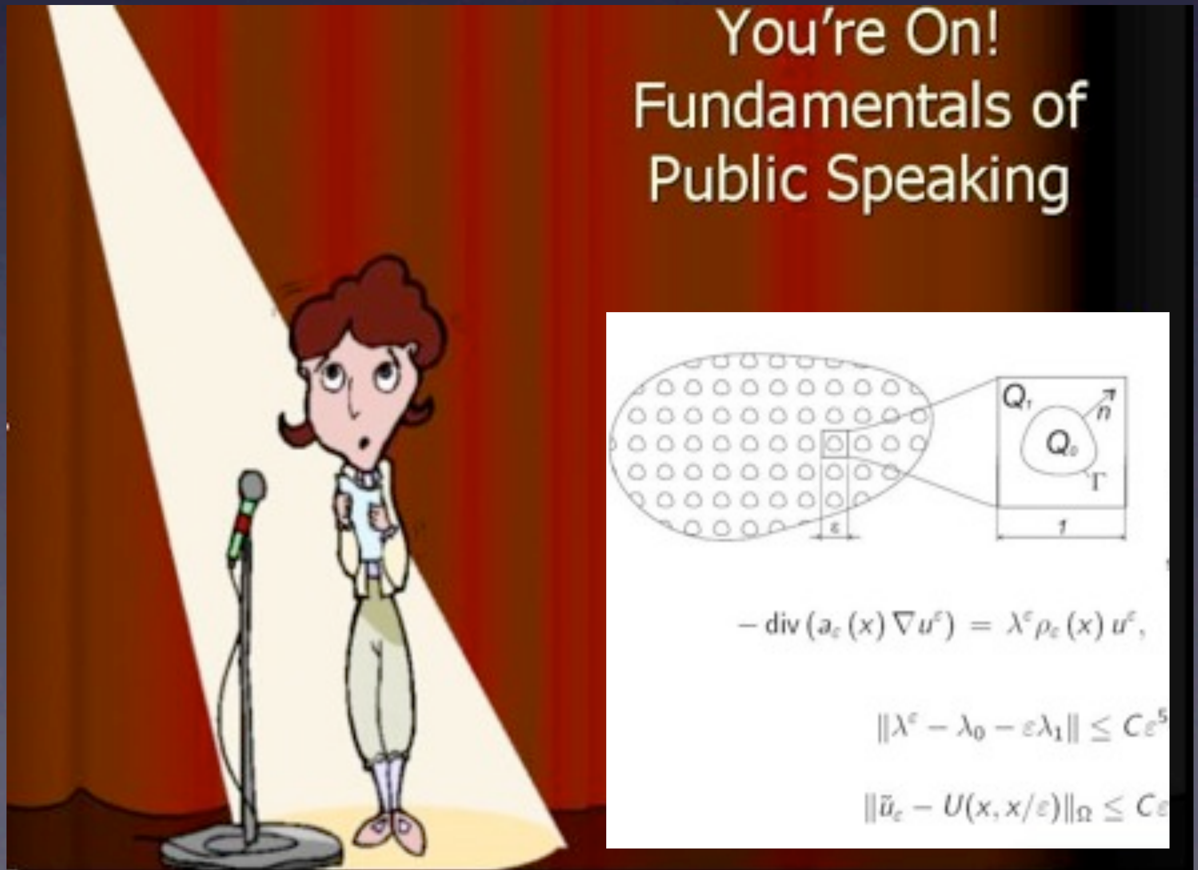
University of Sussex

Develop your Presentation Skills

Andrew Liddle

September 2012



Microsoft-free presentation

Choose your medium

In most academic subjects, it goes without saying that the talk will be presented as a slideshow, almost certainly using Powerpoint. But is that right for you?

Considerations:

- Will you be presenting from your own computer or the venue's?
- Do you have a lot of technical content, e.g. equations?

If it is a relatively informal setting, eg group meeting, might a blackboard talk be more appropriate?

Common mistakes in talk construction

Planning

- Trying to do too much
- Poor time planning (usually overrun)
- Technical problems (projector/laptop)

Content

- Lack of contextual introduction
- Too technical for audience
- Too much information crammed into each slide, especially equations

Execution

- Excessive use of animations
- Poor choice of colours
- Invisible/illegible diagrams
- Monotonous slide style
- Too many bullet points on your slides
- Reading from your slides (which causes poor eye contact)

Setting the right goal

Recall the last research seminar or lecture that you attended.

