

Designing **High-Impact, Low-Bandwidth** Messages to Help People Act Quickly (Part 1)



Presented to the
San Luis Obispo STC

by
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We're here to explore the design of **static visual information** (for print or Web)



Today's media-saturated world challenges people to comprehend and respond quickly



Employees and customers alike are overloaded and attention-limited



We must "grab our audiences by the eyeballs" before their attention goes elsewhere!



Poll: What types of "multi-tasking" do you do?

- None
- Talk on phone while reading e-mail
- Listen to radio while reading a book
- Watch TV while reading a book
- Check e-mail while reading a book

This presentation covers three important topics...

1

Challenges

2

Solutions

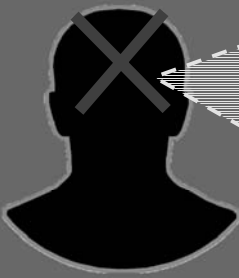
3

Research

Topic 1: What challenges do we often encounter with information design?



Poor visual presentation can *delay* or even *prevent* understanding and action...



We must help our audiences *scan*, *skip*, and *retrieve* information — and then *act* on it...



In **memos** that explain new developments...



Experiment...



Information Mapping® offers a **structured writing program** with similar dramatic results



www.InfoMap.com

In company **policies** that provide guidelines on personnel conduct...



In **instruction, job aids, procedures, signs,** and **forms** that tell people what to do...



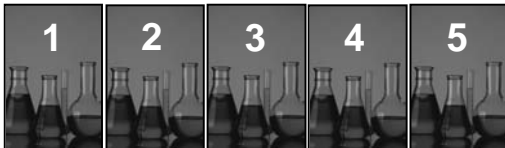
And, in **interface designs, manuals, and Help** that show how to interact with systems



How do we solve these problems?
5 information design solutions help people quickly interpret, retain, and apply information



Topic 2 - Five solutions: *Classifying, Chunking, Arranging, Simplifying, and Illustrating*



Solution 1:

Classifying
organizes
content into
actionable
types

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Fact Example:

“Over 200 breeds of dogs exist around the world.”

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Concept Examples:

“dog”
“book”
“weather”

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Procedure Example:

Example of a Step-by-Step Procedure

How to Teach Your Dog to Sit

Step 1: Stand in front of your dog.

Step 2: Hold a treat near your dog's nose.

Step 3: Slowly move the treat over your dog's head, toward his or her tail.

Step 4: Say your dog's name, and say, "Sit."

Adapted from www.show.com/how_65_train-dog-sit.html

Facts

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Procedures

Processes

Principles

Procedure Example:

Example of a Procedure Flowchart

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Process Example:

Example of a Process Diagram

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Process Example:

Example of a Process Diagram

Image from www.srm.joi.is/article.asp?cat_id=57

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Process Example:

Examples of Process Map Symbols

Adapted from *The Internet Manifesto* by Rich Schefren

Facts

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Process Example:

Example of a Process Map

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

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Principles

Principle Example:

Examples of Guidelines

Writing Interview Questions

- **Determine** which skills you want to explore during the interview.
- **Develop** a question for each selected skill.
- **Write** questions that are job-relevant, open ended, verifiable from past performance, and non-discriminatory.
- **Review** the questions to be sure they meet all of these guidelines.

Adapted from *Developing Technical Training* by Ruth Clark

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Principle Example:

Examples of Business Rules

Adapted from [http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/...](http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/)

Facts

Concepts

Procedures

Processes

Principles

Principle Example:

Example of IF-THEN Decision Table

IF the document is...	THEN...
A company: • form • organization chart • job aid	• Follow steps 3 and 8 from the checklist. • Return the document to the author for final review.
• Quality Record (QR) • Job Instruction (JI) • Project-specific document	• Follow steps 1 and 7 from the checklist. • Be sure QRs meet the standards stated in Practice 0-0-2.

Solution 2:

Chunking organizes content into smaller, more digestible blocks

Doggie Training Manual

Fact Over 200 breeds of dogs exist around the world.

Concepts Definition of a dog: ...
Examples:

Procedure How to Teach Your Dog to Sit

Step 1: Stand in front of your dog.

Step 2: Hold a treat near your dog's nose.

