

President's News Digest

Message From the Editor

Welcome to the 25th issue of the 5th volume of the President's News Digest.

In this issue **Dr. Mohamed Abdeldayem, Head of the Department of Design & Arts, Faculty of Arts & Science** will address the subject of " **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly : The Increasing of Importance of Designing Proper Visual Aids In the Era of Distance Learning "**

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Mrs.Hessa Al Meraisi
 Manager of President's Office

Message from a Colleague

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: The Increasing Importance of Designing Proper Visual Aids in the Era of Distance Learning.

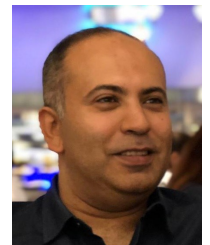
Introduction

Whether in the era of the pandemic or not, we always need to enrich our presentations during our lectures. However, now we all went distance learning because of the vicious Covid-19, we may need to make our presentations more engaging!

With nearly all education institutions transitioning to online and distance learning during the COVID-19 outbreak, digital visual aids are much more important for communication. It is now well known the key role of visual communication. "Educational psychologist Jerome Bruner of New York University cites studies that show persons only remember ten percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they read, but about 80 percent of what they see and do" (Lester, 2006).

However, visual communication must be done using proper visual aids. I have attended several seminars and workshops with many ugly PowerPoint presentations and badly designed infographics. There have been great talkers, wonderful topics, but with disastrous visual aids. In such presentations, MS PowerPoint slides are abusively used as mere pointless spaces that are crammed with text, limited, mostly irrelevant and low-resolution images. As if this all is not enough, and appalling colours!

Ghulam Shabiralyani, et al. define visual aids as "tools that help to make an issue or lesson clearer or easier to understand and know" (Shabiralyani et al., 2015). But to be more specific, this article is particularly interested in the visual aids of the digital era. PowerPoint presentations are in fact not enough on their own. We can make greater use of online videos like those on YouTube or Vimeo, we can use audio recordings and we can definitely pick from a plethora of readily available royalty-free digital images. But the real deal is: how we should use all those types of media while keeping our presentations tidy? In other words, how we can build up rich, but also neat content.



Dr Mohamed Abdeldayem
 Head of the Department of Design & Arts, Faculty of Arts & Science.

Dr. Mohamed Abdeldayem Soltan is the Head of the Department of Design & Arts, Faculty of Arts & Science. Dr Mohamed is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK. He has more than 18 years in of experience in academia. He joined ASU in 2018 as an assistant professor in the Department of Design & Arts.

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رمضان أفيل

Quote of the week

من روائع الشعر العربي

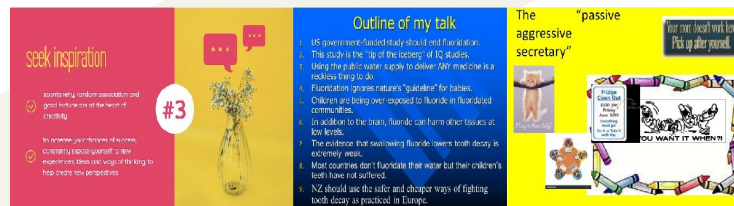
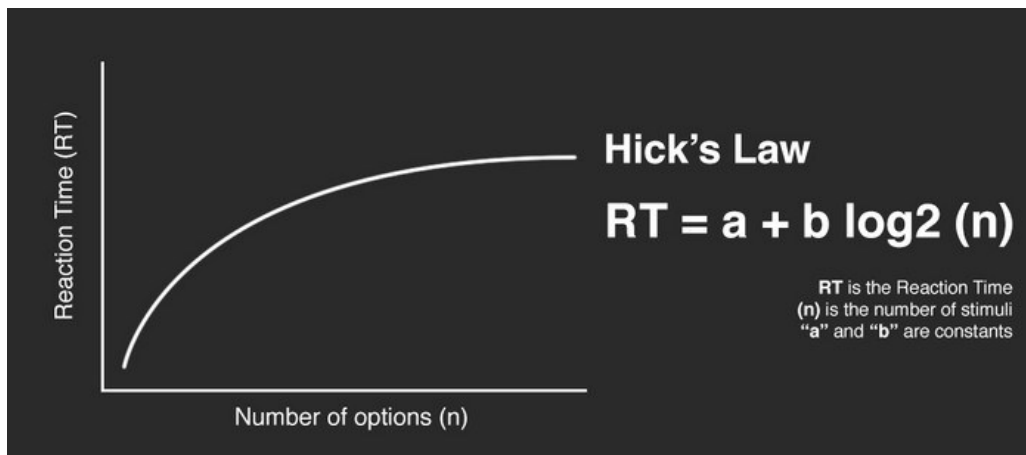


