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Essay Title: **Is technology critical to a live presentation? Or is technology just a crutch?**

The power of the spoken word is one which cannot be equaled through any other form of communication. It is intimate and yet public; live speakers seem personal, while addressing anywhere from one to one thousand people at once. The most talented orators are able to eloquently and concisely communicate their standpoints clearly and effectively, captivating their audience. In this sense, the speaker is not simply offering an opinion, but rather a passion; a speaker is selling himself to the audience to persuade them of his own viewpoint.

How can technology play a part in this sale? There are countless arenas of public speaking, from the President's State of the Union address, to a ninth grade biology teacher in a Minnesota classroom. Technology can revolutionize either of these circumstances or any in between, by making the presentation itself more lucid and convincing, while also increasing its accessibility to and resonance with a larger audience. What better way to understand a complicated process within a chloroplast in a cell than with an animated diagram on a Smart Board to demonstrate? Or to put our nation's political events on the radar of young people on the internet, who otherwise may not have an interest?

As helpful as technology is in spreading the spoken word and enhancing its persuasive powers and simple clarity, it can also be a speaker's downfall. The key to a successful presentation is personality - likeability. This can only be developed through human-to-human connection between speaker and audience, something which no PowerPoint presentation can artificially create.

Ultimately, nothing can ever replace that true "je ne sais quoi" quality of a charismatic and captivating speaker. The truly gifted orator melds human contact and technological tools, creating a synergy of purpose and imagination, which neither can produce on its own.