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- Some common mistakes people make when building slide decks

- Most of them are very obvious, but people still make them again and again

The first common mistake is having too much text on one slide

- If you put text on the screen - people WILL start to read it - No matter how bad it looks

- They will NOT be paying attention to you

- For example, this slide is about User Experience

Who Owns
User Experience?

The last slide could easily be summarised in a few words

It's a presentation - talk about the subject, don't write about it

Speaking of text, let's talk about our beloved bullet points

- It's not just too much text, it's too many points for a person to keep in their head

- They'll have forgotten the first two by the time they get to the end

- In generally people can only keep between 4 and 6 in active memory - keep this in mind when using bullet points

One point per slide?

-   Ideally you would ditch the bullet points altogether

- There's nothing wrong with 8 slides instead of 8 bullet points if anything it highlights the points even more

The First Part

- The first and really awesome details

- Some stuff about how we did another part

- Moving on, we did something else

- And of course we must not forget the other

- If you really want to go through all the points, break them to onto different slides

The Second Part

- This was cool as well, so we should include it

- You won't read this one anyway

- Can we stop doing this now?

- And finally…you can stop done

The Second Part

- **This was cool as well, so we should include it**

- You won't read this one anyway

- Can we stop doing this now?

- And finally…you can stop done

- You can have your bullets appear as you speak about them them
- But another nice idea is to highlight stuff with colours, that way you can focus one the one you're talking about

The Second Part

- This was cool as well, so we should include it
- **You won't read this one anyway**
- Can we stop doing this now?
- And finally…you can stop done

We've greyed out everything apart from the 2nd point

We've still got the context of the other points, but aren't focused on them

The Second Part

- This was cool as well, so we should include it
- You won't read this one anyway
- **Can we stop doing this now?**
- And finally…you can stop done

The Second Part

- This was cool as well, so we should include it

- You won't read this one anyway

- Can we stop doing this now?

- **And finally…you can stop done**

Another important topic is the size of text you use on your slides

How do handle Deadlocks

Let's say we're talking about database deadlocks:

- we've followed the guidelines above and are avoiding too much text

- But now or next is lost in a sea of emptiness

- We've lost any impact from our short meaningful content

- Our users are staring a a mostly blank page

You can always go bigger!

Deadlocks

- Minimise the words, maximise the size
- When you think it's too big, make it bigger
- Make sure the person at the back of the room can see it
- Make sure the person who forgot their glasses can see it
- Make sure you can still see it, even with a crappy projector

Font

- Don't go crazy, you don't want your font to distract from the content

- No comic sans please!

Of course there are exceptions, but generally sans-serif fonts will work better

Feed Me!

- Make sure your font has enough weight.

- Use Bold or semi-bold if you need - this especially applies to code samples,

Keep it simple. Most importantly, legible.

Again, make sure:

* the person at the back of the room can read it

* the person who didn't bring their glasses can read it

* it's still legible when the sun is shining on the screen and the projector is crap.

If you really want to level up your presentation, use some non-standard fonts

Don't go crazy, pick two and stick to them.

Google Fonts and Typewolf are a great place to start for complimentary fonts

It can add a lot to a presentation, but it can also ruin one..

Poor Contrast

Poor contract is another common problem.

- Light text on light backgrounds,
- Dark Text on dark backgrounds
- The projector/screen is always going to be worse than your laptop,

Contrast problems don't just apply to text slides

If you've got diagrams, make sure there's proper contrast on the components

Change colours to make sure the background and foreground differ sufficiently

You should also avoid mixing colours that can cause issues for people who are colour-blind:

