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Creating on Online Hub for Professional Presence

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Creating on Online Hub for Professional Presence

by

Charlene Hopela

A Portfolio
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
St. Cloud State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Science in
Information Media: Technology Integration

June 2015

Culminating Project Committee:
Jeanne Anderson, Chairperson
Kristen Carlson
Emil Towner
The best ideas are common property.

~ Seneca (5 BC - 65 AD), Epistles
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Chapter 1: Introduction

While the term ‘social network’ may bring to mind breezy personal updates, selfies and BuzzFeed links, some college graduates are putting an emphasis on work-related aspects of this online activity. LinkedIn, the leading online resume bank, is used for self-presentation with a focus on developing meaningful business or employment connections (Schaffer, N. (2014). In 2012, LinkedIn purchased SlideShare, another professional services firm. With this merger, LinkedIn continues to act as a social network for professionals. “SlideShare's strength is in sharing presentations, usually crafted by those same professionals” (Hachman, 2012). Easy connectivity between the sites allows users to supplement their LinkedIn resumes with relevant work materials hosted on Slideshare.

Professionals in a wide range of fields are using SlideShare to share knowledge, develop name recognition and build community. This open-platform social media site allows users to create individual profiles and showcase their work, increasing the audience for several types of informational material: chiefly slide presentations and infographics. By late 2013, over 15 million “SlideShares” had been uploaded to the site (Smith, 2014). What is behind this explosion of content? Some users are contributing to informal communities of practice. Others are marketing products and services. Many are hoping to get noticed by potential employers. By sharing professional materials on the Web, knowledge workers can differentiate themselves from other job seekers in a widespread marketplace.

The repercussions of the U.S. recession, beginning in 2001, and the global recession of 2009, are still being felt by many job seekers and newly established professionals. Graduating in a recession typically results in initial earnings losses as new workers have difficulty finding jobs that are a good fit and settle for marginal employment. Kouropoulos, Watcher and Heist (2006)
analyzed large data sets on Canadian college graduates who launched careers in economic recessions and found a persistent negative impact on earnings as a result of early labor market conditions. During a recession, new workers are more likely to start careers with smaller, lower-paying employers and spend subsequent years catching up by switching jobs more frequently than graduates who entered the labor pool in better times. Workers who moved on to new opportunities by changing employers had higher wage gains than those who stayed put with their current firms.

Kouropoulos, Watcher and Heist (2006) note “mobility appears conducive to wage growth” (p. 26) and is a viable means of mitigating initial wage losses due to recession. Recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics finds today’s average worker stays at a job for 4.4 years. The workforce’s youngest bracket of employees, the Millenials, “expect to stay in a job for less than three years,” according to a Future Workplace “Multiple Generations @ Work” survey of 1,189 employees (Meister, 2012).

In a report on labor trends in the U.S., Langdon et al. (2004) noted an unusual “post-recession disconnect between overall economic growth and the labor market” (p. 50). Since the Great Recession, workers have experienced a climate of employment contraction and instability. Many are planning defensively for unexpected job loss by keeping their social media profiles and associated artifacts current. This paper will focus on the advantages of using LinkedIn and SlideShare in tandem for competitive advantage in the workplace by utilizing key features of each site. On LinkedIn, this means posting a compelling resume and networking through targeted LinkedIn Groups. On SlideShare, users benefit from content sharing to illustrate LinkedIn resume points and engage in lifelong learning.
Background and Theme

The connection between LinkedIn and SlideShare has been strengthened with new features linking a user’s accounts from each site. For example, SlideShare packages an individual’s LinkedIn career highlights in an interactive presentation format called a Professional Journey. Drawing from the user’s online resume, a summary presentation is created on SlideShare as a companion service to LinkedIn.

SlideShare is a collaborative media site for business people and academics alike. Gonzales and Vodicka (2012) describe the platform “as the YouTube for documents instead of videos” (p. 29). Like YouTube, SlideShare is free to users. The site began operations with a freemium strategy, allowing most to use the service without paying fees. Popular with Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) companies, this marketing strategy relies on fees collected from those opting to pay for enhanced services. The freemium tactic generally falls short as a long-term business model; and while used as a means to enter a market before building an advertising base, the approach rarely leads “to a substantial increase in paying customers” (Murphy, 2010, p.3).

Initially, SlideShare offered “Pro” accounts to users willing to pay for premium service features including analytics, content privacy settings, and profile branding enhancements. Since late 2014, Pro tier services have been made free to users while maintaining an ad-free environment. All users can access an analytics dashboard with graphed data on the number of presentation views generated by direct search, social media and other sources driving traffic to content.

Most of SlideShare content consists of slide presentations and infographics. Once content is uploaded to the site, the user receives a URL link that can be shared via email. Those receiving the link can view content online or download the presentation in PDF format. SlideShare
documents can be embedded into websites, such as online portfolios or, based on privacy settings, browsed and viewed onsite. Gonzales & Vodicka (2012) define SlideShare as an online hosting site for presentations, especially those created in PowerPoint or, since 2012, Haiku Deck. However, the SlideShare site is defined as “a LinkedIn service” that “is not just a place to share presentations,” but intended to be “a community of people who come together to share and mingle” (SlideShare Community Guidelines, n.d.).

Slideshare users can set up email alerts to notify them of fresh offerings in subject areas of their choosing. This feature allows users to remain up-to-date without periodically conducting active searches. Staying current in one’s field is important for working professionals with present-day work structures placing a premium on employee flexibility and capacity to learn and change (Evans, 2015). In the past, completion of a college degree during a confined period of study was the norm. Once employment was secured, there was often no need for further education. In the modern workforce, staying abreast of new information is critical to remaining relevant on the job. Professional development is a formal requirement for licensed professionals in the legal, medical and educational fields, and an ongoing necessity for those faced with new developments in workplace technologies (Blaschke, 2012). While some workers have access to human resource development services on the job, others turn to outside sources of reciprocal learning. In response to rapid technological change and a precarious labor market, many engage in lifelong learning; and some of this activity takes place within collaborative media sites like SlideShare, which provide free access to specialized content (Evans, 2015, Klamma, et al., 2007).

In this brave new economy, workers keep their resumes current and their options open. In addition to updating resumes, working professionals are finding it beneficial to maintain
portfolios to back up their claims. Kimeldorf and Hagy (n.d.) call for expanding the definition of career portfolios to exploit the dynamic possibilities of multimedia documents. In the workplace, these portfolios can provide visual evidence of employee contributions for formal job evaluations. Posted online, portfolios support job-hunting efforts and can powerfully differentiate individuals by supplying examples of work the job seeker is capable of performing. A hybrid document, the new portfolio bridges work, hobbies and college coursework with product samples from these experiences. Digital formats such as PowerPoint and PDF files are typically included to create a high-impact message (Kimeldorf & Hagy, n.d.).

This paper discusses how engaging in social media practices on LinkedIn and SlideShare can serve job-hunters at any stage of career development. The theme for this portfolio is to provide general guidance and media examples for those seeking to create a professional presence online. This effort starts with using LinkedIn for professional self-presentation and networking. With LinkedIn serving as the primary point of contact, SlideShare offers substance to claims of workplace expertise. The site provides a place to assemble and showcase an individual’s material endeavors, unifying the efforts as the account holder’s creative output, which may be multifaceted or difficult to narrowly categorize. The portfolio includes upcycled work products, selected and revised for reuse, and intended to demonstrate subject matter expertise and technical know-how by way of digital repackaging.

Project Rationale

By self-promoting work products that demonstrate professional range, job-seekers make the case for their ability to meet the demands of changing workplaces. The employee who aspires to shift from one field to another may begin by building online evidence of aptitudes and knowledge valued by the targeted employer. Participating in open online spaces, individuals
have a free and public platform for assembling representative work and engaging in professional identity generation (Evans, 2015). In doing so, these professionals are also contributing to a social collective of knowledge, or an informal online learning community, peer generated and up-to-the-minute (Lewis, et al., 2011). Taking part in this exchange connects individuals and can lead to reciprocal relationships that support lifelong learning and career development. This culminating project designates two linked online entities, LinkedIn and SlideShare, as appropriate social media sites for career-building activities. The portfolio will include materials from an internship and a professional development group to show how assorted work samples can be upcycled and made available online to peers and potential employers.

**Problem Statement**

Social networking is a growing part of our business and personal lives. Some are being introduced to various modes of social media as a part of formal learning in college. Higher education programs are repurposing social media technologies to connect learners via Twitter, Facebook and other networking sites (Hemmi et al., 2009). Participation in these online venues requires an understanding of new technologies and a public demonstration of applicable skills through active forms of communication. As the Web has become meshed with the workplace, those who “lack appropriate literacies…are doomed to hover on the fringes of digital societies and economies” (Pegrum, 2011, p.10). Working to develop a public identity is a critical task for graduates who hope to be discovered by employers who are increasingly going online to find talent. Posting a resume to LinkedIn, joining LinkedIn Groups, and compiling digital documents on SlideShare can boost visibility and build credibility for job seekers.

When employment opportunities are limited, new college graduates with unproven skills may find landing an entry-level position a difficult task. In competing with more seasoned
workers for job openings, graduates will need to validate their classroom learning by offering examples of how these skills translate to the workplace. Hiring managers are inclined to favor candidates who have elected to earn a degree with brand recognition and relevancy within a chosen field (Haynie, 2014). However, the hiring advantage goes to those whose experience outweighs their education. Lacking experience, recent graduates must take steps to distinguish their personal brand by building positive visibility for their creative output and work products related to future employment endeavors.

Demonstrating new skills and technical savvy through postings on targeted social media sites can improve employment prospects. While blogs, free of outside editorial control, were once seen as a leading online tool for disseminating personal content and establishing authority as a subject matter expert and content creator, other platforms emphasizing swift generation and easy consumption of content are rising in popularity. For now, SlideShare is a leading platform for professional content sharing. Ciotti (2012) notes the site caters to the business community and cites ComScore data showing SlideShare draws more business professionals than other popular social media outlets including Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn. Repackaging content to a presentation format is one way time-pressed professionals use SlideShare to disseminate their work with minimal effort (Gillin, 2013). However, the success of these postings can be greatly impacted by the user’s ability to fully utilize the medium by making good design choices and employing search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, such as on-page meta tags and descriptions. If users are not aware of site-specific best practices, they may find their online submissions result in few views and fewer followers.
Purpose

College graduates are faced with tough realities in the workplace, including more freelance, contract and temporary employment. Chronic job insecurity is predicted to be part of the new normal as a recent U.S. Department of Labor Special Report observes companies are increasingly relying on contingent labor to make the conditions of employment more flexible (Special Report: Contingent workers. n.d.). With systemic changes to the workplace altering career paths and increasing the barrier to entry-level jobs, it is important for new and transitioning workers to draw attention to their competencies. Social media has become a popular means of displaying professional talent.