Figure 1: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: examples of presentations' slides ranging from good design to disastrous design

Hick's Law

Probably the answer lies in some of the principles and laws that are well known for professional designers. For instance, Hick's Law is famously implemented in many design purposes as it proved effective in making choice easier for the user. "Hick's Law (or the Hick-Hyman Law) is named after a British and an American psychologist team of William Edmund Hick and Ray Hyman. In 1952, this pair set out to examine the relationship between the number of stimuli present and an individual's reaction time to any given stimulus" (Soegaard, 2020).

Hick's Law is simply based on the idea that the more choices presented to the users, the longer it will take them to decide. Despite, this idea is common sense, it can be easily overlooked as it appears that many people prefer to cram too much information. In the context of this article the user here is the student, who can be overwhelmed with presentations containing too much items. As you can imagine, it is hectic to follow such presentations. The formula for Hick's Law is defined as follows: $RT = a + b \log_2 (n)$. The following illustration shows a diagram that explains Hick's Law, where reaction time (RT) increases in a direct proportion with the number of options (n).

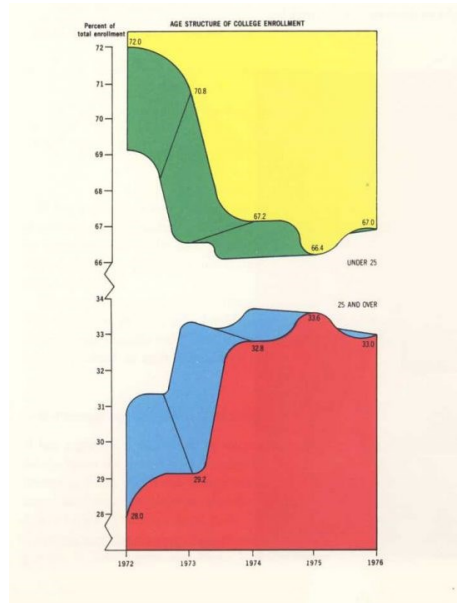


Tufte's Principles

Among many other important design principles there are the so-called Tufte's Principles. In 1983, Edward Tufte introduced the concept of "data-ink ratio" in his book *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. In print media, the "data-ink ratio" is the ratio between the amount of ink used to transfer information, and the total ink used to print the graphic. In doing so, Tufte called for maximizing the data-ink ratio by removing any elements that do not contribute reasonably to the transfer of new information. This principle can be illustrated through the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Data-ink ratio} &= \frac{\text{Data-ink}}{\text{Total ink used to print the graphic}} \\ &= \text{proportion of a graphic's ink devoted to the non-redundant display of data-information} \\ &= 1.0 - \text{proportion of a graphic that can be erased} \end{aligned}$$

This concept can be applied to multimedia presentations used in lectures. Students might be particularly misled by information introduced through visual illustrations which have inflated graphics that do not properly express intended facts. This can cause misinterpretation of facts among students and hence confusion. Diagrams with low data-ink ratio can be misleading and confusing, thus described as graph with low graphical integrity. The following illustration shows an example of graphs with low graphical integrity where a visual aid becomes a visual impediment. ('Tufte's Principles', 2018)



Tufte accordingly came up with certain principles that can be very handy to those who seek better presentations with more reliable visual aids. Principles that can be important in this context are as follows:

1. Attention to the diversity of medium size: in distance learning students may prefer to open lectures through their mobile phones, i.e. smaller screens. Teachers need to put this in mind while designing their presentations.
2. User expectations: Students interact with digital information differently from the printed medium, and they are more likely to "scan" this information with their eyes.
3. Colors: Choosing a color group that is inconsistent with one another or with the content may lead to improper reception of the information.
4. Density of information: intensification of information must be avoided, whether textual or visual.

