

before and after

Combine custom animation and better graphics to illustrate complex processes



by nancy duarte

Nancy Duarte's visual design team has developed presentations in the Silicon Valley since 1988. Duarte Design specializes in digital presentations for strategic storytelling. She can be reached at nancy@duarte.com or www.duarte.com. Michelle Chew, visual editor for Duarte Design, also contributed.

The impact viruses, worms and other network vulnerabilities can have on an organization translates into thousands of hours of downtime and millions of dollars in lost revenue. IT company Securify's keen understanding of those concerns enabled it to develop applications that monitor network traffic, and schedule and customize network reporting.

Duarte Design was asked to help clarify Securify's visual message to better communicate the company's network security product to audiences of various technical proficiencies.

Specifically, Securify wanted to demonstrate the core strengths of its solution by showing how it defines and prioritizes critical threats, and handles the most debilitating dangers first.

The requirements of a secure network are extremely complex, but Securify didn't want a complicated

graphic to represent the concept. The original graphic (Example 1) was extremely busy and didn't accurately show how the components interacted. The original design concept was based on a traditional XY table that focused on how the network could be managed based on assessing network change and threats. Realizing that the XY table did not accurately represent the context of an entire network and the prioritization of threats, the Duarte team began by rotating the axes of this graph 45 degrees to show that the network was growing exponentially. The resulting concentric arcs emanating from the XY intersection give the illusion of expansion, in the same way water ripples from the core and spreads out.

Duarte also developed a slide design to illustrate how a proactive management system would work. The new design (Example 2) uses two planes to

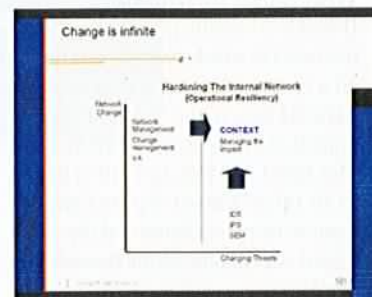
represent a positive model (in green, to designate the stated intentions of the network) and a negative model (in red, to designate the known threats and vulnerabilities).

In developing a visual that could depict real-time diagnostics, the designers used interlocking circles to illustrate how Securify's software continually monitors a network. Custom-animation schemes were used to show the constant activity. Key components of the network management system were emphasized in four separate quadrants as each component is highlighted.

The redesign gave Securify a graphical solution that not only clarifies the company's key messages but helps simplify a complex process. □

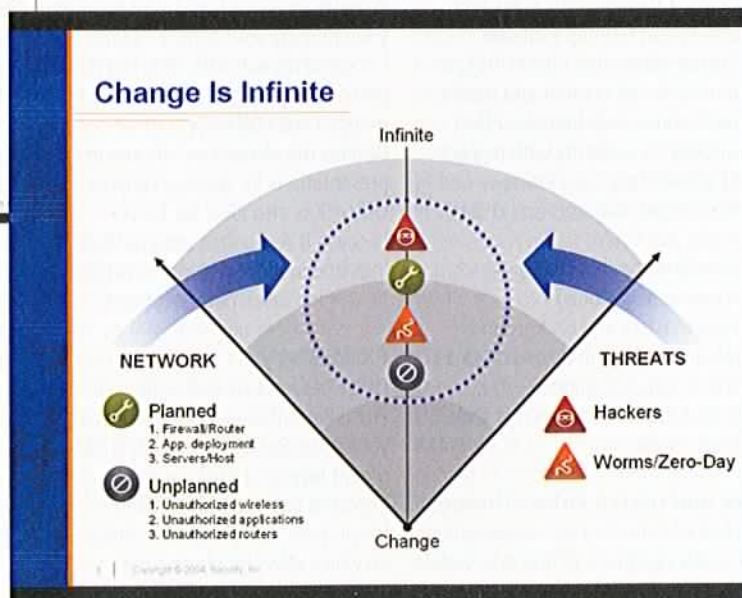
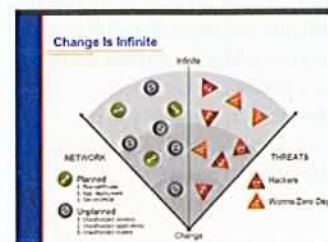
Software and system used: Microsoft PowerPoint XP, Adobe Illustrator CS; Microsoft Windows XP.

