

PREZI: A GIFT FOR PRESENTERS

All my friends know that I'm not a huge fan of technology for its own sake – I still use a Filofax, for example, which causes much hilarity in certain circles. Still, I have moved into the 21st century and I can tweet and blog happily enough when I'm in the mood.



When I'm training presenters, I focus on helping them to project themselves, bringing their personality, voice and body language into play. We look at where the audience is coming from, and what they want, need or expect from the presentation. It's all about building the speaker's confidence so that he or she won't need the comfort blanket of the 97 slides, which many people think allows them to slide into the background!

I never rely too heavily on gizmos when I'm training or presenting - what if there's a power cut? Or the technology fails to operate? A well-prepared speaker can ride that kind of setback out.

Plus, I've sat through too many so-called workshops where I'm using the boring PowerPoint-generated handouts to count down the endless PowerPoint slides in a vain attempt not to fall asleep. I also amuse myself by counting those slides which are so detailed and illegible that the presenter has to apologise "I know you can't really see this one properly..." (So why bother?)

However, a year or so ago, I discovered Prezi, which is a web-based programme for designing visual aids for presentations. Despite what you might now be thinking, I'm not a complete Luddite, and when I was introduced to the thinking behind Prezi – it works on the mind mapping principle – and the relatively simple control panel known as the zebra, I'll admit to being beguiled, just a little. It's very dynamic, and allows you to integrate other media such as video easily.

What's more, you can use Prezi for free, as long as you don't mind working online and sharing your ideas; plus there are very detailed tutorials to get you started. If you have a presentation coming up, I'd advise giving Prezi a go.

One word of warning, though: it's possible, and tempting, to make the words and images swirl in and out – possible also to make the whole audience feel seasick!

Find Prezi at <http://prezi.com> and play around with it. Have fun.