According to a 2013 survey of members by the Society for Human Resource Management, 77 percent of respondents used social media sites to recruit candidates for job openings. In a Reppler study, hiring agents named Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as top sites for screening potential job candidates (Swallow, 2011). Recruiters reported hiring employees based in part on online profiles that supported the candidate’s professional qualifications, demonstrated strong communications skills, and included good references posted by previous employers. LinkedIn, which bills itself as the world’s largest professional network, is the leading online resume bank with over 300 million profiles. With the purchase of SlideShare in 2012, these entities can provide complementary services for users and “enable professionals to discover people through content, and content through people,” says LinkedIn’s Deep Nishar, SVP, products and user experience.

As we become a technological society built on provisional labor, “information is the road to jobs and the passageway between jobs” (Meyrowitz, 1995, p. 77). Focusing on SlideShare’s functionality in hosting information media, this portfolio project will demonstrate how using the
site can enhance an individual’s online identity by increasing viewership of slide presentations and infographics originally prepared for limited audiences. The selected projects will include an infographic created for MnSCU faculty, a slide presentation given to student and adult audiences, and a set of speeches on technology topics, newly combined and upcycled as a slide deck for online viewing.

**Significance of Portfolio**

Educators and businesspeople are expanding their professional reputations beyond their classrooms and boardrooms by building online presence through social media. Creating a LinkedIn profile and participating in the site’s professional groups are first stops on this journey. Taking part in the Web 2.0 culture of sharing is critical to this process (Klamma et al., 2007). This paper examines how SlideShare is being utilized as a platform for sharing documents with an emphasis on infographics and slide presentations. Given a pool of content producers that ranges from academics to marketing professionals, it’s not surprising that much of SlideShare’s substance is built using the most common of presentation tools: PowerPoint. While a media platform showcasing PowerPoint presentations might seem low tech—even a bit boring—the company’s value as a professional service firm was established when it was acquired by LinkedIn for $118.75 million (Sonefeldt, 2003).

Commenting on the purchase in a media release, Jeff Weiner, LinkedIn chief executive, noted, "Presentations are one of the main ways in which professionals capture and share their experiences and knowledge, which in turn helps shape their professional identity." Since 2006, SlideShare has made it easy for users to convert their PowerPoint slide decks into a format that can be shared onsite or embedded into other online platforms including blogs and newsfeeds. Carr (2012) found “a widget displaying a professional's recent presentations is one of the most
common additions to a LinkedIn profile,” and the insertions of graphic images effectively break up text-heavy resume summaries.

This process of sharing begins at graduation, if not earlier, when students produce portfolios as tangible examples of newly gained skills. Using SlideShare as the online site for a portfolio’s media samples can help establish a professional identity for a new college graduate. Connecting the work samples to LinkedIn by embedding documents as illustrations of graduate-level learning provides visual impact to text-laden resumes and injects what Carr calls “professional personality” to an otherwise pro forma list of college degrees and coursework.

An online portfolio establishes the substance and relevance of college-level learning in a marketplace that demands job experience. On LinkedIn, supplying links to work samples is intended to differentiate and elevate an individual’s profile from a pool of like candidates. On Slideshare, creating a collection of searchable, tagged content introduces the work to a broader audience interested in topical themes. Using these linked entities, Slideshare and LinkedIn, leading platforms on the professional social web, allows college graduates to maximize the potential for making connections with recruiters and colleagues.

Contributing to these paired sites can be a means of self-promotion, but each social web platform also has utility for sharing ideas leading to discussion, debate and learning. On LinkedIn, professional groups provide access to individuals with shared interests and backgrounds. On Slideshare, the posted content includes wide-ranging professional development topics. Accessing online information for self-directed learning allows busy professionals to overcome time and location barriers related to face-to-face learning experiences (Cook, 2013).

Establishing a presence on each site, and seeking out expert knowledge related to one’s career path, can lead to the development of virtual learning communities. This can be made up of
informal networks of learners or more cohesive groups, based on user preference. This paper will describe the networking potential of the selected sites, and will include portfolio materials demonstrating information media skills. Selected PowerPoint presentations and infographics will cover technology integration topics and will adhere to best practices for inclusion on SlideShare.

**Definition of Terms**

**Andragogy:** A theory of adult learning that promotes the benefits of self-directed students.

**Best practice:** A technique or method that, through experience and research, has been proven to lead to a desired result in content delivery and user interaction.

**Career Portfolio:** A collection of documents and work products demonstrating an individual’s range and capabilities with examples drawn from professional employment, hobbies, volunteering or learning experiences.

**eLearning:** Use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad range of learning solutions that enhance knowledge and performance.

**Heutagogy:** Individual learners set their own course of learning in an independent and needs-driven manner.

**Infographic:** Graphic representations of information and data intended to present complex material quickly and clearly with a minimum of textual content.

**Knowledge management:** When the learning need more appropriately requires information over instruction.

**Learner-content interaction:** The process of directly interacting with content, sans instructor, that results in changes in the learner’s understanding or perspective.
**Learning portal:** A website that acts as a central directory/repository for various types of learning and training materials used by learners.

**Participatory culture:** Connecting, socializing and sharing online by participating in the creation of media, contributing to collective intelligence, demonstrating new media literacies, remixing digital works and challenging existing social conventions.

**Personal Learning Network (PLN):** A loosely defined network of colleagues who share work-related ideas via various digital communications for the betterment of each individual’s professional practice.

**Slide deck:** Digital slides, or visuals, created in a presentation program such as Microsoft PowerPoint that are shown in sequence for a live or online audience.

**Social web platform:** A social networking site intended to build social networks or interactions among people who share interests, activities or backgrounds.

**Upcycle:** To reuse and repurpose (discarded objects or material) in such a way as to create a product of a higher quality or value than the original.

**Vicarious interaction:** Learning takes place without discourse through interacting with posted material and observing how peers respond to emergent issues.

**Web 2.0:** A second generation of the World Wide Web focused on the ability and propensity of users to collaborate and share information online.

**Conclusion**

In recent years, the professional social web has grown to include new platforms favoring content reduced to a brisk read or a glance through photos. As online audiences increasingly opt for visual content, newer social media platforms, such as Instagram and Pinterest, emphasize images as a primary means of communication. Once business blogging was popular, but today
we hear far more about Twitter, the micro-blogging service that limits text transmissions to 140 characters. Many blogs have gone dormant as content creators have discovered composing text updates is a time-consuming add-on to core business activities. While in general, blogging is an activity outside of work duties, business and education professionals are often called on to make PowerPoint presentations on the job. SlideShare has the advantage of using content created for live presentations and expanding the reach of the material with a simple upload. With this in mind, this portfolio includes examples of work created for small audiences and retooled for online sharing with software designed to repackage content with a minimum of time and effort.

Who is using SlideShare? According to Goldner (2013), the platform “appeals to content consumers who are happy with the Cliff Notes version of PowerPoint presentations” and prefer encapsulated content free of “lengthy preambles, asides and audience queries” (p. 6). Given the site’s strong following, Goldner suggests that lost opportunities for professional discourse are presumably outweighed by the advantages of viewing content stripped down to essential messages. For those seeking targeted professional development, SlideShare provides a convenient platform for gleaning online content devoid of extraneous human interaction.

This graduate portfolio project is beneficial to the learner who, through placing its contents online, promotes a freshly updated technological skillset necessary to enter the information media profession. By emphasizing media formats commonly used in education, and relevant to online instruction, the learner demonstrates a strong capacity to contribute to the field of instructional technology. The selection of work products, slide decks and infographics, will show an understanding of SlideShare’s strengths as an information hub for time-pressed professionals. Chapter 2 will consist of a literature review of how the Web 2.0 environment is being used by lifelong learners to enhance professional knowledge and connect with like-minded
others. This will include a discussion of related learning principles, best practices for audience engagement, and the characteristics of professional learning networks (PLNs). Chapter 3 will describe the projects designed for this portfolio and provide an overview of the site’s detailed analytics dashboard, now available to all users. Chapter 4 will showcase the work products and include audience data specific to each upload, including content views, traffic sources and viewer actions. Chapter 5 will provide a reflection on the portfolio projects including consideration of viewer engagement as evidenced by analytics.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review of literature will occur with discussions of informal adult learning and online sharing as coupled activities intended to enhance the knowledge and professional standing of participants. Most of the literature addresses a single component of this equation, focusing on types of online learning or methods of content dissemination. The learning piece is seen as an ongoing burden of modern workers, who struggle to keep apace of change; while the sharing piece is viewed as a way to increase professional status for those who struggle to move from anonymity to prominence within a selected peer group. Professional social media sites fuse these pursuits as continuing and complementary activities. Increasingly, learning and sharing take place within the same online hub, and are interdependent. Academic literature in this vein is limited to date.

This literature review will include discussion of self-directed learning, the particulars of SlideShare as a site for knowledge sharing, as well as LinkedIn’s potential to serve as the hub for a personal learning network (PLN). Relevant articles were found using the EBSCO Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier and ERIC databases. The search terms ‘lifelong learning,’ ‘professional development,’ ‘repurposing content’ or ‘personal learning network’ coupled with ‘online,’ ‘collaborative media site’ or ‘LinkedIn’ were employed to locate material. Some of the articles provided information on adult learning concepts, which led to further research into ‘andragogy’ and ‘heutagogy.’ While ‘LinkedIn’ has been the subject of a moderate amount of research, the term ‘Slideshare’ uncovered few academic references. A sufficient cache of articles on SlideShare was gleaned from business and marketing websites and mainstream media sources. Recent articles were favored due to the fast-changing Internet landscape. This review includes an examination of online posts on technology and media trends,
as well as pertinent SlideShares, as these presentations, current and topic specific, demonstrate
the site’s learning resource value.

As participatory culture moves from online subcultures, such as those devoted to gaming
or literary genres, to mainstream websites populated by working professionals, growing online
communities reflect the entwined needs of these content consumers/producers. In 1980, Alvin
Toffler coined the word ‘prosumers’ to describe the dual role of “Third Wave” contributors in
mainframe computing circles. Today, the next wave of new media, or mass communication using
digital technologies, carries on the connection Toffler identified. This integration of consumer
and producer is a topic of interest to marketers who often focus on the product-selling potential
of understanding consumers who enjoy media production.

The term ‘prosumer,’ though never popularized, also applies to adult learners who source
the internet for informal learning, seeking and sharing current content. The rapid pace of change
in many fields is spurring interest in life-long learning as a means of keeping up with technology
trends and other workplace innovations (Klamma, 2007). More than ever, working adults need to
keep learning throughout their careers. As more employment becomes temporary, workers
become mobile, and traditional models of professional learning, which presume shared goals and
face-to-face interactions with co-workers and mentors “are increasingly less relevant” (Evans,
2015, p. 32). As workers are offered less corporate training and mentoring, they engage in self-
directed learning through social media technologies and turn to online learning communities for
collaborative knowledge sharing (Evans, 2015).

As adult learning moves from classrooms to online communities, the process of
knowledge acquisition is changing (Duncan-Howell, 2010; Lai, 2011). Adult learning theory was
once dominated by andragogy, an approach that makes the instructor a pivotal partner in the
learning process. From course development to final assessments, the instructor designs the learning experience based on learner needs. However, many adults prefer to forgo the cost and time commitments of formalized instruction, especially as these expenses are more frequently shouldered by individuals rather than employers.