- What was the speaker's name?
- What was the title of the talk?
- What was the main scientific conclusion of the talk?
- Can you summarize your opinion of the talk in one word?

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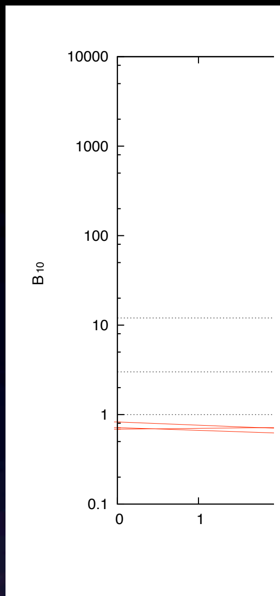
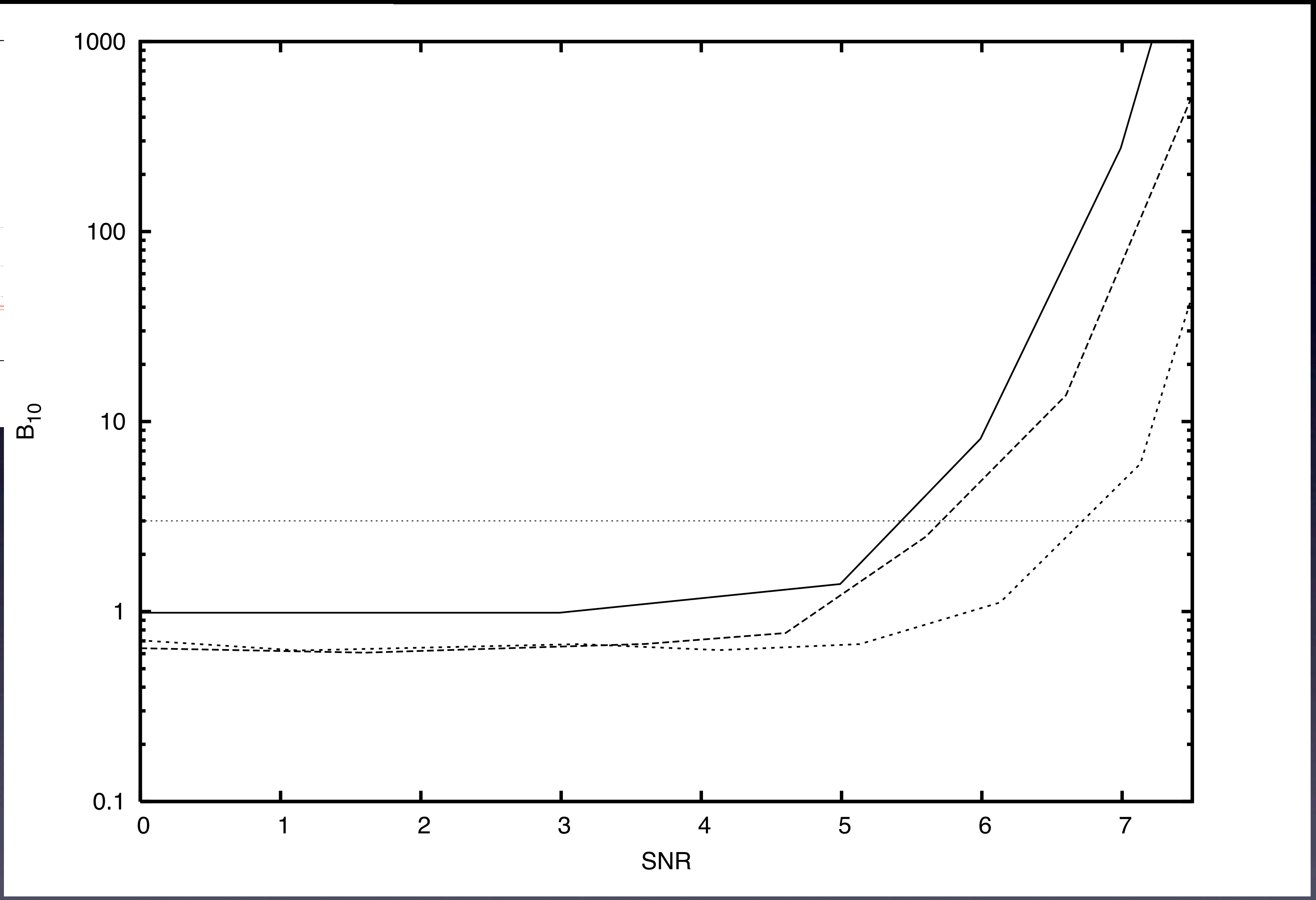
Animation overkill

With modern software it is

Please!

