PowerPoint, Reconsidered

Why should I reconsider?
Used intentionally, PowerPoint can compliment you, the presenter, and keep your audience engaged and focused where you want them.

It is extremely versatile: it can appeal to multiple learning styles and integrate emotion into a presentation.

Rabbit Holes to Avoid
Rabbit holes refer to tools within PowerPoint that can be fun to explore, but are easily (and often!) overused.

1. DENSITY [too many colors, images, bullets, ideas]
   Con: Distracts viewers from where you want them to focus.
   Fix: Rely on your notes to cue your discussion content.
   Limit words and data on one image. Integrate color, pictures, and animations each with purpose.

2. BULLET POINTS
   Con: Makes relationships linear, all ideas seem equal.
   Fix: A few are fine, hopefully using phrases and limited words. Try to integrate images as easy to digest visual cues.

3. COLOR AND ANIMATION
   Con: Can distract audience, focus point is lost.
   Fix: Use each purposefully. Animation is great to add elements at your pace. Choosing two complimentary colors and integrating them purposefully adds interest & directs attention.

Bullet Points
• What’s the big deal ???
Think of the numerous and complicated types of relationships: processes, cycles, hierarchies, etc. Bullet points are overused and are not adequate to represent the complicated messages these relationships convey. Bullet points result in a linear, two dimensional data set. Some experts call them ‘evil’ and warn that they should never be used. I wouldn’t go this far. If you wish to use them, wonderful. Bullet points are not bad when used purposefully; but if they are the only tool used, they can hurt the presentation by not conveying relationships or important ideas.

Why is this important?
Bullet points in PowerPoint are too heavily relied on, giving presentations a dense, two dimensional, sleep inducing feel. Further, the bounty of tools within PowerPoint can be overwhelming and difficult to learn.

Our common misuse of PowerPoint, myself included, has earned the numerous jokes and comedic routines found on the Internet, (I recommend watching comedian Don McMillan’s “Life After Death by PowerPoint,” very funny).

Our continued use, despite the numerous less than enjoyable presentations we have viewed, demonstrates that the tool is still convenient, useful, and despite some feelings about the presentations, here to stay.

I propose a new perspective, to reconsider the positive potential in PowerPoint. By first recognizing our reliance and our humorous dependence on certain features, we can make small, yet impactful, changes.
Here are some examples of typical and reconsidered slides. Use these to better understand the potential harm of the rabbit holes, as well as to spur your imagination.

**Typical Slide**
Dense and distracting: colors might be hard to look at or not contrast well. With lots of data all at once, it is difficult to know which part to look at. Speaker may be ignored while audience is looking at numbers.

**Reconsidered Slide**
Using images can speed up processing time. Animation can be used to add each element on cue during the presentation and discussed at the speaker’s pace.

If you need to convey data heavy material, consider using handouts instead, or circle areas within the data to direct focus.

*IDEAS TO HELP YOU RECONSIDER PPT*

These three slides demonstrate how to pare down presented data: transferring data off the slide and onto notes for talking points. Finally, using an image in the final slide better shows the relationship: the top ideas are based on the bottom ideas.