

Formatting Tips for Accessible Power Point Presentations

Slide Layout:

- Use a slide template and do not use a blank slide when creating a presentation. With templates, headings and text will assist the screen reader users to navigate the document.
- Ensure that all text present on the slides is also available in the Outline View (within Power Point). If the Outline View is missing the information from the slide, it means that it is unreadable to a screen reader user.
- Do not use text boxes to insert content.
- Use short, concise ideas and use bullet points and lists when required.
- Number all of your slides, including the introductory slide.
- Limit animation and transition slides – preference is to not use them.
- Provide the presentation in advance of the lecture. This allows a person to become familiar with the content and to place it on a laptop computer with screen reader software to follow along when the information is presented to the group.

Suitable Background Colour:

- Make sure that the colour contrast between the text and the background colour is enough to ensure that the content can be read without being distracted by the background.
- For readability purposes, avoid the use of background images or effects i.e. watermarks as the text becomes less readable.
- If presenting in a light room, utilize a dark coloured text on a light coloured background.

- If presenting in a dark room, use a text that is light coloured and bolded on a dark coloured background.
- If the document is to have a coloured background, use a single solid colour rather than a textured or patterned background to improve readability.
- Avoid using background colours that are pink, red, dark grey, brown, green or purple.

Fonts:

- Text should be sans serif font (i.e. Arial or Verdana). This means that the font does not have little tails on them, which can become blurry on the screen.
- The minimum size of text should be is 24 point size; try size 24-40.
- Avoid Italics wherever possible.
- Do not use more than one font type per slide – if you want something to “pop” use a larger font size or use bold style.
- Do not use red or green fonts, avoid flashing or flickering information. If you are using different colour fonts, do not use blue as this is the colour that generally symbolizes links.
- Do not use colour only to convey meaning.

Text:

- There should be clear line spacing – suitable for the slide.
- Avoid large blocks of text.
- Use bullet points consistently and have no more than four per slide if possible.
- Do not insert extra spaces between words to try to line up things or insert blank lines to spread out bullet points.
- Use just key words, not complete sentences.
- Each slide should have a title.

- Use left alignment – do not use “Justify” as this stretches and compresses text which reduces readability.

Headings:

- Headings should be relevant to the slide, with a minimal use of capital letters.
- Headings should not be underlined. The recommended font size for headings is 36 point in bold.
- The recommended font size for sub headings is 28 point in bold.

Punctuation:

- When using bullet points and lists, end each point with a punctuation point (i.e. period, comma, semi colon). This helps the screen reader users to note differences in ideas.
- Do not use all capital letters. An initial capital followed by lower case is more legible.
- Do not abbreviate or use contractions.
- Use acronyms only after defining them.
- Do not split words across two lines.

Images & Objects:

- Minimize the use of images for visual effect - use only for enhancing understanding.
- Use only one image or object in a slide at a time.
- These should be clear and uncluttered.
- Text should never be placed over images.
- Use only for enhancing understanding.
- Tag each image or object using Alternative Text (Alt-Text).

- Do not insert complex charts or tables or use unnecessary graphics for charts. Images, such as flow charts, maps, etc. should be provided in hard copy and in accessible formats with a text descriptor (alternate text) added along with information added to the “Notes” section.
- Always create images in jpeg format and then insert them into the Power Point presentation by using Insert ->Picture. Never Edit-Copy, Edit Paste Images into a presentation.
- Provide text descriptions for all images/graphics. Image descriptions should be added to the “Notes” area of slides.

Media & Links:

- Videos must be described completely in Alternate Text (Alt. Text).
- Audio must have a text transcript.
- Multimedia must be captioned.
- Use hyperlinks only if they are accessible – i.e. captioned.

Additional Items:

- Prepare handouts in gray scale, check for contrast.
- Prepare copies of “Notes” pages in gray scale.
- In promotion of the meeting/presentation (i.e. advertisements, press releases) mention materials will be available in alternate formats upon request with a request to respond by a specific date.
- At the beginning of the presentation mention that the presentation is available in alternate format.
- Be pro-active. Bring materials/presentation in alternate formats to the meeting. i.e. presentation on a memory stick – to be downloaded to a laptop for a person using screen reader software; Large Print; audio file, etc.

Resources:

- Gugerty, John. 2006. *Making PowerPoint Presentations Accessible*. AHEAD 2006 Conference, San Diego, CA.
http://www.ods.uno.edu/ods_pdfs/making_ppt_access.ppt.
- Ideal Group, Inc. May, 2009. *Ideal Conference® Guidelines for Creating PowerPoint Slides Optimized for IDEAL Conference®*. Hilliard, Ohio
http://onlineconferencingsystems.com/user_manual/1_IDEAL_PowerPoint_Development_Guidelines_051509.doc.
- Life Long Learning. n.d. *PowerPoint – making presentations accessible*. http://www.lluk.org/documents/FS_-_Making_Powerpoint_Presentations_Accessible.pdf.
- Schmidt, Diane E. and Evans, Lauri. n.d. *Power Points for All Learners: Making Accessible PowerPoint Presentations*. California State University, Chico.
http://myweb.csuchico.edu/~dschmidt/accessibility/powerpoints_for_all_learners.ppt.
- Shaw, Glenna Raye. n.d. *Can you see what I see?*
<http://pptmagic.com/articles/see.htm>.
- Shaw, Glenna Raye. n.d. *The Incredible, accessible presentation*. <http://www.pptmagic.com/articles/accessppt.htm>.
- University of Strathclyde Glasgow n.d. *Presentation and Print*.
www.strath.ac.uk/learningservices/assistive/presentationprint/.
- World Blind Union n.d. *WBU PowerPoint Guidelines*.
www.worldblindunion.org.