https://usabilla.com/blog/how-to-design-for-color-blindness/

Add a background layer to the text if necessary, it can help increase the contrast.
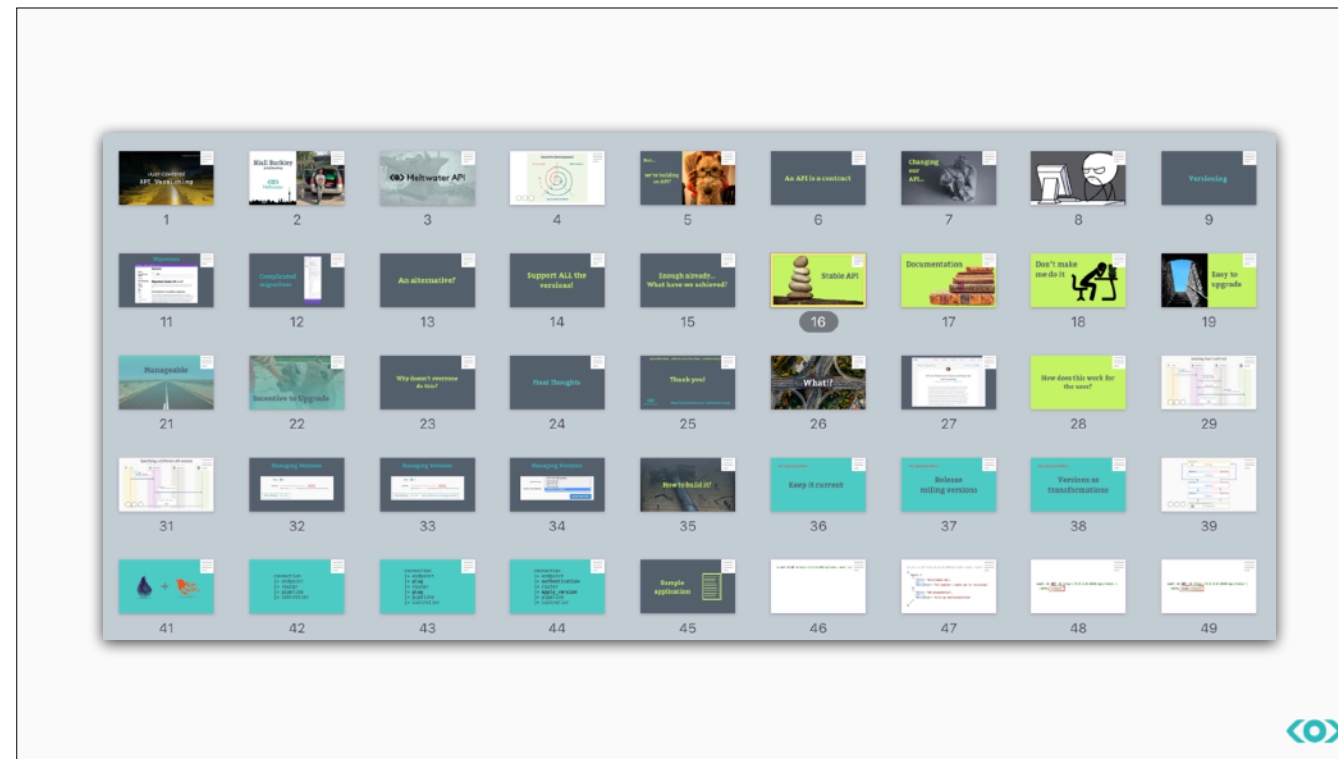
Colours

As long as you use them responsibly, colours can be a great way to improve a presentation.

They're a great way to keep your slides deck interesting, and transitioning between sections

And now for something completely different...

Don't be afraid to use dark background with light text. It's a nice break for the same slides we see every day.