Increasingly, informal online learning takes place by vicarious interaction between learners who interface with posted material and without discourse with other site users. On SlideShare, these interactions are evidenced by saving, sharing and social bookmarking actions. This approach places access to information above interaction and elevates online documents as the key elements of learning (Chambers, et al., 2012). Sans instructor, users vicariously interact with peers by viewing their slide presentations, absorbing content, and drawing conclusions about how others respond to emergent issues (Evans, 2015).

A more collaborative approach is the concept of connectivism, described as “a learning theory for the digital age” (Siemens, 2005, cited by Evans, 2015). Individuals utilize online resources and determine their own course of study, but rather than simply harvesting information, they contribute to pooled knowledge and engage in networking transactions with peers. Collectivism goes beyond passive consumption of posted materials and involves reciprocity, an exchange of ideas, which leads to changes in existing “nodes” of an online network (Downes, 2014, cited by Evans, 2015).

In 2000, heutagogy, a learning theory rooted in andragogy, and spurred by Internet access to a burgeoning body of knowledge, came into being in Australia (Blaschke, 2012). Several principles set it apart from the earlier model. Heutagogy promotes the value of having individual learners set their own course by designing personalized maps of learning, from content to assessment (Hase, 2009). This self-guided style of learning—-independent and needs driven—is
most appropriate for competent learners who can acquire knowledge and skills through their own selection of materials.

The Web 2.0 environment offers independent learners high levels of autonomy, boundless resources and opportunities for interaction with others. The Internet supports the heutagogical approach by increasing individual access to the work of subject matter experts and remote peers. Learning materials can take many forms including tutorials, TedTalks and PowerPoint presentations. Growing collections of online materials, many of them freely accessible, allow discerning users to gather information and select those incorporating preferred media methods.

**Self-Directed Online Learning**

As the Internet matured, branded learning portals emerged as gateways to learning resources, some sponsored by universities, others by training companies (Chambers, 2012; Rosenberg, 2001). The sites differed in content and revenue models, some favoring user subscription fees and others opting for advertising support. Content was tailored to a learner’s profession, organizational role or continuing education needs. Learning portals were commonly searchable by topic and included social networking features. While content was often professionally or commercially produced, some learning sites were “composed entirely of submissions by outsiders” (Rosenberg, p. 27). As a repository of various types of training and presentational materials, created by outside contributors, SlideShare serves as a learning portal for self-directed learners.

SlideShare has appeared on the list of Top 100 Tools for Learning each year from 2007 to 2014, moving from 31 to 15 in the ranking. Among the presentation sharing site’s strengths is its open delivery of content, which embodies the concept of universal access. Free of the qualifying
rituals of tendering personal recommendations and transcripts and, importantly, tuition to gain access to formalized learning from degree-granting programs, SlideShare provides a rich knowledge base for those willing and capable of searching for personally applicable information. What is accepted as knowledge is changing as formal databases and learning portals are joined by collaborative networks in disseminating information and as user-generated content sites become trusted as legitimate resources (Klamma, et al., 2012). In our fast-forward era, what counts as knowledge extends beyond academic publishing, includes open-source learning and practical understanding, and is related to political and cultural climates of the time (Delanty, 2001).

This democratization of information as a dynamic development bound to Web 2.0 technologies has the advantages of communicating in a human tone and constituting “a productive platform for knowledge co-creation and collaboration” (Costa, 2011, p. 95). This sense of mainstream, genuine communication is another counterpoint to the textual traditions of academia. Online content, much of it shaped by daily news cycles, favors immediacy and brevity. Slideshare appeals to those who prefer unfiltered content, presented by industry peers whose work reflects real world situations and responses. This instructional authenticity, which Rosenberg (2001) suggests takes content beyond relevancy and appropriateness, builds credibility for the material as it increases users’ sense of identification with the learning.

Several studies have found self-directed learners prefer to achieve their educational needs without prescribed learning goals by following “more fluid and opportunistic paths” (Kop & Bouchard, 2011, p.72). Knowledge workers with the skills to explore interactive media-based learning are presumed to be able to develop their practice through access to online information (Chambers, et al., 2012). SlideShare allows users to select topic areas and move through material
at an individualized pace. Slides can be advanced, paused, and reviewed according to user preference. Clickable content, read or skimmed at a pace driven by user interest, is in keeping with “a discernable movement on the Web to value network communications that are as short as possible” (Kop & Bouchard, 2011, p. 68).

However, there is a potential downside to this mode of online learning. As the site’s name suggests, is SlideShare simply delivering the same old stuff, the standby of classroom training, the butt of countless jokes—PowerPoint presentations? Transferring face-to-face instruction to online settings without transformational changes to the approach, and without harnessing the potential of the medium beyond electronic delivery, has been identified as a weakness of much of online training (Rosenberg, 2001).

However, training and the delivery of informational content differ. Many freely accessible websites and social media hubs are not purely instructional in nature, but provide opportunities for eLearning (Evans, 2015; Rosenberg, 2001). As the zooming growth of information, which now characterizes modern business, accelerates the need for learning, “old models of learning acquisition are failing” (Rosenberg, 2001, p. 3). This challenges our thinking on where and how learners obtain knowledge. In the context of business, eLearning includes online activities people engage in to acquire skills and knowledge for performance enhancement, allowing them to work “faster, better and smarter” in a competitive marketplace (Rosenberg, 2001, p. 4). In this environment, knowledge management, or efficient handling of information and resources, has become an essential component of eLearning. In the present information age, independent learners can find a wealth of online material on any subject. This is not the same as finding instruction in the form of eLearning.
Rosenberg (2001) cautioned that instruction and information are not interchangeable, but represent separate approaches to learning based on learner need (see Table 2.1). Instruction is formalized and focused on achieving specific outcomes and often includes assessments to determine if targeted learning has taken place. The instructional provider is commonly in a position of authority to judge the efforts of learners and determine who has met assessment standards. In contrast, information gathering can be an informal and self-directed activity of learners who are not seeking outside validation of their end results.

Table 2.1

*Characteristics of Instruction and Information by Rosenberg (2001)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused on a specific learning outcome</td>
<td>Focused on a specific organization of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose defined by instructional designers or instructors, etc.</td>
<td>Purpose defined primarily by users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on strong diagnosis of user characteristics and needs, and targeted to meet those specific needs</td>
<td>Based on the characteristics of the particular knowledge discipline and targeted users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequenced for optimum memory retention</td>
<td>Sequenced for optimum reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contains presentation, practice, feedback, and assessment components</td>
<td>Primarily centered on effective presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As employees respond to transforming workplaces, the Web “is becoming essential in the work of learning” and is “the latest restructuring technology” (Rosenberg, 2001, pp. 14, 20) to alter the communications landscape and disrupt the accepted paradigm. In the age of social media, new online structures have developed as clearinghouses of freely shared information. As interactive, two-way sharing becomes an online norm, sites like SlideShare are well positioned to serve those seeking knowledge outside of traditional academic settings. These informal learning environments appeal to adults driven by personal interests and needs “rather than institutional
requirements” (Kop & Bouchard, 2011, p.63). The complexities of changing employment expectations requires adjustments in adult learning, which “must be characterized by uncertainty, with knowledge loosely framed, provisional, and open-ended” (Weller, cited in Kop & Bouchard, 2011, p. 65). This altered learning landscape now includes social media.

Slideshare offers users numerous ways to discover fresh learning material starting with a landing page splashed with ‘Today’s Top Content’ and presentations categorized by ‘Featured Topics,’ ‘Latest Conferences’ and ‘Trending on Social Media.’ A recent scan of landing page offerings found presentations on start-up financing, agile leadership training, UX, online tools for computer and iPad, workplace soft skills and other topics related to employment and technology skills. For those searching for more specific material, SlideShares can be browsed alphabetically by tags or user name.

While individualized choice of content is a key driver in user engagement, social media sites also offer opportunities for making direct connections with content creators. Slideshare user accounts frequently provide links to personal websites or LinkedIn profiles, which include a messages link. Access to distant peers humanizes the online experience, empowers the learner to interact, and encourages continued site engagement (Worrall & Harris, 2013). Jarvis (2006) notes the academic activity of knowledge workers generally involves online networks characterized by openness, rather than control of membership and content. Today’s Web 2.0 networks are open and fluid and encourage “finding and being found” (Jarvis cited by Costa, 2011, p. 94).

Some popular online networking venues screen newcomers. On LinkedIn, anyone can open an account and post profile information, but some LinkedIn Groups are members-only, as indicated by a padlock icon. Requests to join a members-only group are sent to the group
manager, who presumably reviews individuals’ resumes posted to the site. Discussions that take place within these closed groups are visible to group members only and do not appear in search engine results. A study of K-12 educators who participate in PLNs that leverage online social networking found cultivating knowledge sharing and trust to be among the most difficult challenges faced by these communities (Booth, 2012). Members-only groups allow for the open exchange of information and opinions among peers within a relatively secure online space.

College graduates are often counseled to take part in online professional groups to develop industry connections and insider knowledge. Engaging in two-pronged networking involves social interactions different from the dynamics of classroom discourse. Networking is about making a good impression and fitting in. One possible drawback to self-directed online learning is learners’ tendency to connect exclusively with like-minded people. Social media users are more inclined to network with those expressing similar views and values than to engage in challenging transactions with those articulating differing points of view (Kop & Bouchard, p. 63). Online knowledge-gathering lacking oppositional dialogues may leave learners ill-prepared to engage in the give-and-take of workplace communications involving differences of opinion.

**Heutagogy.** In an ever more complex world of work, lifelong learning is essential. Adults responding to changing work expectations and technologies are driven to seek granular knowledge to meet pressing needs. Information gathering by online learners focusses on relevancy and immediacy of results and is increasingly reliant on Internet resources. Heutagogy, a form of self-determined learning, serves as a model for defining those learners best suited for independent study. By prescribing a selective process of knowledge gathering in an age of information overload, heutagogy also addresses adults’ desire to limit learning endeavors to the study of practical material, as defined by the learner (Duncan-Howell, 2010). The learning theory
suggests mature adult learners proactively develop “the map of learning” to develop new competencies (Hase, cited by Blaschke, p. 3). Once competencies are gained through learning activities, the learner demonstrates capability by retrieving acquired information and applying the skills and knowledge in unfamiliar situations (Blaschke, 2012). Heutagogy’s “dual focus on competencies and capability” guides learners in attaining information and using newfound capacity to better engage in problem solving in work environments (Blaschke, 2012, p. 3).

This autonomous mode of learning requires learners to possess and utilize a set of advanced traits including self-efficacy, creativity, communications skills and positivity (Blaschke, 2012). Equipped with this significant set of skills and values, adult learners can take “advantage of the key affordances of the internet” (Blaschke, 2012, p. 1) to respond to the ongoing need to update work-related expertise (Klamma et al., 2007). Considered as a continuum of andragogy, a cultivation of adult learning skills with instructor guidance, heutagogy is seen as a realization of these aptitudes for learning, allowing for the highest level of student autonomy (see Figure 2.1).

