# THE FUTURE OF PRESENTATIONS
Emerging trends

On a stage in the not too distant future, a presenter steps up to speak. The walls behind and around her audience come to life with three dimensional visuals introducing her and the company she represents. As she begins speaking, she swipes her hand above a tablet device with a long gesture that ends with her palm facing the back wall. A graph seems to fly from the device to the wall, enlarging as it moves. She asks the audience a question, and the attendees respond via their handheld devices. The graph changes instantly. Remote audiences watching on a huge range of different media responded to the same prompt.

While that may sound like a particularly stylised movie scene, all of the technology that makes it possible already exists and is being used in some form in presentations every day. Presentation technology is advancing constantly, with the goal of making human communication more engaging, more effective and capable of communicating complex ideas succinctly. This white paper examines emerging trends in presentation applications, equipment and techniques to help you prepare for the coming shift in audience expectations.
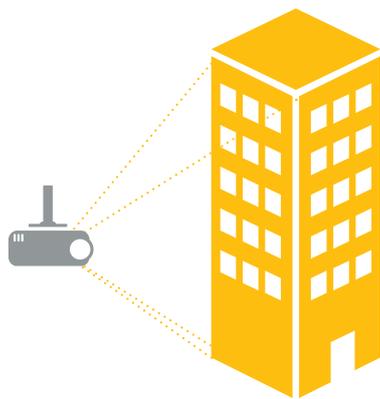
The flagship event

Large-scale presentations to media and big audiences looking for a 'wow factor' could soon be regularly utilising virtual presence in the form of holographic projection. Already used to resurrect departed musicians on big festival stages, holograms are actually just a clever use of 3D projection mapping, using multiple projectors, software and a physical object to carry the image.

Interactive three dimensional graphics are also expected to become commonplace. While it is currently relatively straightforward to have 3D graphics created and projected on cue, the technology will change presentations when the presenter themselves is able to select, manipulate and map images in real-time, by whim and in reaction to the audience. This will involve gesture control of a master device such as a tablet and advanced, automated integration with mapping software and multiple projectors. There are already examples of this technology in the market. The key to utilising it successfully will lie in having the right content created for your message, and knowing when to use it.

The audience speaks

Having now been exposed to the possibilities of interaction via Twitter and live chat applications, audiences now expect more than a simple one-way flow of information from the presenter. Far from a distraction, letting your audience ask questions or vote en masse on a seminar's direction from their phones keeps the attendees engaged and makes them more likely to absorb your message.

There are already countless applications across multiple platforms available to integrate the audience into the content. All offer a variation on a theme – the audience presses a button, writes a message or engages with pre-made content and their results of this are then collated to a main screen. What the presenter needs to be clear about is when and how to use the technology. Presenters that allow themselves to be guided and structured by audience curiosity must know their material inside-out. This rules out the possibility of a presenter using AV as a crutch and simply reading out or referring to slides to get through their material. The presenter must be confident in responding to audience questions and capable of bringing the material back to the important points after digressions. Preparation is key.

In the office

As technological change filters down the enterprise chain, small boardrooms and collaboration spaces used for day-to-day business will be transformed. Increasing bandwidth and High-Definition video have made telepresence a reality for many organisations. More than a traditional video conference, telepresence grants a level of life-like representation of remote participants that encourages engagement and interactivity. Quite simply, the closer the audio and video representation of our colleagues is to reality, the more likely we are to work with them as we would if they were in the room. Previous generations of video technology distanced us from those dialing in; the next generation connects us. Soon video will stream in 4K, at four times the current resolution of HD.

The added dimension of telepresence is collaborative work. Sharing computer applications, images and documents across multiple screens, working on the same document as if you were in the room together. A speaker can not only broadcast their presentation across multiple regional offices, but also open up and share documents for alteration and comment from any audience member. Similarly, a colleague can interject with more up-to-date numbers, a great example of an idea in practice or an image that answers the presenter's question.
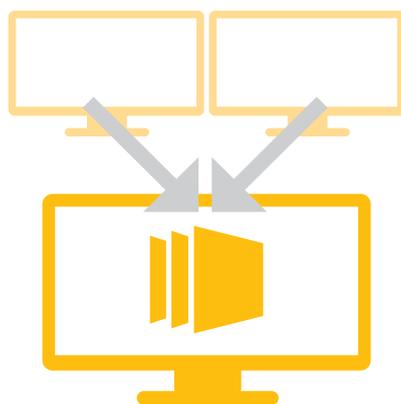
Just between us

Even at the smallest scale that could be termed a 'presentation', in which just two or three people work together, technology already exists to greatly enhance communication. If the collaboration is occurring in one physical location, wireless products enable all devices present to connect to the room's screen and individually share content to it. The same technology, scaled up, also allows remote participants to connect to the system, with all of the same sharing capabilities as if they were there.

