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

Live presentations have evolved tremendously over the past few years. Until fairly recently, the quality and impact of a presentation depended solely on the words and delivery of the speaker. If a speaker was not passionate about his or her message and did not deliver it clearly and forcefully, then the presentation was unsuccessful. Today, although the core of any great presentation remains the speaker and his or her message, presenters have an endless array of technology at their disposal to assist with their delivery. Video, audio, graphics, PowerPoint can be used to improve the show. What must be guarded against is technology becoming so dazzling that the audience barely notices the speaker or the message. And conversely, presenters should not become so preoccupied with the technology that they forget the message they are trying to communicate or that an audience is present. Also, technology should not be relied upon to the point where if it fails, the presenter is at a loss as to how to proceed.

If a speaker is gifted, some might consider technological support optional. That opinion, however, ignores the great impact that technology, when used well, can provide to a presentation. Truly, a picture is worth a thousand words. Reinforcing a key point with a striking image multiplies the impact of the speaker. Music can touch the emotions of the audience and support the speaker's message, while video can use visuals to explain a complicated idea or help the audience make connections. And PowerPoint can guide the audience through the structure and key points of an involved presentation.

In the end, a great presentation is always about the speaker and the message. But the best speakers realize that strategic use of the tools of technology will help their message achieve maximum impact.