Conclusion

We seek to deliver our lectures in the most useful and engaging ways. It can be achieved by simply trying to think as a student. Students are tough audience who can lose interest in a matter of minutes even if they appear to be listening to you. We do not want this to happen because this means actual learning is not happening. Therefore, teachers need to use all tricks up in their sleeves, and they need to use them well enough to really engage students. Multimedia presentations are not enough on their own unless they are well designed for the purpose. Teachers need to know how, when and why they use certain images, fonts, colours, etc.

Final to say: in case of uncertainty, ask a designer for advice!

Sources

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- Soegaard, M. (2020). *Hick's Law: Making the choice easier for users*. The Interaction Design Foundation. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/hick-s-law-making-the-choice-easier-for-users>
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Universities and the Importance of Foresight

In a changing world, universities will need to adjust to a new landscape of higher education. The impact of a pandemic will be long lasting and it will be felt across many sectors including higher education. Foresight will play a major role in driving future universities. There will be many factors that affect the landscape. First, people will have less money as a downturn in economic activities will undoubtedly take place. This will force many parents to choose local rather than overseas education for their children. Franchised programmes will become more popular and this will create an opportunity for us to strengthen our partnership with LSBU and develop more new academic programmes. Our emphasis in developing new courses with LSBU and locally should be on what it will give us a competitive advantage. Subjects allied to medicine, foresight, and political science and its related subjects in a changing world, are just examples of what we could be covering. The College of Engineering has potential to develop many new programmes in topical areas. Joint research and publications will become more important in order to address issues related to any pandemic or other crises and their related activities. Research in the area of foresight and futurology will become more popular as we need to have scenarios for the future and get prepared for them. Scenario planning is not about predicting the future but it is about getting prepared for it. Serious research can only be conducted through funded mechanisms and doctoral programmes. ASU is in a good position to develop serious PhD programmes in 2 Colleges namely Administrative Sciences and Law. Blended learning will become more popular and accepted as governments will adopt cost effective approaches and the recent experience in online learning and teaching has proved that the Kingdom of Bahrain and most universities and schools are prepared to embrace this new innovative approach. E-training will also become more popular and we should be prepared to embrace it.

Second, the political factor will be important as new alliances will be formed once the pandemic is over. Our University should set up strategic alliances locally and internationally to take advantage of the new reality.

Third, social factors will have some influence. Families will be keen to stay together in the foreseeable future and parents will encourage their children not to be educated overseas as it is safer and more convenient to be in the Kingdom.

Last, perceptions factors have changed about where the best education is delivered. The recent experience demonstrated that advanced nations performed worse than others in dealing with a pandemic which will raise question marks about the quality of research in some of their universities especially in the areas of foresight and medical applications.

Universities with the amount of knowledge they generate and the research they conduct should be in a position to at least produce scenarios that help us to get prepared. Unfortunately, past experiences have not been encouraging as we failed to anticipate major events like Tsunami in 2004, September 11, and many pandemics including the current one. Foresight or future studies when conducted scientifically can undoubtedly help.

ASU is in a strong position to perform well in the future considering our achievements in recent years. It is all about quality, excellence, and relevance which should be embraced fully by all stakeholders of the University. We should also embrace the areas of foresight, futurology and future studies in our teaching, research and training programmes.

<https://rossdawson.com/futurist/university-foresight-programs/>



Written By
Professor Ghassan Aouad
The President of Applied
Science University

Online Academic Advising workshop

In order to support our students, especially students at risk, an online academic advising workshop was organised by ASDU (Academic Staff Development Unit) and delivered by Dr Siddiq Babaker on 26/04/2020.

The workshop was for all academics across all colleges with the aim to demonstrate the extra support and the resources provided by the SIS(the students information system), its process and technicalities, some examples of good Vs bad practices of Academic Advising with a particular emphasis on students at risk .