Diagrams





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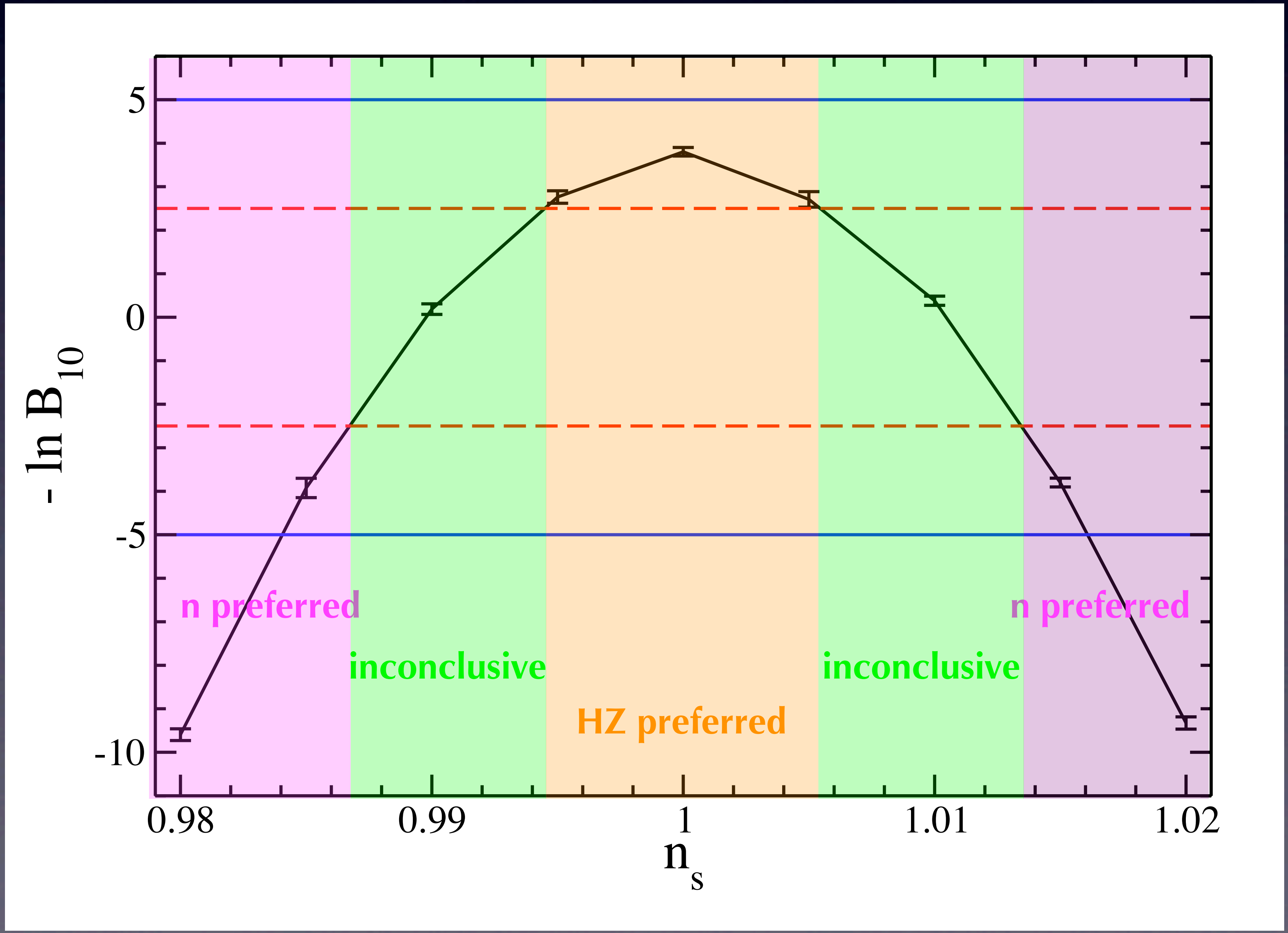

