point number two, it can bring you in and out of a bigger picture," Crowley explains. "It's very intuitive."

COMPLEMENTARY TECHNOLOGY

Other changes Crowley is witnessing include the emergence of wireless audience-response systems that allow presenters to instantly poll delegates. It is also becoming more common for facilitators to give attendees tablets that contain the course material and enable interaction between presenters and audience.

Crowley also agrees that technology should complement rather than dictate speakers' approach.

"A lot of it is about personality; it's about getting out from behind the podium," he says. "Just get out there in front and be animated and use your hands and use gestures and show enthusiasm. All of those things are just so important to connect."

Harris says social-media tools have also sneaked into conferences and seminars, usually via laptops and smartphones. Twitter and LinkedIn are also being used to promote events and increase attendee engagement during and after an event. It is a good move, he argues.

"You've got to be creative, outside the box." **MT**

Cameron Cooper is a freelance business writer.