The workshop was very successful, about 65 academics attended the online workshop and many participated to the Q/A session



Written By
Dr. Faiza Zitouni
Assistant Vp for
Academic Development
(Principal Fellow of HEA-UK)



Congratulations to Dr Moaiad Khder - Senior Member of IEEE

Dr Moaiad Khder the Head of Computer Science Department, has been elevated to the grade of Senior Member of IEEE on 13 April 2020.

Senior Member is the highest professional grade of IEEE for which a member may apply.

It requires extensive experience, and reflects professional accomplishment and maturity.

Only 10% of IEEE more than 400,000 members have achieved this level.

Continuous support from ASU management and College Deanship in addition to Dr. Moaiad professional achievements that led to this recognition and enable Dr.Moaiad Khder to join the elite rank of IEEE Senior Member.



In Preparation for the Virtual ISO 9001:2015 Surveillance 2 Audit: The ACU Conducts its Audits Virtually

In preparation for the ISO 9001:2015 Surveillance 2 Audit that is taking place virtually on 21 April 2020, the Audit & Compliance Unit (ACU) undertook a series of internal audits as per a specific plan from 13 to 16 April 2020 covering all the administrative functions within the scope of the ISO certification:

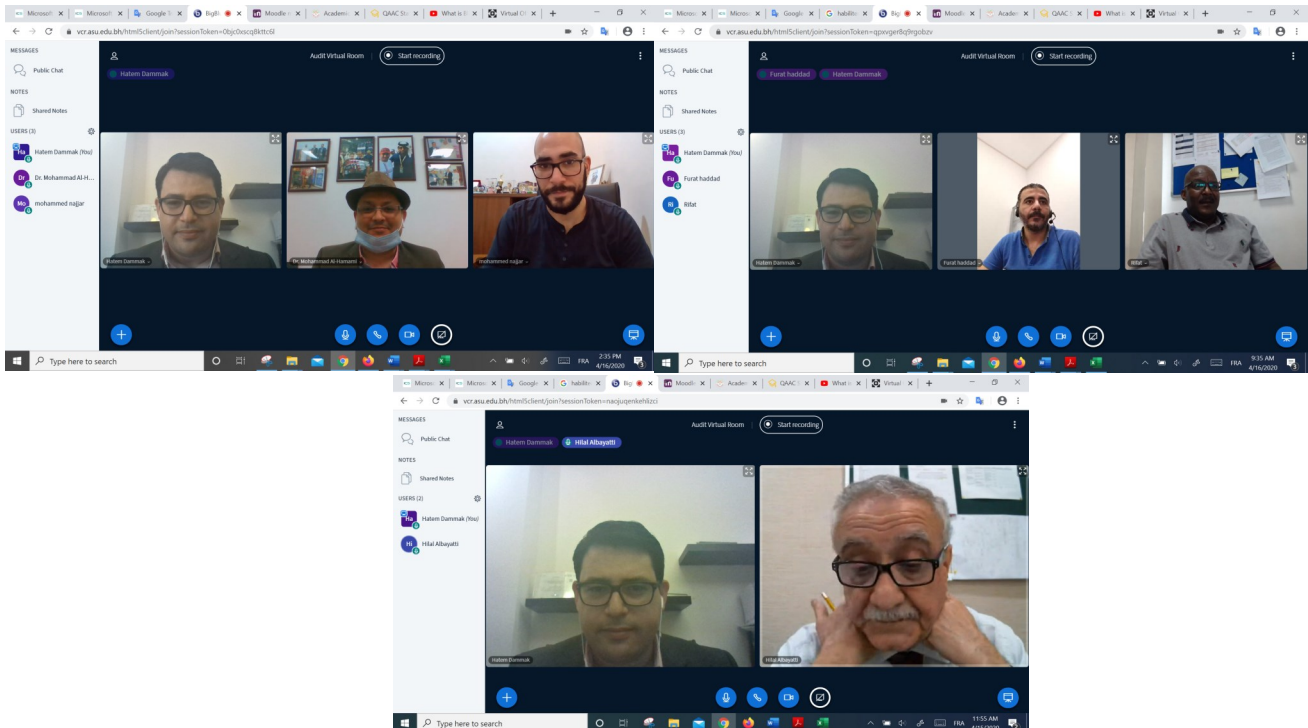
- HR and Administration Departments
- Finance Department
- Procurement and Logistics Services
- Directorate of Admissions and Registration
- QAAC
- Directorate of Library and Information Services
- Deanship of Student Affairs
- Directorate of ICT and KM
- Community Engagement Office
- Directorate of Marketing and Public Affairs



