

A photograph of a nuclear explosion, likely Nagasaki, with a large mushroom cloud rising from a desert landscape. The background shows blue mountains under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Top 10 Ways to Give a Bad Talk

Jarron Leisenring & Paul Ries



# 10. Creating a Presentation too Long for the Allotted Time

- If time is running out, just speed up
- *Never* skip any slides
  - You did the work
- Audience came a long way
  - Want to hear the entire talk
  - Even if briefly
- If absolutely necessary (ie. someone cuts your mic), skip the summary/conclusions
  - Just repeats points you already made anyway
- Alternatively, they can pry the podium from your cold, dead hands



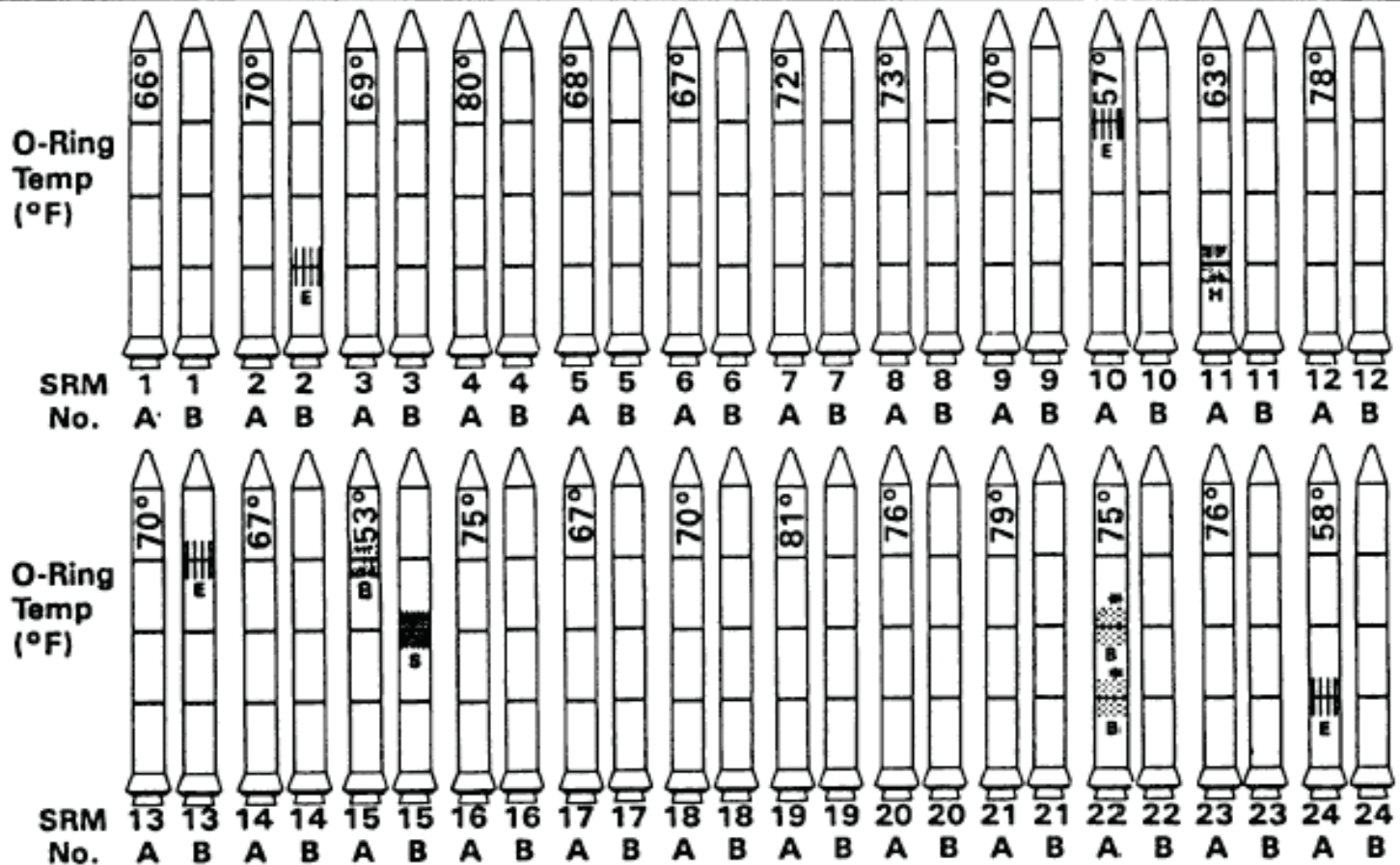
# 8. Busy Slides are a Must

- Adds **sizzle** to your presentation
- There's a lot going on in your research and you must make your audience understand that through the physical appearance of your slides
  - The more points the better