Foretelling the coming influence of the Internet, Breen (1985) argued for the ‘porous classroom,’ a learning space with permeable boundaries between formal campus structure and the rest of the world. With the availability of technology, what counts as the construction and reconstruction of knowledge is rendered almost infinite (Breen, 1985). This visionary idea recognized the value of enhancing traditional learning with outside knowledge pulled in from the larger society and accepting these contributions as legitimate additions to course curriculum. By incorporating such practices into the pedagogy and andragogy levels of adult learning, educators prepare students to assume a fully autonomous role as lifelong learners.
Professional Online Networking

Web networking activities can increase collegial communication, effectively disseminate information “and enhance learning and practice” (Costa, 2011, p. 82). Cultivating online connections is an important way for professionals to stay current and efficiently access and filter required job information (Sherer, Shea & Kristensen, 2003). In technically advanced times, being mutually supportive within a Community of Practice (COP) helps knowledge workers meet the challenges of technology proliferation and information overload. Academics have popularized the concept of COPs, or learning circles, as a means of interacting with peers to “co-develop deeper understanding and practice about relevant areas” (Costa, 2011, p. 85). A decade ago, email listservs were a dominant method of connecting COP members. Today, listservs continue to thrive as question-and-answer forums for restricted COPs. In addition, Web-supported
exchanges on intranets, wikis and social media sites allow remote peers to share experiences, artifacts and understanding related to professional activities (Lewis et al., 2011).

Developed informally, COPs can create bonds between people who connect for a shared reason and demonstrate membership through participation. To engage in the COP domain, members must have “knowledge and some competence in the focus area” (Sherer, Shea & Kristensen, 2003, p. 185) to participate in community interactions, which typically include joint activities, discussions and mutual assistance. Although COPs are informal, they are not necessarily open, and screening mechanisms to vet members are common. Permission to join a listserv, for example, may be granted to those having an email address with a domain name demonstrating a connection to a university or other qualifying entity.

Personal Learning Networks are also informally organized and sustained by easy interaction within selected spaces in the participatory Web. Some information media professionals believe “a robust PLN employs different technologies to network” (Perez, 2012, p. 21) around diverse content types. A “heavy-hitter” PLN media menu could include a host of digital activities: using a blog feed aggregator; monitoring certain Twitter users and hashtags; joining professional groups on Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn; and surfing and sharing on documents/presentations sites like SlideShare (Perez, 2012).

However, this breadth of online applications can create a significant barrier for implementing a lasting virtual COP. Technology is always changing. As groups of professionals move on to other, newer networking tools, this social dispersion can foster disconnection and isolation for some professionals (Lewis, et al., 2011). Although the relationship between never-ending Web 2.0 technologies and user engagement is difficult to measure (Michaelides et al., 2014), willingness to relocate to other platforms and adopt new tech habits is “often divided
along generational lines” (Lewis, et al., 2011, p. 160) and dependent on perceived usefulness as well as the social ties formed within the COP.

COPs and PLNs differ in the strength of the bonds linking individuals and the focus of learning (Blitz, 2013). COPs put a greater emphasis on communal goals and cooperation to “develop a shared repertoire of resources” (Sherer, Shea & Kristensen, 2003, p. 185) to tackle reoccurring issues common to the practices of many (Lewis et al, 2011). This can require collective effort in sharing and problem solving (Michaelides, et al., 2014). Some of this activity is altruistic in nature, as experienced members pass along knowledge, resources and work products to the group. In contrast, PLNs center on user interests “rather than the purposes of a given community” (Costa, 2011, p. 86). Typically, a PLN involves sharing work-related ideas with dispersed colleagues via digital communication and places emphasis on the individual’s learning needs (Perez, 2012).

SlideShare is user-centered and relies on the contributions of individuals to keep content current and compelling. Documents are swiftly uploaded and quickly join the ranks of existing materials. This ease of input encourages users to participate in the dissemination of work. According to Jenkins (2009), participatory culture has relatively low barriers to individual expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing materials, and some type of informal mentorship. Is SlideShare a participatory culture? Jenkins (2009) defines an online participatory culture as one where “not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute” (p.6). Slideshare, a browsable resource, openly accessible, much like YouTube, meets this standard. Those who want to share their own work can become contributors by opening an account and uploading materials without initial critique or other qualifying hurdles.
Jenkins also specifies that members feel a degree of social connection, or at least care about how others view their contributions. This standard also applies to SlideShare as contributors post work products under their profiles, and make them searchable under designated topics to contribute to learning in their field. While content is freely shared, individuals are credited for their contributions, and develop name recognition through accumulating views. Strong viewing numbers can lead to a presentation being posted on the site’s Featured Contents page. Given the professional nature of the materials, and the incentive of increased exposure to popular presentations, contributors are likely to care about the community’s response to their work.

SlideShare followers are alerted by email to new uploads created by those they have elected to monitor. These email notices and subsequent viewing of new presentations can strengthen the perceived connection between members, prompt feedback, or trigger a competitive response in recipients who are hoping to get noticed on the site. As a participatory culture, SlideShare has few mechanisms to encourage casual interaction or mentoring. Communications between members generally begins with self-initiated networking exchanges, and links to social media accounts such as LinkedIn or Twitter are used to connect to each other.

Cultural communities grow around communications technologies and “activities become widespread only if the culture supports them” (Jenkins, 2009, p. 8). SlideShare has developed numerous communities of interest. Individuals share knowledge employing several preferred forms of digital content, primarily slide presentations and infographics. While digital formats are fairly limited on the site, content is wide-ranging and can serve as a document collection for self-guided study. The pursuit of learning solutions can be a singular, even “peculiar,” quest into the scholarship of an “agglomeration of people with intersecting interests” (Costa, 2011, p. 86).
Based on topic- and visibility-oriented goals, a PLN can be constructed to enhance the user’s practice and professional profile in equal measure. In a networked environment, gaining prominence within a chosen online channel is an important outcome as “the network celebrates the individual” (Costa, 2011, p. 87). The Internet’s capacity to allow users to present themselves, and their ideas, outside of institutional channels and beyond the barriers of social and professional ranking is another important value of online networking.

One effect of our current economy is the elevation of “knowledge, rather than any good or service (as) the chief resource for workers” (Daly, 2011, p. 222). Creativity, defined as the “ability to analyze and solve problems in innovative ways that require original thought (Daley, p. 223) leads individuals to online settings that promote access to new ideas, some raw and untested, as well as best practices, some fresh and unpublished. Daly describes a worker’s employability as security in the form of “diverse skills and experiences” (p. 223) gained in and outside of the workplace. This new knowledge worker is best represented by a portfolio of skills and achievements that is elastic enough to bridge professions and work opportunities as they arise. Gee referred to this worker as a “portfolio person” (Gee, cited in Daly, 2011, p. 223). A portfolio being a portable collection of skills illustrated in an online collection of work samples. These workers must demonstrate the ability to adjust to workplace makeovers by reshaping the presentation of their skillset to suit current trends and demands. A digital environment allows for frequent shape-shifting by workers who, through profile pages and presentations, create online identities, not only accurately depicting their current skill and experience levels, but “serving as an argument for who they desire to be seen as” (Daly, 2011, p. 229).
**Upcycling.** While sites like SlideShare have simplified the processes of uploading, tagging and sharing digital documents, users need to start with goods in hand. Posting is easy, content is hard. Leveraging existing content through effective upcycling, or repurposing, speeds the process of sharing ideas, expertise and opinions. In this context, upcycling is the act of reusing mothballed materials to create a digital product of a lasting value.

As a basic transformation, repurposing content for online sharing involves converting existing materials to a Web-accessible format (Sherman, 2001) and making multimedia enhancements. Content creators add value to low-tech documents by being cognizant of the Web’s unique characteristics and reshaping materials to take advantage of the digital environment. For example, a print document may be enriched by the insertion of digital images or by adding hyperlinks to related text or video content. Some of these skills are being developed within corporate intranet environments, which are used to connect dispersed workforces. Digital communications platforms can pull documents or presentations from content management systems like SharePoint and readily repurpose them into visual content channels (Freedlander, 2015).

**Best Practices**

While the phrase “if you don’t play, you can’t win” applies to games of unqualified chance like the lottery, “winning” at social media requires more than simply playing. Some SlideShare users insert small effortless inputs, like nickels in a slot machine, and hope to pull three cherries. Perhaps they are gambling that popular tags will result in a high number of views and equate this with a winning strategy. While tagging may lead to a sampling of uploads, only compelling content will result in users becoming followers. Each of SlideShare’s primary upload types requires an understanding of best practices for the medium.
**Infographics.** Infographics have become an accepted way to represent data and related information through graphic representations that combine compelling images, easy-to-comprehend charts, and short, informative text elements. Infographics are used by media outlets, corporations and educators to convey information in a quick and memorable manner. Their popularity can be attributed, in part, to the information glut resulting from the expansion of the Internet. As more media producers demand our attention, we, in turn, require encapsulated messaging (Camp, 2013). A good infographic engages its audience with simple and accurate information, sometimes in the form of a timeline or figure supplemented with bullet points of text and numeric information. On the downside, in an effort to simplify topics, infographics may eliminate supporting information, which could be used by readers to come to their own conclusions.

Thatcher and Zadeh (2012) define a good infographic as one that sums up its points in two sentences or less. Despite this constraint, they found the format to be a positive development for teaching and learning as it captures students’ attention with visual graphics and relays relevant data in readily digestible “bytes.” Best practices for creating an effective infographic include determining its purpose and gathering hard data at the start (see Table 2.2). Once a topic has been researched and reduced to key points, these elements are organized as though writing an article. A powerful headline is essential to pull readers into the content. From there, a well-constructed infographic has a logical flow of storyline, data and visual signposts to draw the reader’s attention from section to section, or beginning to end.

Cloud-based infographic software is common and provides users with many templates to speed the graphic design process. Piktochart has a gallery of user-generated work to serve as inspiration and illustration of well-composed infographics. Complementary font groupings and
color schemes, as well as graphic structures for information flow are all preplanned in the templates. With a well-selected design package, users can insert information into appropriate formats from linked text blurbs to bar charts and achieve a visually understandable result in short time. This permits those without experience in, or access to (or patience for) more complex software packages such as the Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator) to create infographics with strong style elements. Increasingly, content creators are looking for simple and intuitive software tools like Piktochart to transform information into convincing content. Importantly, these infographics can be completed and uploaded to social media sites while the topics are fresh and newsworthy.
Table 2.2

*Best Practices for Infographics referencing Thatcher and Zadeh (2012) and Kenner (2015).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practices for Infographics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research and Plan</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Choosing a compelling topic for an anticipated audience, and finding accurate and current information, are first steps in making a well-founded infographic.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Select a meaningful and timely topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience</td>
<td>Determine intended audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Gather pertinent and statistically significant data. Let the data drive the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>What is the intended message or take-away?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic points</td>
<td>Identify key topic points. Sum up each point in two sentences or less.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data points</td>
<td>Reduce facts and figures to selected data points that convey insights on key topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design and Author</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Infographics package information in an engaging manner with a combination of concise text and visual elements.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual theme</td>
<td>Choose visual components including fonts, color-scheme and graphic design elements. If using infographic software, select a template.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headline</td>
<td>Think up a strong headline to capture audience and convey main message of infographic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize information</td>
<td>Determine a logical flow of storyline, data and visual signposts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct text</td>
<td>Convert topic details into copy points. Write subheads and tell an infographic story with concise, engaging language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format data</td>
<td>Select simple, graphic means—from charts to graphs—to explain data points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>Cite sources of ideas, information and data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More than ever, timeliness affects the impact of information. Today “content is bypassing traditional media and entering the public sphere” through social media channels where “it is being openly discussed and analyzed in real-time” (van den Hurk, 2013). These online conversations can become trending topics, which are picked up on by major media providers. What was once considered amateur content is now regularly accepted as source material for news stories; and this recognition of social media contributors as subject matter experts spurs content creation and online sharing.