Written by
Mr. Hatem Dammak
Head of Audit & Compliance
Unit – Acting Secretary
General of University
Councils

The internal audits were conducted virtually (except for a site visit to the Library) as a mock to the external surveillance audit as it will also be conducted virtually. The virtual audit interviews went smoothly demonstrating that the technology is suitable. All colleagues from the various departments were very cooperative and exhibited strong command of their respective fields. That said, this exercise helped identify a number of improvement areas which will be discussed at the Management Review Meeting to be held on Monday 20 April 2020 starting from 11:00 am.

The external surveillance audit will be conducted on Tuesday 21 April 2020 all-day long.



رمضانُ أَقْبِلُ

بقلم د. علي الددا- قائم بأعمال
رئيس قسم العلوم السياسية



في رمضان صافح قلبك، وراجع نفسك، وارثق فتق جُرحك، وأقبل على الله بكلّ جوارحك، معترفاً بفضلِهِ وشاكراً لِنِعَمِهِ السابغة. أعد ترتيب ذاتك، قلب صفحات حياتك، ولملم ما انتثر من شظايا روحك، واجبر ما انكسر بداخلك من توقعاتك وآمالك. تجاوز عثراتك وانهض من جديد، واقترّب من أحلامك، وأطبق عليها واحملها، وارثق بها المدارج بخطى الواثق بالله، منافحاً عن قيمك وأخلاقك. جاهد نفسك، واغسل قلبك مما رانَ عليه من الخطوب والمشكلات، وداهم ذنوبك في جوف الليل بأفواجٍ من التسبيح والاستغفار.

وفي نهار رمضان، اجعل روحك تذوب في نفحاته، وأوقد شموع الآمال للمتعبين، واسرق من افتدتهم أوجاع السنين، واسحق بداخلهم هموم ضيق ذات اليد إلى حين، واسترق السمع إلى نبضات قلوب المحرومين، واحرق من حولهم أسباب قنوطهم المُستكين، فلا حرج عليك. واجعل ليالي رمضان العامرة بالطاعات، سبباً للقرب من الله ونيل رضاه، وامدّد شرياناً من المحبة مع كل من جافيته أو جافاك.

املاً كفوفاً الضعيفة بدموع الخشية، واجعلها تسافرُ سابعةً صُحبةً روحك في الأفاق. وانأى بقلبك عن فصول الوجع، وشيّد حوله حُصوناً من تهذيب النفس وتكاملية الروح والجسد. واغمس في شريان الحياة فتيلةً من الإيمان، لتغدو شعلةً يستضيء بها كل من حولك. وانسج بساطاً من الصبر، زينةً بالوانٍ من التسامح، ولا تنس أن تطلقه بعد ذلك، قمرأ يدور في ملكوت الكون.

ضُرُّ وَجُرْحِي نازِفُ	رمضانُ أَقْبِلُ مَسْنِي
والأجرُ فيكَ مُضاعَفُ	فيكَ السكينةُ كُلُّها
وارفقِ فأنتَ العارفُ	يا ربِّ هَبْني قيامه
كم مزقتهُ مَواقِفُ	كم ذاقَ قلبي لوعةً
للضُرِّ غيرُكَ كاشِفُ	والضُرُّ إن يسري فما



Quote of the Week

“ In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can “

- Nikos Kazantzakis

من روائع الشعر العربي

أحسن إلى الناس تستعبد قلوبهم * فطالما استعبد الإنسان إحسان

- أبو الفتح البستي