

# THE TEXT DOCTOR<sup>®</sup>

## creating better writers



### Nothing can go wrong-o, I am in the Kongo

I love listening to the Raffi song “Joshua Giraffe” with my grandchildren in the car. The chorus, “Nothing can go wrong-o, I’m in the Kongo,” is a wonderfully ironic line that makes me chuckle, partly because the irony is aimed at adults, not children.

That chorus reminds me of some presenters I’ve seen: They arrive shortly before their scheduled presentation; their technology fails; they get rattled. They look extremely unprofessional. All of this could be avoided if they would recognize that “If something can go wrong-o, it probably will.”

Here’s what I have learned about preparing for potential surprises and disasters.

### “Buy” insurance

It’s so simple: Insure against surprises by showing up at least ONE HOUR EARLY. This saved me when I arrived at a prearranged building in St. Paul, Minnesota, only to find that the class had been moved to Minneapolis (12 miles away) with no notice. Risking an accident or a heart attack, I raced to Minneapolis and started class on time because I had that one-hour buffer. Your potential disaster may not be so dramatic, but certainly extra time will help cushion you against potential surprises.

### Bring backup files

Projectors seem to be far more compatible with laptops than ever before, but technology is never predictable. Sometimes, my laptop won’t work with the technology in the room; I always bring a flash drive loaded with my linked files and folders to use in another laptop or computer. I include a PDF of the handouts if for some reason they haven’t arrived by mail. For extra insurance, I bring a DVD with redundant copies of all relevant files. The good news is that I’ve hardly ever had to use my backup material, but knowing that it is available relaxes me.

### Bring redundant equipment

I use a remote to advance my PowerPoint slides. Since all batteries are fallible and the one in the remote gives no warning that it’s going to fail, I carry a backup battery (it costs less than \$4 and is about the size of my thumbnail). With a tiny screwdriver, I can replace the battery in less than a minute, or I can replace it pre-emptively about every two years.

I carry extra cables and an extra battery pack for my laptop, and I even bring an extra power strip and extension cord (all labeled with my phone number in case I leave them behind). My laptop is labeled with my tech support number and my account number. I bring a copy of my purchase documents in case I am ever questioned in customs. I carry duct tape to secure cables and cords to avoid tripping over them. All of this preparation costs less than \$50 and one hour of time, but it has saved me countless headaches.

### **Troubleshooting a faulty projector**

Check the lens cap, power cords, power switch, sleep modes, and cable connections. Synchronize your laptop with the projector; the method differs between brands. If the projector and laptop don't sync, completely disconnect both, then reconnect; turn on the projector first and laptop next.

### **Only you can prevent....a presentation disaster!**

We all hope to arrive at our presentation or training room to find the latest model projector and a professional support person eager to help us (and bring us coffee and a Danish, too). Reality differs from this vision, of course, and we can prepare and insure against most surprises or disasters with a few simple steps. Recovering from disaster quickly will help you relax a bit before your presentation and be more effective during your presentation.