Infographics often move from social media to traditional media audiences by way of online links as reporters supply readers with a firsthand look at source matter. This linkage increases views on the infographic’s host site. On SlideShare, a spike in views from outside sources can signal a trending topic and result in featured placement on the homepage. Prominent site placement boosts name recognition for content creators and can infer credibility. Additionally, online magazines and other content providers like organizational websites often use the same infographic templates as individual producers. These shared digital tools result in high-quality graphic products for sanctioned professionals and newcomers alike; and this blurs the line between the two camps of content creators, an advantage for those working to professionally establish themselves.

Slide Presentations. Compelling presentations can make new ideas memorable and inspire audiences to take action. A persuasive mix of text and visual images can engage lifelong learners and capture the attention of corporate recruiters. When presentation materials are made accessible online, corporations, universities and individuals can broaden the reach of their messages. To some, uploading content to online platforms, where it can be freely viewed and
shared, may seem like a heedless giveaway of intellectual property. The growing popularity of the practice, however, indicates that content creators are finding rewards in online sharing. Greer & Swanberg et al. (2012) note digital natives are “accustomed to constantly sharing and relaying information in their social lives” (p. 251) and this proclivity may be a driving force in the expansion of collaborative media sites like YouTube and SlideShare.

Seminars, lectures, speeches and reports all commonly rely on slide presentations to aid in the task of connecting with audiences. Reynolds’ (2008) “Presentation Zen” offered speakers graphic guidelines to refrain from using PowerPoint as a crutch and elevate its status to art form. The approach values white space and abhors slides loaded with data junk. When deliberating on what data to share, a media presenter is counseled to narrow the focus on “truthful, credible, and precise findings” (Tufte, 1997, p. 27). Opting for precision requires thoughtful graphic depiction of data that minimizes distortion of facts. To help viewers visualize data, eliminate “extraneous details in visuals of fact content” (Clark & Lyons, 2004, p. 282).

Reynold’s top slide tips start with a call for simplicity: more open spaces, less clutter. Mayer (2009) also supported simplified presentations as a better means of knowledge transfer. The coherence principle asserts that multimedia learning is improved when unneeded words and visual elements are eliminated from presentations (Mayer, 2009). In 13 of 14 empirical tests, learners who viewed concise multimedia lessons outperformed learners who received multimedia instruction loaded with extraneous music, video clips and other “seductive details” not directly related to the lesson material.

Best practices include limiting bullet points, animation and text. While others quantify these elements, Reynolds provides visual examples of overladden slides and lighter alternatives to guide the reader in making better design judgments. One explicit point is Reynolds’ advice to
include text-free slides within presentations. Following this less-is-more edict allows bold, evocative images to convey the speaker’s message without the usual text trio of headline, subtext and supporting points. Reynold’s partiality for images as primary content is reflected in his habit of referring to those who put together slide presentations as designers rather than authors. With more presentations being hosted online, many without audio tracks, image quality and selection are crucial issues. Photos are the leading element of slide content in Reynold’s work. The approach balances concise messaging and pleasing aesthetics.

The computer’s “great capacity to organize multiple images” (Tufte, 1997, p. 116) is enhanced by the selection of high-resolution and attention-attracting photography. Clark and Lyons (2004) noted supplementing text with images helps deliver meaning to the learner. Illustrative images can serve to reduce mental load, or the amount of work required by the working memory, as text is replaced in part or whole by visual elements. “Visual design and sequencing decisions” (Clark & Lyons, 2004, p. 105) are also critical to developing slide presentations that hold audience interest. Table 2.3 summarizes these guidelines.

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practices for Slide Presentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opt for simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid bullet points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid data junk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select evocative images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipate impatience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize storytelling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Such an approach, however, relies on narrative as well. As slides are stripped to the essentials, and unnecessary details are omitted, spare narrative elements remain. Ideally, text points communicate intended meaning, tell a relatable story and, above all, move along. Brisk storytelling maintains audience attention, and “is the bedrock of informal learning” (Clark, 2007, p. vi). To be effective as a narrative device, storytelling must focus on an objective. To achieve the desired objective, the story “must be carefully selected, constructed, and delivered” (Clark, 2007, p. 195). Beyond being ‘on message,’ a story needs to be compelling. One way to make storytelling impactful is to make an emotional connection with an audience by sharing personal experiences related to the topic.

Audience impatience must be anticipated in the design stage. “Good design should take into account how, when, and where the information is used” (Tufte, 1997, p. 115). Maps and driving guides, for example, should anticipate a driver’s split attention as he glances from printed material to roadway to signage and back, and incorporate short lines of type and easy-to-comprehend visuals to meet the user’s needs. Similarly, online slide decks should be easy to navigate and succinct in style to align with the typical preferences of multitasking users.

Slide presentations have transitioned to the digital age and are here to stay; but sleepy presentations are being upstaged by quick formats catering to audiences who are accustomed to fast-edit media production. PechaKucha is a presentation practice limited to 20 slides, with each slide displayed for 20 seconds. This fast-paced style came into existence in 2003, when PechaKucha Nights were popularized by the Tokyo design crowd as a means for young professionals to network and share ideas. Keyword: crowd. With many people eager to take center stage, tight time constraints were needed. PechaKucha relies on automated slide
advancement to keep speakers within a six-minute-40-second limit. PechaKucha style has since been adopted by speakers worldwide including those at academic conferences.

In 2006, an even speedier delivery method, the Ignite presentation, was introduced in Seattle, Washington. The Ignite format also features 20 slides with each auto-advancing at 15 seconds for a running time of five minutes. The Ignite website’s cheeky slogan “Enlighten us, but make it fast,” delivers the message that content must move at a brisk clip to capture attention without flirting with audience impatience. Introduced to technical audiences, the format was intended to be entertaining and rapid-fire (Coker, 2007).

Audiences are not alone in wanting fast content. Presenters are finding new tools to simplify and speed the process of pulling together slide decks. Haiku Deck promises its Zuru platform can create “instant presentations, powered by artificial intelligence.” Zuru develops presentations with the upload of a speech outline, a set of PowerPoint slides or even an Evernote list, and is working to transform email messages into slides through high-tech content analysis. The program selects Creative Commons images to illustrate ideas and has done away with a common design element: bullet points. By supplying photographs and removing bullet lists, Haiku Deck promotes best practices endorsed by presentation designers like Reynolds, who urges presenters to use impactful images and keep text to a minimum.

On the Haiku Deck site, presentations auto-advance, moving at a smooth and even pace, about four-seconds per slide. This automated delivery works best when content is confined to one idea per slide. This approach is in accord with the coherence principle, which counsels against adding extraneous text to multimedia presentations (Mayer, 2009). Limiting slide content to a single idea also conforms to the spatial contiguity principle, a proposition that learners are best served by related text and visuals presented in close proximity on the screen (Mayer, 2009).
Each of the Haiku Deck slide templates integrates a line or block of text with a dominant visual image. Copy appears as either an overlay or as a colored text box adjacent to the photograph. In either case, corresponding words and pictures are closely integrated, which can help viewers “learn more deeply” (Mayer, 2009, p. 144). Avoiding use of bullet point lists keeps this pairing of text and related image intact. Haiku Deck adopters have embraced a minimalist approach to crafting slides to be consumable this pace, relying on full-size images and short-form text to engage viewers in a style that brings to mind picture-book storytelling.

How do these approaches translate to SlideShare, a repository of slide decks, most posted without audio and with transcripts of the copy contained on the slides? Many popular SlideShare uploads feature the sparse visual style of Presentation Zen supplemented with enough text to clarify intent without cluttering the slides. The site stages an annual presentation contest with winning entries typified by “big fonts, spare text, simple images” (Gallo, 2009). Haiku Deck users can share directly to SlideShare, without the automated slideshow delivery, which allows viewers to comfortably engage with content at an individualized pace. Countless highly viewed SlideShare uploads far exceed the 20-slide limit placed on PechaKucha and Ignite presentations. Without a presenter’s narrative, story points must be shaped by a progression of slides, each with enough detail to advance the storytelling and maintain momentum.

Conclusion

The shift from an analog to a digital culture has dispersed the activity of learning and widened the reach of individual learners (Costa, 2011). Universities and local libraries, once central to the dissemination of information, are “being less accessed” and serve as “academic knowledge safes” (Costa, 2011, pp. 93-94) for scholarly papers and other analog cultural artifacts. This suggests that such print materials without digital counterparts are unlikely to reach
many readers. In comparison, open Web environments are conducive to spreading ideas and building reputations through rapid-fire content sharing. Much of this online content favors “the visual over the textual” (Hemmi et al., 2009, p. 29) and is further characterized by frequent revision and truncation as content creators respond to newly posted material and feedback.

Generally these online exchanges of information are conducted at a much faster pace than in academic channels, which require “reflection and reference to authority” (Hemmi et al., 2009, p. 29). In contrast, the new social media is impatient and permissive. Web spaces thrive on new posts and put emphasis on self-explanation, compelling multimedia messaging and a brash point of view. This type of authorship gets noticed and boosts visibility—a common goal of those contributing to the professional social web. Online influencers are becoming more accepted as legitimate sources of industry knowledge as they gain views from site users seeking specialized information and frequent updates.

Websites like LinkedIn and SlideShare have opened communication between content producers. By cultivating an online PLN, individuals gain prominence in career channels (Costa, 2011) and benefit from networked access to professional resources. Social media sites can serve as points of interaction, exploration and information. The open architecture of the read/write Web encourages a do-it-yourself (DIY) approach to learning. In this new Web paradigm, learners participate in authorship, collaboration and networking on websites serving as “points of presence” (Hemmi et al., 2009, p. 20) for individuals. Social media spaces built on peer contributions produce content expressed in layman’s terms, and crafted with modern media habits in mind. Today, the read/write Web is shifting toward the view/post Web with the rising popularity of sites like YouTube and SlideShare. Both platforms emphasize visual content and allow DIY subject matter experts to jockey for views.
Collections of self-paced media artifacts are popular resources for independent learners who can acquire information at their own speed. Much as they program Pandora to reflect their musical tastes, online learners prefer to selectively gather knowledge by putting together a playlist of peer-experts and tuning in when time permits. This self-styled study of pertinent material has an agreeable human tone and a pleasing learning tempo; and these elements contribute to a new practice of lifelong learning.

As an online resource of searchable information created by users, SlideShare fits this model. Many uploads are formatted as instructional material, as the presentations were created for local audiences and shared to the site for greater, even global, impact. However, without the scaffolding of instruction, PowerPoint presentations and other documents are properly considered informational. Stripped of traditional instructional supports including practice, feedback and assessment components, online presentations may not rise to the level of training, but can certainly assist in learning (Rosenberg, 2001).

