

Prezi? Pshaw.

Posted by [chris2 Comments »](#)



[image by Melle Oh]

In an aside while [discussing Serena Epstein's brilliance](#) (I can't help but agree, someone should hire her pronto), [The Rev](#) says:

Don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those fickle zombies that fawns over every slick tool that comes around. On the contrary, I'm a rather loyal WordPress zombie. Nonetheless, their presentation with Prezi is so intelligently imagined and executed that I came away re-thinking that tool. The presentation became the canvas upon which they painted their way through the topic of visual interaction, and in this example the medium was the message in every sense of that concept. Hats off to Serena and Brian for both imagining and executing this fact so brilliantly. Nothing like having faculty raving about these new fangled web 2.0 tools after the students rock their world! Check out their [presentation blog](#), and be sure to feast your eyes on the Prezi [here](#) ...

A similar sentiment came up in conversation with another colleague a few weeks ago, and I'm just not seeing it. [Prezi](#) looked pretty interesting when it first came out– I was eager for a Beta account– but it only took a half-dozen steps into my first viewing of a Prezi presentation to lose interest. In effect, Prezi is like a stockpile of cool Powerpoint transitions with the slides, and like their despised Powerpoint brethren, these become irritating rather quickly. I just don't see the innovation that others talk about.

I'm a strong proponent of a presentation style– using Powerpoint or otherwise– that use few or no words. Prezi does help with this. And in very minor sense in this particular case, with this particular topic, Jim is right that Prezi illustrates the idea of the medium being part of the message. But it does so in both a positive and negative way. In this case– as in every Prezi presentation– it doesn't take long for the medium to get in the way. I'm reminded of [Larry Lessig's presentation style](#) and how amazing and effective it

was the first few times until it became something that only Larry could pull off without seeming cheesy, derivative and repetitive.

When Alan Levine showed [Blabberize](#) in a Northern Voice session a few years ago, it got a great laugh. It was funny and well-placed. But more than about 30 seconds of it– no matter how brilliant the words coming out of its mouth– and I'm suddenly a long way from re-thinking the power of the talking llama.

I want to be clear: the *content* of [the presentation](#) is very interesting. In the end, quality will out. I wouldn't (won't!) hesitate to recommend the presentation to others. It's just unfortunate that after the umpteenth Prezi "swirl and grow"– guess what's going to happen, swirl around and grow/focus? Yep. What's next? The same!– the Prezintation starts to distract from the presentation.