When colours are used effectively you should be able to see the transition of your presentation from afar

Pick a colour palate if 4/5 colours and stick to those

colourlovers.com

If slides are similar, the transition should be smooth

Let's say we've got two slides

This is Heading Two

If we swap back between the two they jump and jitter
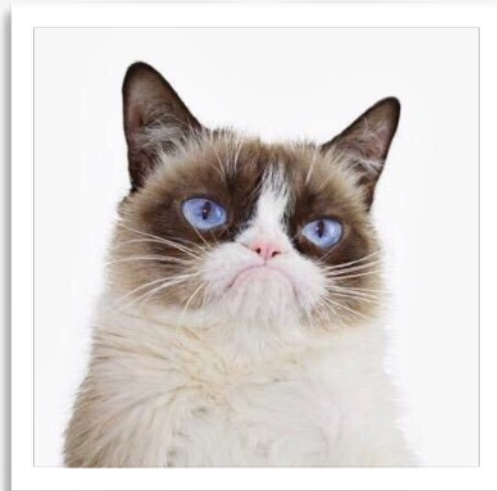
Instead we could keep them consistent

This is Heading Two

Instead we could keep them consistent

Images are really important on slides

- "a picture paints a thousand words"

- non only can it help back up and explain your content, but it keeps people interested

- grumpy cat is far more interesting than your text or bullet points

Use images to their full extent

- For example if I'm explaining to people people what I do in my free time

- This looks kinda lame

Kayaking

This looks much better

Full-bleed (edge-to-edge) images are immersive and impactful

Use high resolution images - nobody want to spend their day counting the pixels on your slides

Kayaking

- Good images also make interesting and relevant backgrounds

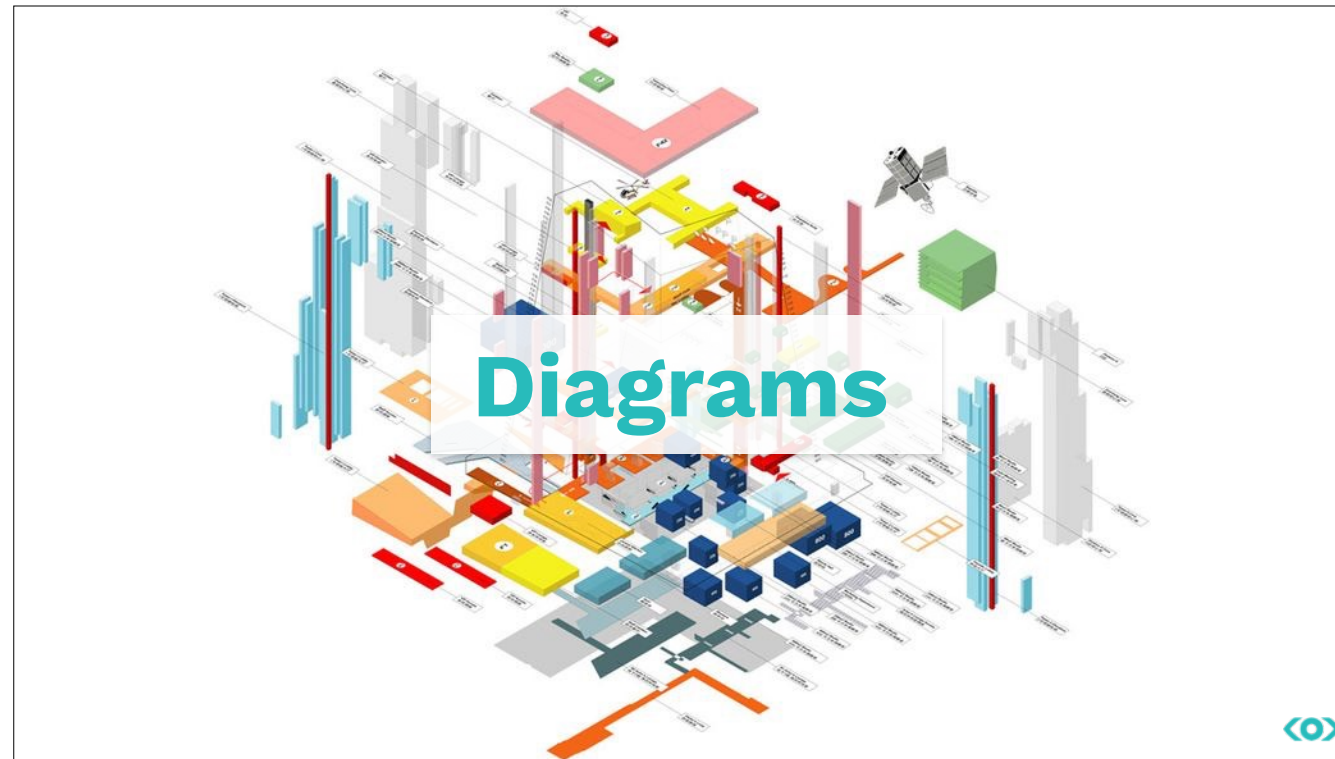- Just make the image black and white and adjust the transparency