To be successful in using SlideShare to supplement existing knowledge and build personal networks, independent learners need to be Internet savvy, and capable of employing keywords to find caches of relevant information. While the site contains scholarly material, Slideshare is not a curated database of presentations culled from peer-reviewed journals. Credentialed thoughts and crazy ideas coexist on SlideShare, and this mash-up of ideas can be stimulating to those who find the publishing norms of academia stultifying.

Each learner must be intellectually curious enough to engage in self-guided searches of the site’s artifacts and have the capacity to weigh the veracity of the information, based on a personal evaluation of sources. This process of self-directed learning, a key element of andragogy, requires individuals take initiative in determining their own learning needs and
identifying appropriate resources for achieving their goals (Knowles, 1975). While many adults require instructional guidance and course structure to effectively engage in eLearning, individuals who possess the skills to actively update professional knowledge and assess learning outcomes outside of formal channels can benefit from using targeted social media sites as learning spaces.

Beyond the rewards of independent learning, SlideShare users who move from passive viewing to content-sharing profit from the professional exposure that results from creating a profile and uploading material. This can be critical for workers who want to improve earnings by changing jobs, an undertaking that often entails moving across industries and regions. Taking part in online activities can build professional stature. For new workers who have had to settle for less favorable employment in recessionary times, job changing is an efficient means of rebounding from initial low wages Oreopoulos, Wachter and Heisz (2006). SlideShare can be used to establish and broaden credibility for workers who seek opportunities far from their current locale and circumstances.

By contributing documents to the site, a SlideShare user takes ownership of his or her thoughts and takes part in the free exchange of ideas. Participating in LinkedIn Groups provides added chances to make impressions on industry peers through structured conversations about hot topics and other professional concerns. These conjoined activities place the user on the professional map, which can improve job mobility as the user becomes networked to distant decision-makers. There is a gap in literature on consumers of informal online learning as producers of peer-learning content. However, online sites that link learning and self-promotion are increasing in number as adults are compelled to seek out information to stay current in their
work roles and network to secure future employment. As this trend continues, it is likely to prompt future study.

Multimedia design principles discussed in work by Clark & Lyons (2004), Mayer (2009) and Tufte (1997) and popularized by Reynolds (2007) provide a framework of best practices for the presentation projects contained in this portfolio. Work by Thatcher and Zadeh (2012) and Kenner (2015) guides the planned infographic. The projects to follow will be uploaded to SlideShare as a means of participating in a professional interchange of ideas. The slide presentations and infographics are designed for college student and faculty audiences and cover a range of loosely related topics which fall under the site’s Education and Technology headings.
Chapter 3: Project Description

Objectives

This portfolio provides a set of information media samples, each created in the graphic form best suited to either delineate a set of tasks or answer questions for the intended audience. Cairo (2013) states “function does not dictate form,” but instead restricts the number of acceptable forms to be considered. He stresses these design decisions are not simply a matter of personal taste, but are driven by the substance of the content, whether it be a story or set of data. Through my projects, I will demonstrate the ability to effectively select appropriate graphic and informational forms as well as competencies in:

- Designing materials that deliver understandable and coherent information on educational topics
- Designing engaging media forms capable of capturing attention on the chosen social media site, Slideshare
- Employing best practices for maintaining attention and interest in online learning materials
- Projecting professional personality through design and content choices that convey authorial point-of-view or sense of style

The projects will be uploaded to my SlideShare account as they are completed. I will capture screenshots of SlideShare's analytics including the upload summary for content posted to the site for a one-year period, May 2014 to May 2015. This will provide an overview of content performance of the four portfolio projects as measured in total views. Previous uploads will provide benchmark data. Once I upload my portfolio pieces, which demonstrate best practices, I
will collect data on the change in total views and SlideShare actions including outbound clicks, favorites, comments, downloads and email shares.

**D2L Tips Today Infographic**

**Product.** A multi-panel infographic explaining the benefits of creating online content for students using HTML. The intended primary audience is MnSCU instructors. The infographic form exemplifies the type of lean content that appeals to online users who prefer condensed subject matter (Goldner, 2013).

**Content.** The infographic outlines key advantages to building content in HTML as course content within the D2L learning management system (LMS). Using a newspaper style format to break material in meaningful chunks, the infographic covers several benefits of HTML content including universal accessibility for students, compatibility with mobile devices, and availability of templates.

**Process.** The infographic is authored in Piktochart, a leading cloud-based software service dedicated to the format. Information on HTML and D2L was gathered during an internship with MnSCU’s Instructional Management System (IMS). A template was selected to demonstrate ‘newsworthiness’ and appeal to faculty members who have an affinity to the newspaper format, which is suggestive of the analog age.

**Relationship.** D2L, recently rebranded as Brightspace, is the LMS used by MnSCU colleges and universities including St. Cloud State University. D2L’s Brightspace platform delivers online content to students who need to navigate the LMS to access class materials, submit coursework and interact with peers. Faculty and students statewide rely on MnSCU’s IMS for technical assistance in the effective use of D2L, a powerful, but complex, LMS. D2L is frequently updated, resulting in changes to various tools. Oftentimes, FAQs are produced with
text instructions and basic screen captures with production values limited to symbols like arrows and highlights to direct attention and address user questions. With service pack updates to the LMS, these FAQs can be subject to change within short timeframes. However, the advantages of using HTML over Word (or other word processing programs) to create course content are enduring.

Life-long learning to keep up with technology changes in the workplace is becoming essential in all fields (Klamma, 2007), including higher education. Like an FAQ, this infographic addresses technical considerations that may be unfamiliar to users. It goes beyond an FAQ by proposing a solution to a problem some faculty members do not know exists. Online resources like the CAST website (http://aem.cast.org) have provided pertinent details on authoring accessible educational materials, supplying tips on design and conversion methods to make materials usable across student variability. Creating a well-designed infographic is a reasonable means of building awareness of HTML formatting as a means of improving user accessibility to content within Brightspace courses.

Employed in the field of assistive technology at the high school level, I work with instructors on similar digital formatting issues. As the district supplies struggling readers with mobile devices equipped with text-to-speech apps, we must ensure that educational materials are provided in compatible digital form. Teachers are used to distributing paper handouts in their classes. Sharing digital documents with students is not part of their regular practice. My job is to find ways to reach out to faculty to help make this change happen. Beyond detailing preferred formats and procedures, I need to present good reasons for making this effort. An infographic could be a motivational tool. By incorporating images, stories and data to support this new approach, an infographic could raise awareness and acceptance. Such an infographic could be
shared via the district’s email newsletter, The Notebook, which is used to disseminate news including technology tips.

**An Attitude of Yes Slide Presentation**

**Product.** Using Haiku Deck, I will recreate a presentation I have given to several student and adult audiences. The slide presentation, in its current form, was authored in PowerPoint and runs approximately 50 minutes. Created for face-to-face delivery in the classroom, the presentation includes breakpoints for audience participation. Authoring the content in Haiku Deck, will allow the adapted work to be uploaded to SlideShare site for unrestricted viewing. It can also be shared on a mobile device. Repackaging the product in this manner will result in a tighter slide deck appropriate for online and mobile viewing.

**Content.** “An Attitude of Yes” is a scripted slide presentation that includes a number of stories, drawn from popular culture and personal experience, designed to illustrate the value of being positive in outlook and open to change. In its new format, the presentation will reduce lengthy narrative to simple slide points. In viewing multimedia materials, students are apt to “learn more when less is presented” (Mayer, 2009, p. 106). Interactive audience elements will be retained as questions posed to the viewer. This presentation touches on personal qualities required of today’s lifelong learners, who succeed by developing their creativity and positivity, among other advanced traits (Blaschke, 2012).

**Process.** Following the steps outlined by Haiku Deck to create a slide presentation from text inputs will result in a new, streamlined media product. The original PowerPoint presentation and companion Word script will be reviewed prior to authoring. Key points will be highlighted to develop ideas on reducing a traditional narrative speech to a condensed form. Images supplied by Haiku Deck will be used. The process of authoring in this format is supposed to be fast and
uncomplicated to help content creators to quickly move from idea to upload. While a high level of professional polish is expected of portfolio pieces, this product is intended to demonstrate a new online aesthetic that requires some informality.

**Relationship.** Experimenting with new software and apps is essential for staying abreast of developments in the information media field. Adopting new tools to reduce production time allows the IM practitioner to contribute more often to PLNs for personal development. Technology integrationists who are aware of easy-to-use tools are in a better position to move instructors from established practices to new methods of content delivery. In K-12 settings, time demands prevent many teachers from incorporating more technology into their practices. Nearly all of these teachers have hands-on experience with PowerPoint and most have old slide presentations that can be revised. This common starting point makes a transition to a new slide format, Haiku Deck, less intimidating as the software can revamp existing materials.

**Create an Online Hub for Professional Presence Infographic**

**Product.** A multi-panel infographic explaining how to use LinkedIn and SlideShare in tandem to create a professional online presence. The intended audience is senior-level college students, graduates and job-seekers.

**Content.** The infographic will use persuasive and instructional copy to encourage job-seekers to take the steps necessary to create a LinkedIn presence by creating a profile with resume components including work experience, education, recommendations and appropriate personal details on interests and hobbies. The benefits of joining LinkedIn Groups will be presented in an infographic panel. This informational piece will spell out the LinkedIn and SlideShare connection and explain the value of having supporting materials on each site. The infographic will emphasize the importance, and ease, of creating profiles on both sites. This
graphic project will not provide step-by-step instructions, but will link to a helpful LinkedIn tutorial and SlideShare presentation on getting started with the process.

**Process.** I will draw on materials I presented in HBS211—Career Essentials to develop social media advice pertinent to job-seekers, and information from my community education presentation, “Using LinkedIn for Job-Hunting and Networking.” My creative process includes online research, looking at similarly themed materials, making notes, collecting links and surfing infographics until I get a spark of inspiration. Using Piktochart, I will select a suitable template and build the infographic. This paper will provide best practices for building the infographic. Drawing on my advertising background, I like to keep my options open until a headline, sometimes wordplay, sometimes an image, brings an idea forward.

**Relationship.** This project will result in a portfolio piece that is a clear link between this paper’s problem statement and literature review. Working to develop a professional identity is a critical task for graduates who hope to be discovered by employers who are talent searching online. Posting digital documents on SlideShare can boost visibility and build credibility for job seekers. In an online network, gaining prominence within a chosen channel is an important outcome as platforms built on peer contributions celebrate the individual and create points of presence (Costa, 2011; Hemmi et al., 2009). This infographic will serve as an example of an online document created and posted with these intentions in mind.

**Unlearning Analog Slide Presentation**

**Product.** Using Haiku Deck, I will combine a set of technology-themed speeches into a cohesive slide presentation. Material from five seven-minute speeches will be culled to flesh out the topic “Unlearning Analog.” The basic premise is to encourage adult learners to recognize
elements of an outdated skillset and to encourage this audience to embrace new technologies.

The resulting slide presentation will be uploaded to SlideShare.