  - Smaller font also makes one appear more humble
- Don't omit any of the gory details
  - People rarely read your papers
  - This is your opportunity to make the audience understand all the nuances that went into your research
  - The more details you present, the *smarter* you appear
- People have small attention spans these days
  - Graphics, graphics, graphics
    - Pictures are worth a thousand words
    - Thus, you should have a lot of text in your slide to explain the pictures
  - Animations also come in handy
- **Colors are fun!**
  - Use as many as possible



# 8. Busy Slides are a Must (cont.)

## History of O-Ring Damage in Field Joints (Cont)



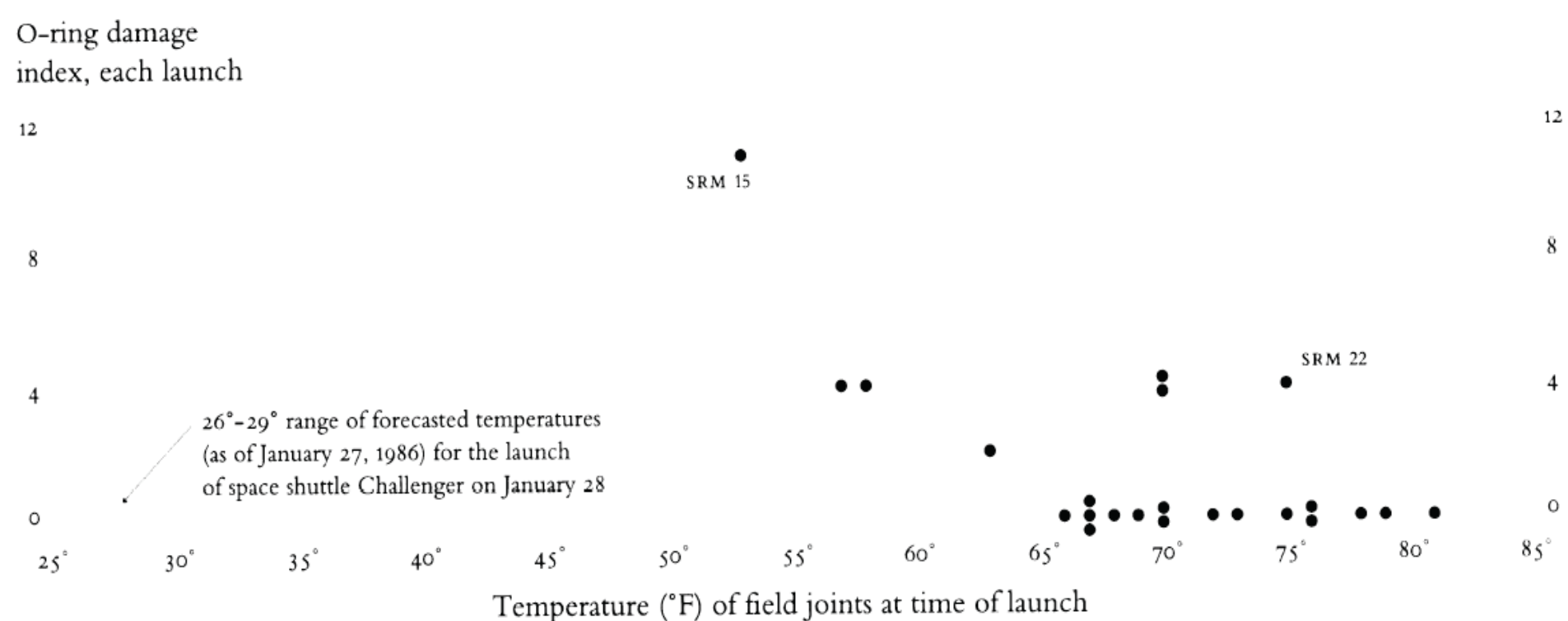
MORTON THROKOL, INC.  
Wasatch Operations

\* No Erosion

INFORMATION ON THIS PAGE WAS PREPARED TO SUPPORT AN ORAL PRESENTATION AND CANNOT BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE WITHOUT THE ORAL DISCUSSION

# 8. Busy Slides are a Must (cont.)

- So much less information....