Kayaking

Another common mistake is bad contrast with text and images

It can be hard to use a sufficiently contrasting colour for text if the image is made up of lots of colours
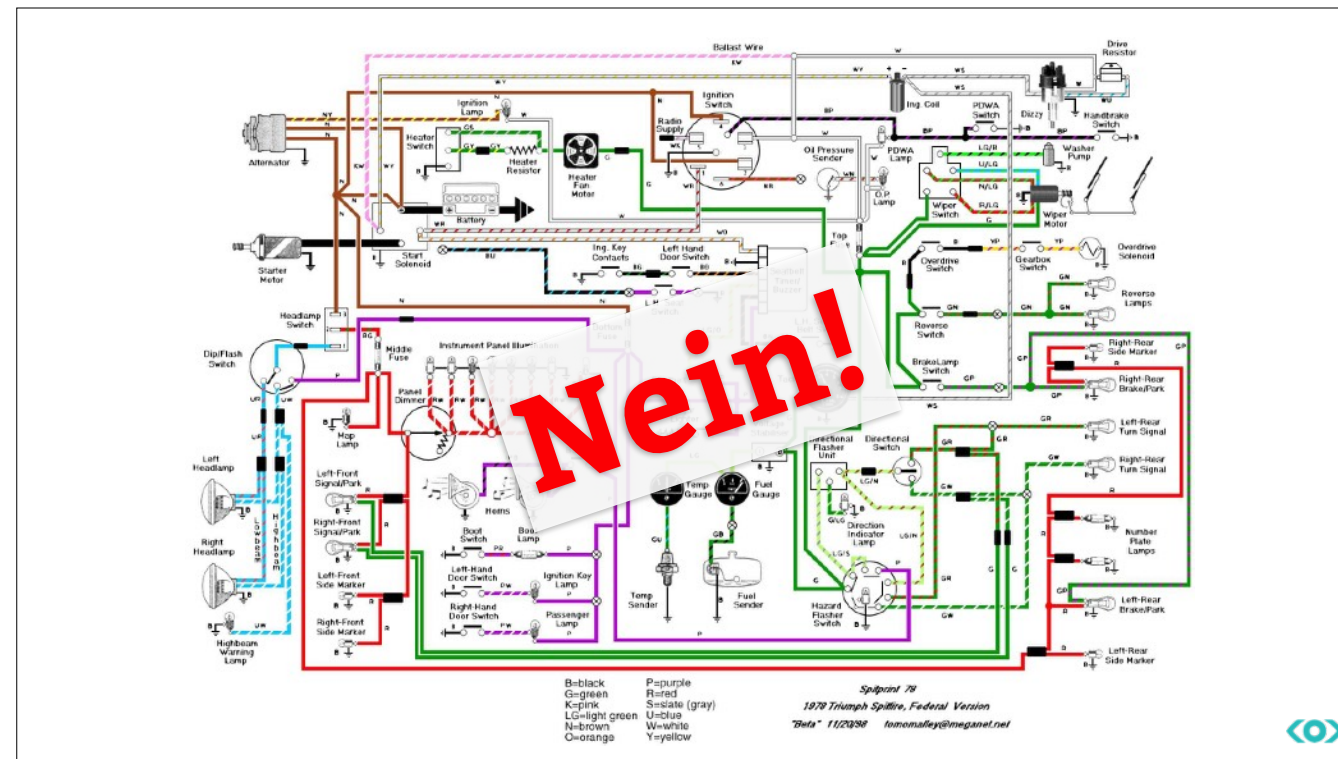
Kayaking