**Content.** Each of the speeches was presented at a Toastmasters Club to complete the requirements of the Technical Presentations manual. The five-project manual trains speakers to present technical information in an engaging manner and focuses on the challenges of communicating tech topics to non-technical audiences. Covering subjects ranging from the International Space Station’s first official tweet to the process of online remediation, the speeches provided an overview of how information technologies are connecting people, shaping conversations, and expanding our understanding of distant news-making events. The thru-line of the slide presentation addresses the ongoing need for individuals to update work-related expertise (Klamma et al., 2007).

**Process.** The bulk of this material was presented orally without the use of visuals. The scripts are not formatted to PowerPoint presentations. This presents another opportunity to test Haiku Deck’s ability to transform text to logical representative images. Using best practices outlined in Chapter Two, I will create a slide presentation meant for online viewing without audio components. This will require parsing scripts down to minimal slide text and relying on arrangements of headlines, subheads and images to convey meaning.

**Relationship.** Technology integrationists are often in a position to persuade tech learners to move into unfamiliar territory. This online presentation, through personal storytelling, offers a look at one professional’s adoption of new tech tools. This journey can serve as an example to other adult learners faced with unsettling technological changes. “Authentic storytelling provides us with meaning, understanding, and coping behaviors” (Clark, 2007, p. vi). A good story
“involves the audience in the main character’s efforts to overcome an obstacle” (Clark, 2007, p. 196).

The project also demonstrates a means of repackaging existing content for sharing online. In this case, the speeches were presented to small audiences in face-to-face settings. Professionals who have created content for one-off situations are looking for efficient ways to take their messages to broader audiences without spending too much time modifying the work for another medium. This simplified approach to building a slide deck will offer one way to speedily reshape speech content for the internet.

**Culminating Project Timeline**

April 2015
- Culminating project preliminary meeting with committee, April 30

May 2015
- Program of study form to School of Graduate Studies, May 4
- Change of address notification to Records and Registration, May 4
- Enroll in IM691 Enrollment Continuation, May 15
- Deadline for graduation application, May 26
- Final meeting date, scheduling, May 4-June 1
- Revise chapters per Report of Preliminary Evaluation Committee, May 1-30
- Production and completion of projects, May 1-30

June 2015
- Notify Graduate Studies of final meeting date (two weeks in advance)
- Final meeting with committee members, June 18
- Deadline for submission of culminating project to Graduate Studies, June 24
- Exit interview with IM department, date TBD
- Graduation
Chapter 4: Tangible Products

Four projects make up the contents of this chapter. They were selected for this portfolio to demonstrate the type of work best suited for SlideShare. The two infographics incorporate modern design principles and best practices for the medium. Well-made infographics are colorful and cogent, and have become a popular way to explain complex subject matter. Journalism and information media students are being introduced to the infographic form to visually represent data and analysis, and communicate complicated material to readers.

The two Haiku Decks use photographic images and sparse text to effectively engage an online audience. Such informational content has become highly visual in recent years as appealing to social media users requires strong graphic messaging, beginning with a bold, bright, and interesting title slide (Ciotti, 2012).

Each portfolio project was posted to SlideShare upon completion. Analytics related to these uploads, including a look at total views, traffic sources, and user actions such as downloads, outbound clicks and comments will be discussed chapter five.
Product 1 — Infographic

This infographic has been segmented into four panels for presentation and can be viewed in its original PDF format at http://www.slideshare.net/CharHopela/html-for-d2-l-course-content.
See How You Can Help Students with Access Issues

Students with vision impairments or learning disabilities may use screen readers to translate course materials from text to speech. D2L templates utilize Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), which modify HTML formatting. These style sheets look great and provide an easy-to-follow page structure for all students, including those using screen readers.

Tablet and E-reader Ownership is Up

The number of Americans ages 16 and older who own tablet computers grew to 35% in 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tablet Computers</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either Tablet or E-reader</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Research Center Internet Project, Library User Survey.

D2L offers free templates to format documents!

D2L template packages were designed to make it easier for course instructors to create professional-looking—and accessible—course content. Select from five distinct styles. Choose a style, upload, and get started.

For a list of template packages and setup instructions, go to:
https://documentation.desire2learn.com/en/accessible-template

Infographic Sources:

- " Desire2Learn Client Success Story – Minnesota State Colleges and Universities," [Link](http://www.desire2learn.com/solutions/higher-education/success-stories)
- "Civic Engagement and Public Libraries — And Beyond," a typology of public library engagement in America. [Link](http://www.pewtrusts.org/2014/05/21/about-this-report-and-beyond)
Product 2 — Slide Deck

This slide presentation, An Attitude of Yes, can be viewed on the Haiku Deck site with auto-advance functionality at www.haikudeck.com/an-attitude-of-yes and as a click-to-advance presentation on www.slideshare.net. The following pages are the images from the 27-slide deck in sequence.

an attitude of
YES
Char Hopela

We make yes/no choices from the moment we hear the alarm clock.
Will we get up and get going?

All day, we have "Do the Right Thing" choices

Not all of them black & white
Most of us are still discovering when to say yes to reach our goals.

When the YES response becomes ingrained, it’s powerful, explosive,

it’s like a mind grenade
(I got that from the movie "Yes Man")

In the film, Jim Carrey plays a banker,

who is in the habit of saying, "no."
A to Z, his life fits in a file drawer.

Until he reads his YES manual and starts giving micro-loans to people with creative ideas.
He gets the promotion

And gets the girl!
Hollywood happy ending

In real life, say yes

- selectively
- purposefully
- to open yourself to new experiences
Even those that seem difficult or inconvenient

"An attitude of yes is how you will be able to move forward in these uncertain times." ~Michael Hogan

In the past, new college grads found good jobs in their fields of interest.
Today, some find their prospects uninspiring.

Are you willing to say yes to less than you expected?

Yes
is for all of us
This is you, bouncing into the jobs market!

Here’s to your life-changing yes.

Char Hopela
artist, journalist, and technology instructor
Product 3 — Infographic

This infographic has been segmented into four panels for presentation and can be viewed in its original PDF format at http://www.slideshare.net/CharHopela/create-an-online-hub.
Check out the LinkedIn Help Center for information on building your profile, growing your network, and more.

- Customize your professional headline for a strong first impression.
- Summarize your most valuable skills.
- Itemize your work history using keywords from your field of expertise.
- Personalize your profile with a simple, tasteful headshot.
- Connect with classmates, coworkers, colleagues and mentors.
- Endorse members of your network for their top talents.

---

Important: Join LinkedIn Groups

Ask questions to unlock industry knowledge.

With LinkedIn serving as the primary point of contact, SlideShare offers substance to claims of workplace expertise. Share presentations to establish your credibility as a subject matter expert. Connect your accounts and add your SlideShares to your LinkedIn profile, too.
"Presentations are one of the main ways in which professionals capture and share their experiences and knowledge, which in turn helps shape their professional identity."

Sources:

Product 4 — Slide Deck

This slide presentation, Unlearning Analog, can be viewed on the Haiku Deck site with auto-advance functionality at https://www.haikudeck.com/unlearning-analog-education-presentation-dGK6rBpvU and on SlideShare as a click-to-advance presentation at http://www.slideshare.net/CharHopela/unlearning-analog. The following pages are the images from the 28-slide deck in sequence.
HINT:
THESE WERE MOBILE DEVICES

WHEN I WENT TO COLLEGE
AND LEARNED RADIO PRODUCTION

I EDITED COMMERCIALS
ON REEL-TO-REEL TAPE.
MY TOOLS?

• X-Acto knife
• splicing block
• editing tape

I JOINED TOGETHER AUDIO SEGMENTS FOR SEAMLESS SOUND RECORDINGS.

These were hand skills, audio artisan skills.
Today? Think history museum.

You've been to Fort Snelling, in St. Paul, Minnesota?

Where people in period costume churn butter and make horseshoes?
MAKING HORSESHOES?
AT LEAST THAT SKILL HAS SOME RELEVANCE.

KNOWING HOW TO SPLICE AUDIO TAPE?
NOT SO MUCH.

TIME TO REINVENT
THE REEL.
HOW DO YOU
Learn Unlearn Relearn
UNLEARN ANALOG?

LET GO.

PICK UP NEW TOOLS
AND PLAY.
Ask stupid questions.

Question the answers.

Connect with people who are willing to share.
GRAB ONTO
NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

- Podcasts
- SlideShare
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Haiku Deck

REMEMBER
YOU WERE SHARP WITH THE OLD TOOLS
BE BLUNT
WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

CHAR HOPELA
ARTIST, JOURNALIST AND TECHNOLOGY ADVOCATE.
Chapter 5: Reflections

In working for MnSCU’s Instructional Management Services as an intern and graduate assistant, I was tasked with explaining working aspects of D2L to end users. D2L, the learning management system used by Minnesota’s state colleges and universities, undergoes frequent updates that result in changes to the user interface. Most often, I authored video demos of new features for faculty and students. I became enamored with creating a smooth-moving flow of screenshots, highlight boxes and explanatory voice-over. Concerned about maintaining audience attention, we pushed for streamlined, fast-paced products. In our zeal to create professional-looking videos, we considered quick pacing a positive production value and gave little thought to the rate at which a learner could effectively absorb new information.

Later, in a computer-based authoring class, I viewed video demos on advanced functions of Xcel spreadsheets as a learner and realized the potential drawbacks of relentlessly speedy pacing. While a video can be paused and reviewed, needing to interrupt the flow of a recording with frequent stops and starts causes the user to question her learning abilities. Sometimes the felt subtext to rapid pacing is ‘this is so obvious we’re flying through the material as a formality.’

I preferred self-paced learning materials that allowed for the type of mental meandering that occurs in my head as I’m connecting old and new knowledge. During this time, I viewed several slide decks on SlideShare. I liked having access to slide presentations packaged to allow the user to click through at an interest-driven speed. In viewing the slides of a colleague from St. Paul, I realized that as much as I appreciate her skill as a public speaker, I loved having the core of her presentation without the long drive, rubber-chicken luncheon, and roundtable chitchat. I started posting some of my class presentations on the site and discovered that a Presentation Zen approach did not always result in effective online messaging. Preferring thought-provoking
visuals to bullet-point lists, my slide were open to interpretation. While my initial hope had been to click upload and be done with the process, I became interested adapting my text and images for better sharing on SlideShare.

Infographics caught my attention as a graduate assistant with University Communications. The department began to use them as Facebook posts in 2013, following the University of Minnesota’s lead, after seeing evidence of their impact in a social media webinar. Infographics gained more “likes” and “shares” than text-only posts on Facebook. Drawing on my advertising background, I created several for a campus energy-savings project. I liked how infographics, like good print ads, are crafted to convey information with well-selected images and few words. With Piktochart templates, I began to explore the multi-panel potential of infographics. In the longer format, infographics can break down complicated material into understandable pieces, a process known as ‘chunking.’ Since infographics can stand alone or be deconstructed and used in a slide presentation, they are also ideal for upcycling to social media.