Step 3: Slowly move the treat over your dog's head, toward his or her tail.

Step 4: Say your dog's name, then "Sit."

Solution 3:

Arranging text and graphics with visual cues helps people *scan, skip,* and *retrieve* quickly

Heading → Doggie Training Manual

Label → Fact Over 200 breeds of dogs exist around the world.

Section divider

Concepts Definition of a dog: ...

White space

Grouping

Bold text → Procedure How to Teach Your Dog to Sit

List of items

Step 1: Stand in front of your dog.
Step 2: Hold a treat near your dog's nose.
Step 3: Slowly move the treat over your dog's head, toward his or her tail.
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Resources for learning more about **classifying, chunking, and arranging**

Classifying & chunking

Arranging

Solution 4:

Use active voice, simple words; indicate who takes action

Good:
"The technician removes the tray from the table."

Good:
[You] "Remove the tray from the table."

Not good:
"The tray is removed from the table."

Solution 5:

Illustrations reinforce or replace text with graphic elements

A picture is worth a thousand words...

Types of **dogs**

Solution 5:

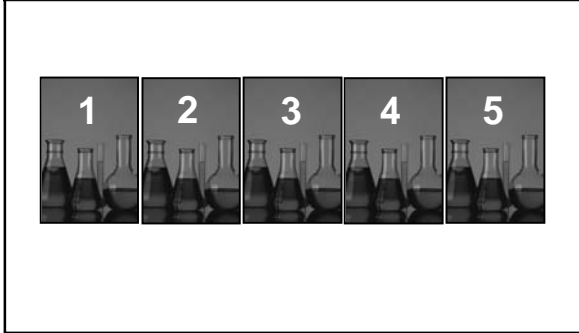
Illustrations reinforce or replace text with graphic elements

A great resource...

Illustration helps us visualize information
(Example: CommuniCards.com)

Illustration helps us visualize information
(Example: Visual-Literacy.org)

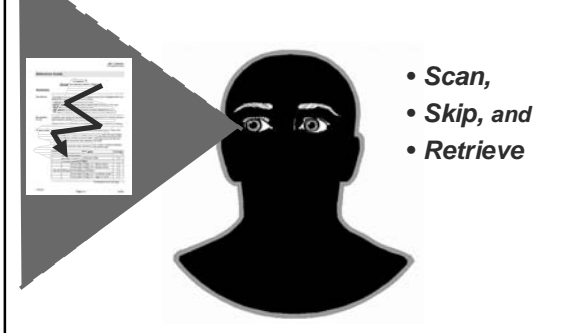
In Topic 2, we covered 5 information design solutions...



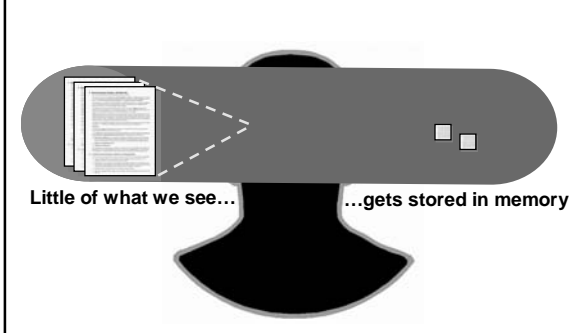
Topic 3: What research supports these solutions? Why do they work?