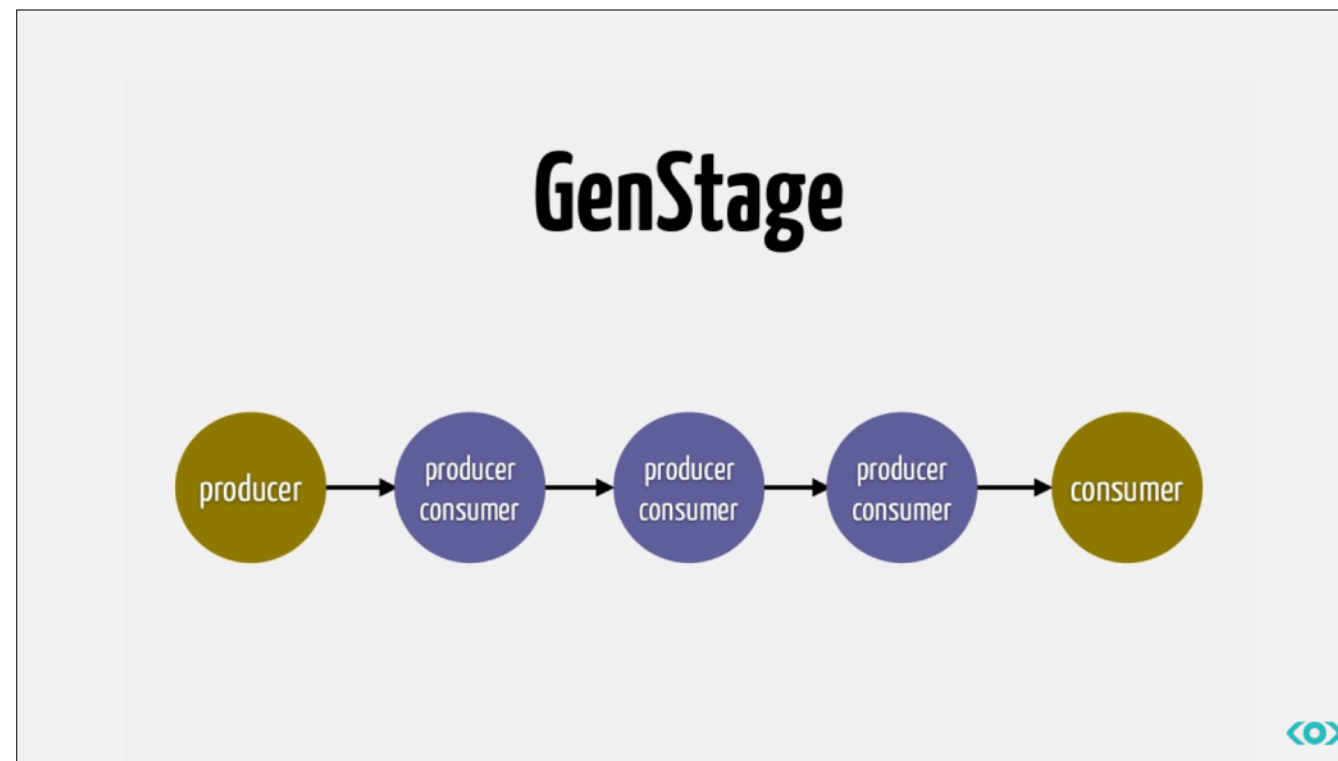Add a layer underneath to make it legible