Change in perspective communicates expansion



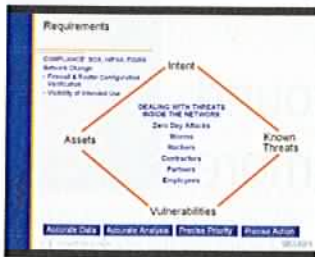
BEFORE: The original XY graph doesn't accurately represent the entire network and the prioritization of threats.

AFTER: To better demonstrate the core strengths of Securify's solution while depicting the exponential growth of a network, the original graph was rotated on its axes to enhance the concept of expansion.



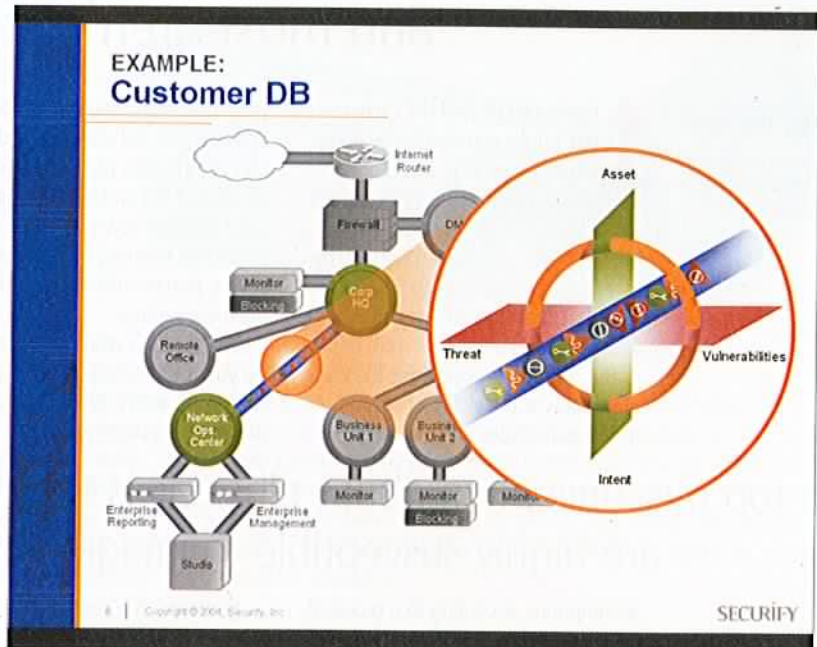
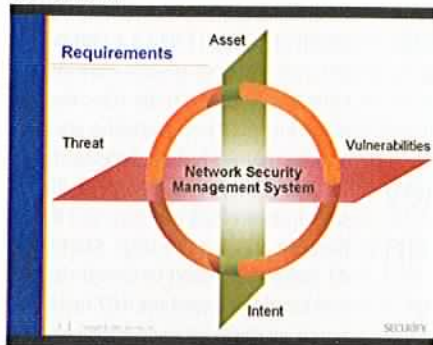
before and after

Use graphics and color to simplify the complex



BEFORE: In avoiding a complex graphical representation of its product, Security's original slide had little visual appeal and did not accurately describe how the components interacted.

AFTER: The new design shows the workings of a proactive management system and includes a graphical depiction of abnormal behaviors and threats, as well as the four core components of the network.



Graphics and animation clarify a complex process



BEFORE: Viewers don't know where to focus their attention on this text-heavy slide. It also fails to portray an environment of constant activity.

AFTER: To depict real-time diagnostics, interlocking circles represent Security's application as a constantly monitoring process. Key components of the network management system are emphasized and custom animation schemes, which include pop-outs, help show the constant activity.