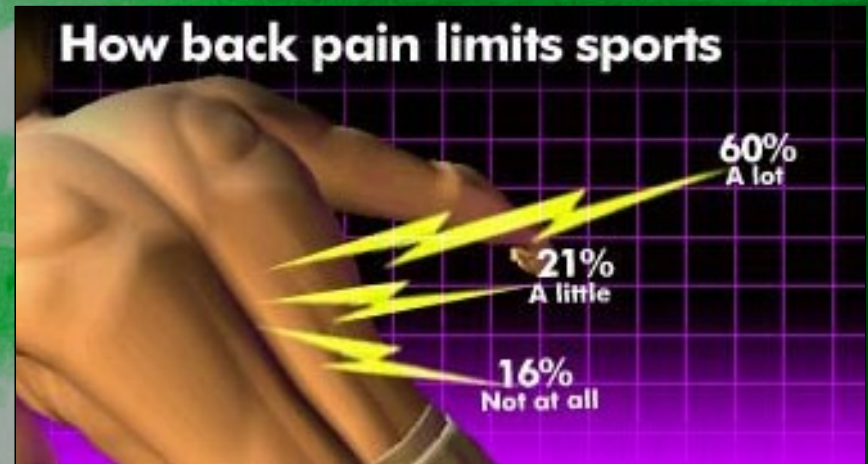
- But don't waste space with things like citations:

- Tufte, Edward R: Visual and Statistical Thinking, 1997



# 8. Busy Slides are a Must (cont.)

- One must always speak in complete sentences because sentence fragments make you look incompetent. Also, the audience might mistake misinterpret those brief bullet points.
- **Use up as much room as you need to make your point.**
- Sometimes it's necessary to say things twice to get the point across.
- Sometimes it's necessary to say things twice to get the point across.
- Don't fret if you think the font gets too small
  - The important people sit up front, anyway





# 6. Don't Engage the Audience


- Eye contact makes people nervous
  - Averting eyes shows respect
- No distracting motions
  - Always keep arms at side at the podium
- Speak softly
  - The audience will be more attentive
- Avoid rhetorical questions and humor (especially irony)
  - Big sources of confusion
  - I mean, seriously, who would use such a tactic?
    - Crazy people, that's who...
- If you must use the laser pointer, use it constantly and consistently



# 6. Don't Engage the Audience (cont.)

## Docking

157

- L-1 Orbit Insertion
  - Execute AR&D
    - 2 video guidance sensors
    - 2 3-D LADAR units to provide AR&D
  - Manual rendezvous and docking
    - 2 sets of translational/rotational/throttle hand controllers
    - Remote Manipulator System
    - SSP-CEV UHF communication
- 



# 4. Don't Worry About Your Target Audience

- It's all about you and the research you've accomplished
  - Can you say "captive audience?"
  - You're the expert
  - The audience's chance to get *your* opinion
- Ignore the knowledge and interests of the audience
  - You're here to teach them
- What if the audience doesn't come away with a heightened sense of interest?
  - Not your fault they don't understand
  - That's why they're not the invited lecturer
- The Gettysburg Address if Lincoln were born in our time period: <http://www.norvig.com/Gettysburg/>



# 2. Last Minute Preparation

- Click to add text





## 2. Last Minute Preparation (cont.)

- Gives the best results
  - Adds spontaneity to the presentation
- Everyone works best under pressure
  - Just listen to Bill Watterson (Calvin & Hobbes cartoonist)





## 2. Last Minute Preparation (cont.)

- Don't practice
  - Time better spent doing research
    - Should be churning out more results to fit into your talk
  - Kills the appearance of being spontaneous
- No point in preparing for Q & A session
  - Again with the whole spontaneity thing (really important!)
  - Most likely won't get any insightful questions that you can't answer on the spot, anyway
- Leeds too knew an fun knee grammar and spelling, e van with spell check



# Top ~~10~~ 5 Ways to Give a Bad Talk

5. Create a presentation too long for the allotted time
4. Create slides that are too busy and full of information
3. Don't engage your audience in the discussion
2. Don't consider your target audience
1. Prepare your talk less than 24 hours in advance