Diagrams and charts should help your presentation, not hinder it

Unless you're willing to spend half an hour of your presentation explaining it, and loosing everyone in the process please don't add anything too complicated
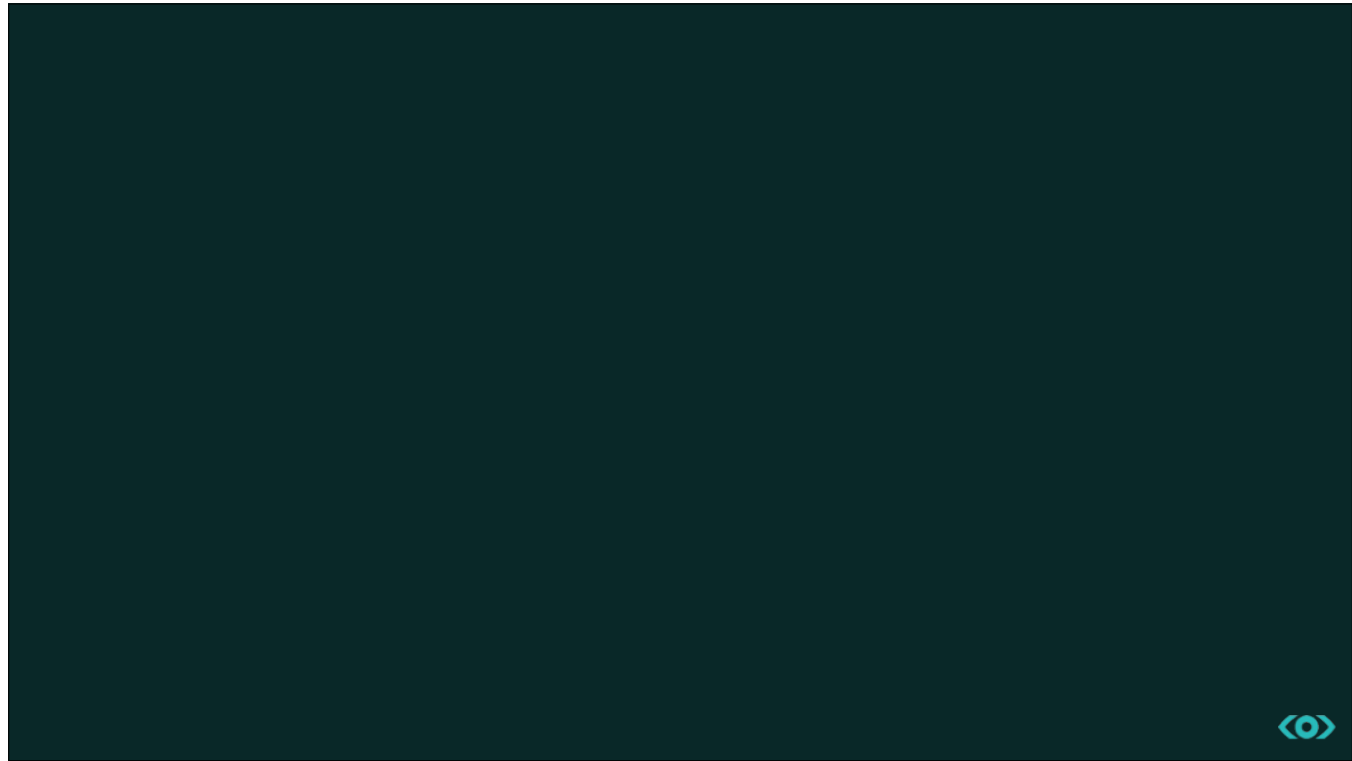
Diagrams should be simple an easy to follow.

Break them down into smaller diagrams that describe each component, rather than one diagram to cover everything.

José Valim (elixir creator) does an amazing job of explaining complicated computer science problem with shapes and arrows

Sometimes

The best slide is…
no slide

For Keynote, pressing 'B' turns the screen black, pressing 'W' turns the screen white

If you've got something important to say, turn off your slides, let the audience focus on you.

It's a great way to get peoples attention and really drive a point home

Resources

[Speaking.IO](#)

[How to avoid death By PowerPoint](#)

[Speakerdeck](#) + [Slideshare](#)

[Google Fonts](#) + [Typewolf](#)