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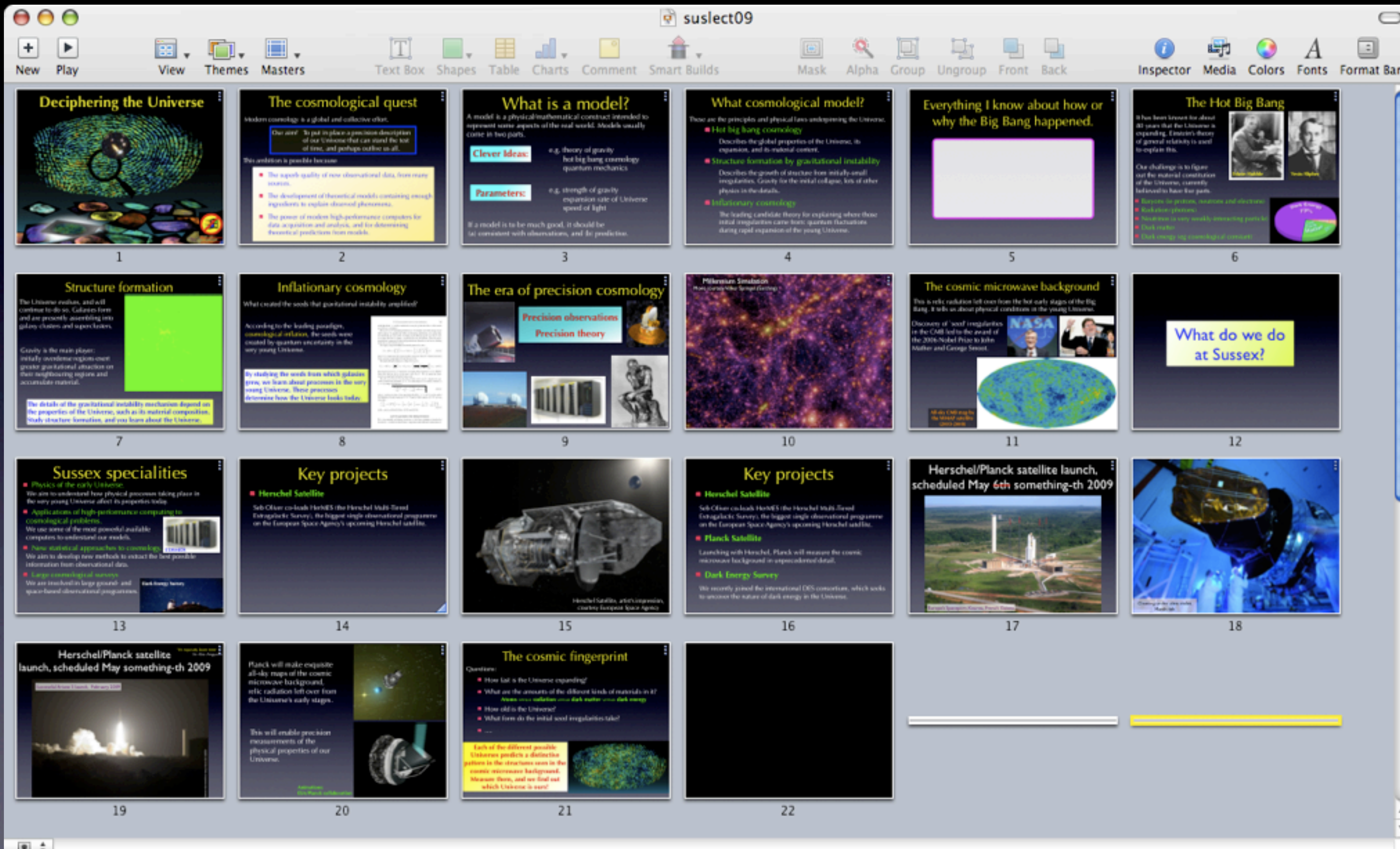
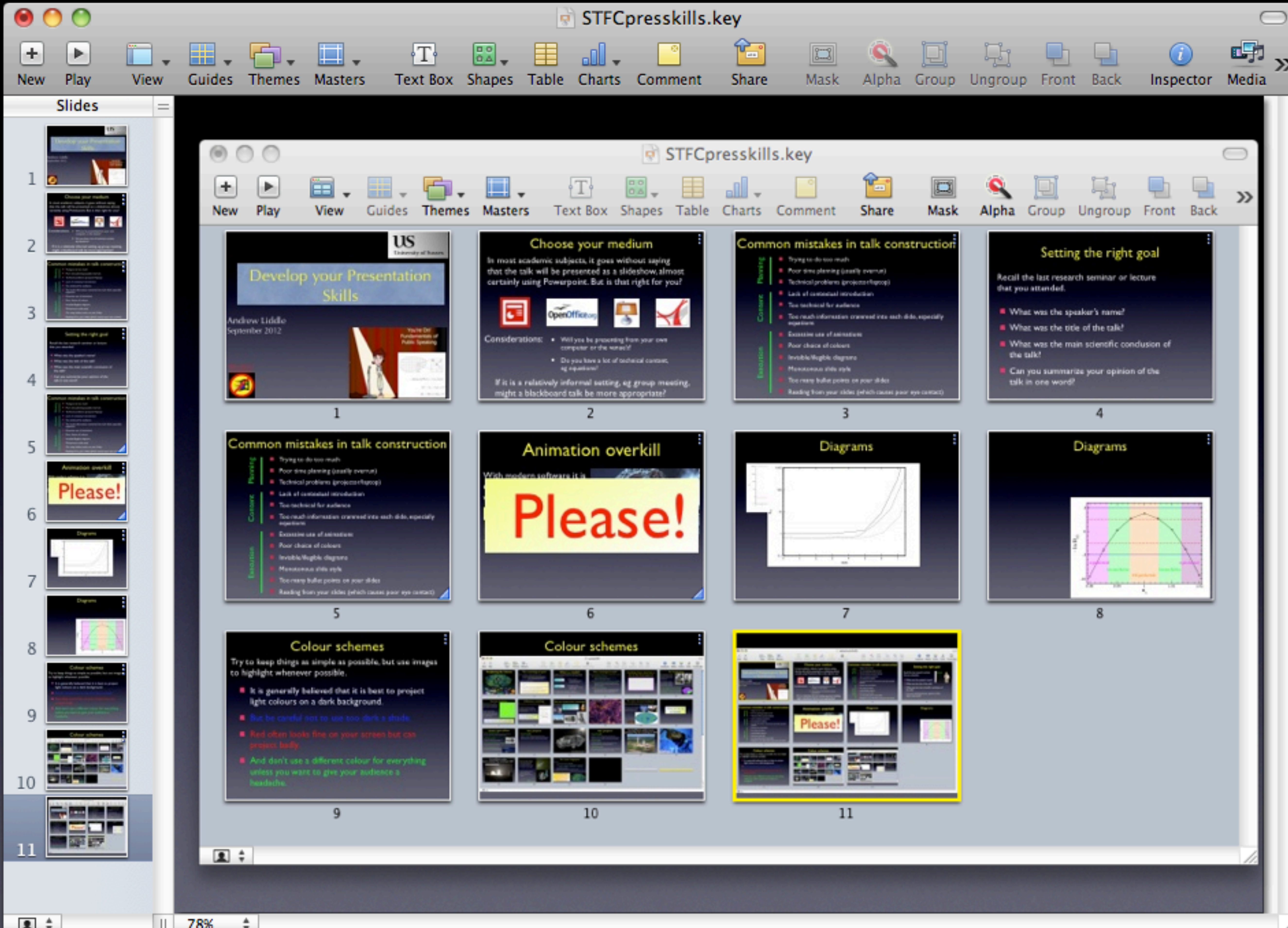
Colour schemes

Try to keep things as simple as possible, but use images to highlight whenever possible.

- It is generally believed that it is best to project light colours on a dark background.
- But be careful not to use too dark a shade.
- Red often looks fine on your screen but can project badly.
- And don't use a different colour for everything unless you want to give your audience a headache.

Colour schemes

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