D2L Tips Today

At MnSCU, I created the D2L Tips Today infographic to explain the advantages of creating course content in HTML. This was the first infographic posted to the Answers Tab, which is primarily made up of FAQs. The messaging was meant to be factual and persuasive; as the information was directed at a faculty audience in hopes of changing their practice. A standard video demo, a fast-moving maze of mouse clicks, was not the right medium for the message. Because the content was informative rather than procedural, an infographic was a better format for making a case for supplying students with HTML content. The graphic format allowed me to lead off with a bold benefits statement and support the headline with a number of visual data pieces. I think this infographic’s newspaper style effectively targets instructors moving from a
primarily print to digital age by using familiar formatting to compartmentalize information. We
read newspapers to be well informed, to stay current, and this template draws on these
associations.

Published in SlideShare’s Education category on August 6, 2014, this upload received 33
views from August 6-31, and has had 89 total views through May 2015. In April 2015, this
infographic had four views. In May 2015, D2L Tips Today had 14 views, a 250% increase over
the previous month. This uptick is attributable to increased account activity in uploads and
views. A SlideShare viewer drawn by new material may linger to view additional work by the
same author as access to relevant peers encourages continued site engagement (Worrall & Harris,
2013). Another older upload, Infographic as PowerPoint Slides, experienced a similar bump,
going from three views in April to 11 views in May, a 267% increase. D2L Tips Today’s direct
views were 61%, referral views were 15%, and SlideShare views were 15% of the total. Table
5.1 summarizes traffic sources for site content.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SlideShare Traffic Sources based on Sawhney (2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. SlideShare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Embed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Create an Online Hub for Professional Presence

This second infographic was done after I researched best practices and wrote a project description. With these as guides, I organized my material and followed the plan. Like the D2L template, this infographic incorporates an iconic print-era image, the recipe card. This appears in outline at the top of the template and suggests that the infographic will be true to form: a short list of ingredients and instructions that add up to something appealing and worth the effort. Creating the infographic was agreeable work. I enjoy copywriting, which in this case was the process of taking academic writing and reshaping it for quick reference online.

Published in SlideShare’s Business category on May 18, 2015, this upload received 225 views within a week. Direct views were 86%, referral views were 4%, and SlideShare views were 7% of the total. A graph of upload views shows an impressive spike in views when this infographic was added to my content. While the project was successful overall, I was disappointed to realize that my hyperlinks for LinkedIn and SlideShare did not work as intended on SlideShare. If the infographic were embedded to a website, rather than exported as a PDF, the links would be active.

An Attitude of Yes

Creating my first Haiku deck, An Attitude of Yes, was another enjoyable challenge. The user interface was reasonably easy to learn, and any difficulties I encountered were likely due to entrenched PowerPoint habits. I very much liked being able to pull photos into the slides from the extensive onsite selection. This was a time saver, as was the automatically generated transcript of photo credits. These features worked as I had hoped. Despite these shortcuts, authoring the presentation took nearly eight hours. This amounts to a considerable time commitment for a working professional who wants to upcycle material to the Internet. However,
the “Yes” presentation was freshly produced based on previous work, an outdated PowerPoint deck and notes. Choosing Haiku Deck as the original format for a work-related presentation would make the material immediately ready for onsite archiving and online sharing.

I found this automated presentation platform requires an abridged authoring style. Storytelling examples had to be shortened without losing the sense of the intent. The even pacing of Haiku Deck slideshows is pleasing as long as the slides are not over-crowded with content. Too much text per slide results in a sense of hurriedness as the viewer skims to keep up. Using too many slides to make a point can result in viewer impatience. Without spoken narrative as a project element, the selected “Yes” examples had to be reduced to snapshot ideas that could be understood within a handful of slides. I soon realized the medium was best used to present a few encapsulated examples from the full presentation rather than document each of many story points.

In a month, the “Yes” slide deck had 74 views on the Haiku Deck site, posted in ‘Education’ and ‘Inspiration’, and 43 views on SlideShare, published in ‘Career.’ “Yes” has outperformed my previous slide deck uploads. For example, “21st Century Skills,” posted a year ago, had seven views in the first month on site. “Yes” had 600% more views than the earlier work. Top SlideShare traffic sources for the “Yes” presentation were direct views at 73% and SlideShare views at 23%. I was also happy with the number of viewers who have seen it on Haiku Deck. The thumbnail image of a bold YES superimposed over a blue background figure is a strong title slide. This was one of the Creative Commons images found on Haiku Deck and it does a good job of capturing attention and conveying a positive self-marketing message.
Unlearning Analog

This second Haiku Deck is very close in length to the first and took slightly less time to complete. One of my concerns in developing this portfolio concept was to find a presentation technology that rapidly facilitates upcycling material from other formats, such as text scripts, for online sharing. After authoring two presentations in Haiku Deck I am satisfied that this simple-to-use program accomplishes the task in a reasonable amount of time. I was impressed with the serendipity of some of the image selections. For example, the “Goodbye trusty analog” slide features a typewriter with an end paper dated 2012, which is the year I started the information media program. Being able to find appropriate photos with a minimum of searching is a plus. Once an image is selected, a positioning slider appears within the slide, allowing for optimum placement of photo and text overlay. I prefer this method to searching the ribbon for a similar feature in PowerPoint. Though the design choices are limited in Haiku Deck, this appeals to me as using templates simplifies decision-making and saves authoring time. This also puts more emphasis on the messaging and storytelling elements.

In making the first slide project for this portfolio, I discovered I could cover less ground than I had initially anticipated. This held true for the second presentation. Even telling a snippet of a story involves a good number of slides. This in mind, I honed my material and kept each presentation under 30 slides with a running time of approximately 2 minutes 35 seconds. I followed the oft-heard advice to engage the user and get to the point—fast (Camp, 2013). If viewers found the finished presentation to be fatiguing in length, it would defeat the purpose. I wanted users to be interested in the artifacts I had curated to enhance my online presence.

After reviewing my technology speeches, each of which contained a personal experience of technology transformation, I decided to use the audio editing example. The resulting
presentation incorporates humor to make the point that some outdated skills have to be set aside. I chose the print book image as the title slide to make this point visually from first glance.

In one week, the presentation was viewed 26 times on SlideShare, and 105 times on Haiku Deck, where I again posted in the ‘Education’ and ‘Inspiration’ categories. The high number of views on the Haiku Deck site surprised me. I thought site users might be too young to be interested in the idea of abandoning analog and adopting digital. As Haiku Deck does not have site analytics, I do not have information on traffic sources.

**Summary**

The online element of this portfolio project made this a valuable experience for me. Adding the projects as uploads to my SlideShare account resulted in an all-time high in monthly views. Detailed information on views, viewers and actions for each of the projects provided me with data for evaluation. (See Appendix A.) In addition, the projects caught the attention of my online community, sparked discussion and drew comments in other social media channels.

Among the comments on the slide presentations:

Female, age 53, “Love, love, love your SlideShare presentation!! Great information and I wanted to read more. Nice use of humor, too. Girlfriend, you nailed it!”

Female, age 49, “I did not know what analog means. Now I understand better. I think it is a very good presentation for pushing yourself to learn new things. My 14-year-old is trying to teach me some of what she does on her iPad: Snapchat, FaceTime, ooVoo, Instagram, etc. I am also trying to learn more about Chromebooks, so I can actually help some students next school year (with) Google Docs, slide shows, and whatever else is out there.

Female, age 45, “Some of it moved fast for me. I wanted to take in the pictures, but I needed to focus on reading the text.”

This suggests that a compelling photograph can be a two-edged sword. A great image cuts through visual clutter, but also demands attention. This same viewer noticed the slider at the bottom of the presentation view screen after watching both presentations on Haiku Deck. The
site’s controls allow the user to play, pause, and select any slide at will. With this discovery, she noted she would be more likely to pause the automated advancement of slides whenever she needed more time to grasp the combined visual and text content of a slide.

Her reaction to slide pacing caused me to reconsider Reynolds’ advice to include text-free slides within presentations. In viewing dozens of Haiku Decks before authoring my own, I did not come across any with slides free of text. I decided to be very deliberate in keeping text per slide to a minimum, but maintained a narrative throughout to reduce the overall slide count. In reflection, I believe inserting the occasional text-free slide into a presentation has several benefits. An image slide relieves the viewer of the demands of reading. This allows for a few seconds to absorb the previous flow of textual information. When an image slide follows a mixed-content slide that poses a question, it presents the viewer with a moment to consider the question. By selecting an image related to the posed question, the author signals this ‘pause to reflect’ to the audience. Other responses moved from social media exchanges to email:

Male, age 59, “The “Unlearning Analog” presentation really reminds me of two experiences I have had with changing technologies—DOS (disk operating system) vs GUI (graphical user interface) and the advent of the hard drive.

My initial experience with personal computers was at St. Cloud Technical and Community College in 1984 and was with an Apple Ile. Shortly after that, our college switched from Apple to IBM desktops. It took me a while to get comfortable with the IBM format. Eventually I got it. I believe they were called “strings,” with A:\> being the root of drive A. If something was desired from, or to be put on, the A drive, one may have had to type in a very long string. During the years I worked on DOS based computers, Apple was busy making their computers much more user friendly with the GUI approach. People I knew that used Apple computers would rave about how simple it was to just point and click. That seemed unnatural to me. Then Microsoft came out with Windows 95. It was very challenging for me to rethink the way my computer was to work. As with many other experiences in life, involving change, I did not care for the new way of doing things. However, as I became familiar with the new OS format I loved it and could not envision ever again missing the old DOS.

The other piece of this adjusting to change coincided with the advent of the hard drive. I first learned using the A: and B: drives to load DOS and then load your application software and then save work to your floppy disk in the B: drive. With the introduction of the C:\> drive there was another change I initially disliked. I got over it. Cloud drives are my current challenge.”
This detailed response confirms that the topic of technology change is deeply relevant to adult learners and working professionals. In using the words ‘unnatural,’ ‘rethink’ and ‘challenge,’ this educator gives real insight into the sometimes painful process of discarding familiar technology for new computing and storage systems.

One-word reactions to the projects were more typical of my social network. My Twitter account is linked to SlideShare and promotes new uploads to my Facebook account with automatic tweets. The increased activity over the month of May, amounting to 300 views of new content and 57 views of previously uploaded content, gave more of my colleagues and acquaintances a clearer idea of my professional capabilities. (See Appendix B.) However, there were no SlideShare actions defined as outbound clicks (such as clickable references), likes, comments, downloads or email shares during this period.

Tracking the number of views and looking at the geographic locations of viewers on the SlideShare site was interesting and motivating. Seeing viewers from Belgrade, Serbia; Pontianak, Indonesia; Lima, Peru; United Arab Emirates; the Computing Centre of Russian Academy of Sciences; and other distant places made the concept of ‘World Wide Web’ come alive.
References


Schaffer, N. (2014). LinkedIn or left out. USA Today Magazine, 143(2832), 32-34.


Indianapolis, Indiana: Pearson Education.

Appendix A

SlideShare Uploads Summary for Char Hopela, May 2014—May 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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TOTAL VIEWS: 933
SLIDESHARE ACTIONS: 7
## Appendix B

SlideShare Top Content for Char Hopela, May 01-31, 2015

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<tr>
<td>An Attitude of Yes</td>
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<td>Unlearning Analog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use HTML for D2L Course Content</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infographic as Powerpoint Slides</td>
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