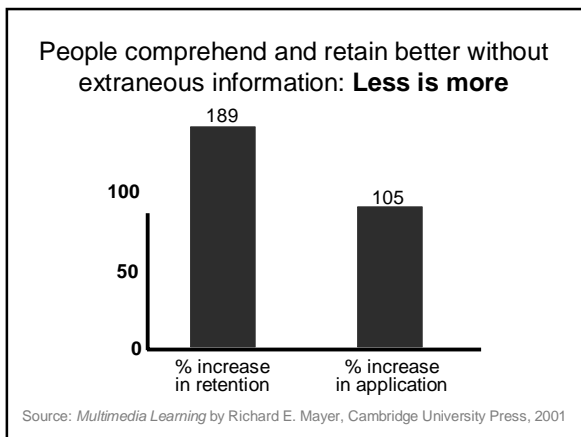
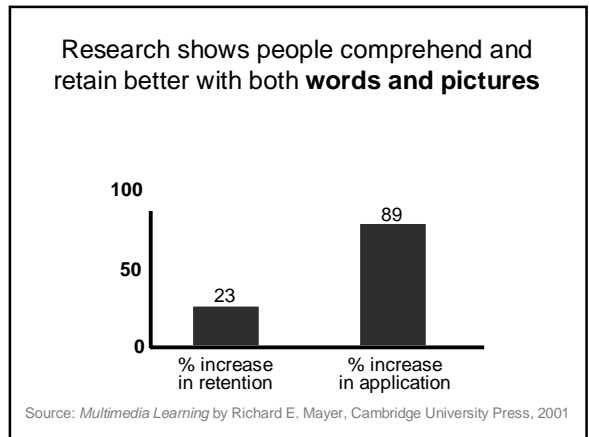
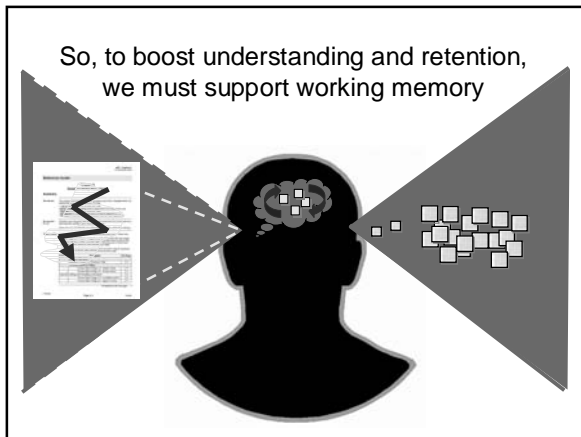
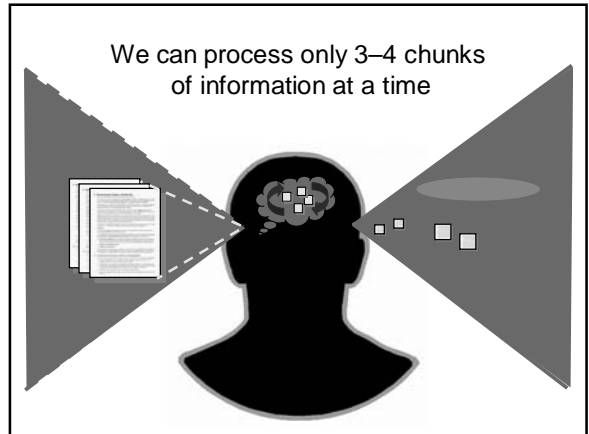
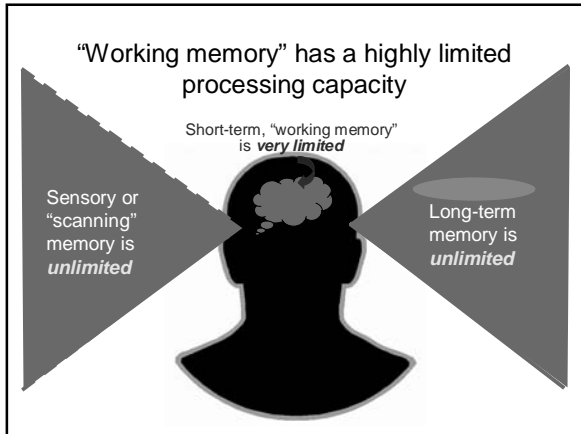


The solutions apply the Gestalt psychologists' research on visual cues to help people...



They address the limitations of how we process information, which is **not** a uniform "pipeline"





Topic 3 explored the research that supports the use of these 5 techniques

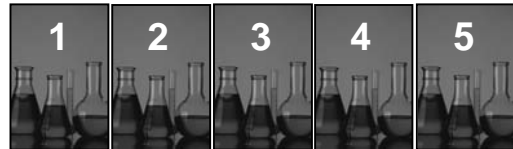
In conclusion...

Use these 5 **information design** solutions to help guarantee your audience's success



1. Classifying
2. Chunking
3. Arranging
4. Simplifying
5. Illustrating

Using these techniques together produces the best results!



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