Increasingly, these systems allow for amazing flexibility. Not only can different types of devices be connect together (phones, laptops, screens) but also different operating systems – iOS, PC, Android, Linux. Cross-compatibility on this scale was a physical impossibility just a few short years ago. Applications now exist that enable users on different platforms to actually work together of the same document, regardless of operating system. Across an network connection and through a shared app, a Mac user can edit an Excel spreadsheet and a PC user can collaborate in editing a Final Cut video, each with their own mouse and total independence.

What's really important

No matter what technologies come along, no matter how real the virtual becomes, the central part of every presentation will always be humans communicating with one another. On the big stage, it's always going to be about someone with great information and insight sharing with an audience. In the meeting rooms and offices, it's about someone with a great idea spreading the word. Technology just helps us tailor our message, simplify the complex and make it memorable. Staging Connections understands the centrality of our physical presence when communicating, and can assist anyone to get the most of out of current (and future) presentation technologies.
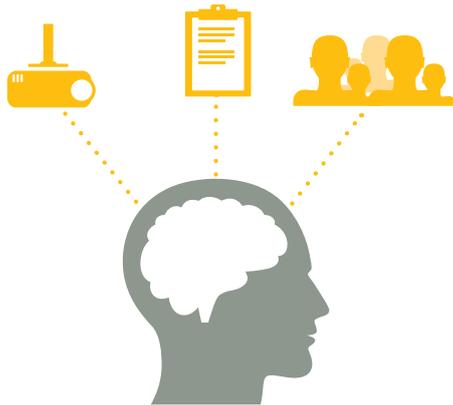
Be prepared

Proper preparation for the presenter is absolutely vital, especially when introducing interactivity, audience participation and any other element that creates a flexible structure. Staging Connections Conference Services ensure that all speakers are prepared and coached if necessary, AV materials are compiled well ahead of time and a space for editing last minute changes is available at the event itself. For more details on this vital resource, go to **www.stagingconnections.com/conference-services**. They can also help prepare speakers in using these new technologies, alleviating any concerns both before and during the event.

In a more general sense, the presenters of the near future need to prepare for the bar to be raised. The internet, video sharing and remote participation means your audience has already been exposed to some of the best speakers in the world, creating and delivering amazing presentations with arresting content. While it may not be fair to compare the elaborate conceptual and visual pyrotechnics of a TED Talk with your quarterly sales meeting, your audience will be doing it anyway, even if just subconsciously. Go back to fundamentals before pulling out the digital tricks – know your material, don't read from notes or slides, encourage participation and be capable of responding to everything.
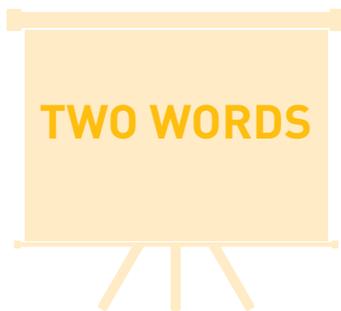
Watch the masters

TWO WORDS

The late Steve Jobs had a rule – never more than two words of text on a slide – the presenter is the one who's meant to be supplying the content. In the coming world when your audience will be able to walk into a 3D projected model of the proposed building project you're talking about, no-one's going to have any patience for bullet points. Keep an eye out for what's next in presentations – you will see it as it happens through events you attend, shared videos, and recommendations from colleagues and friends. As presentations enter their next age, Staging Connections will continue to adopt and champion new technologies that help presenters claim their rightful place at centre stage.

Consult with an expert

Consider what you actually want to achieve in your presentation: is it to convince a group to adopt a behaviour? Buy a product? Remember a set of facts? Consult with an expert in presentation technology, like Staging Connections, who can help point you toward the right solution for your application. Staging Connections deploy a range of presentation aids over a huge number of events and have first-hand knowledge of what best engages an audience.

Interested in adding extra dimensions to your next event? Contact your Staging Connections representative or call us on **1800 209 099** or email **marketing@stagingconnections.com**

stagingconnections.com/event-insights

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