

Guidelines for Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint (PPT) presentations are a powerful communication tool but they are often inaccessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. These guidelines will assist presenters in providing an accessible presentation. There are three aspects of a presentation that must be considered; the actual verbal presentation, the handouts, and any materials that will be placed on a web site.

Part 1: Making Your Presentation Accessible

1. Keep the design simple.

- Use a simple, non-cluttered design template such as Orbits or Refined.
- Use easily read sans serif fonts such as APFont, Arial, or Verdana in minimum 24-point.
- Be mindful of color contrast issues. In general, use light text on a dark background (yellow on black, white on dark blue, or white on black).
- Do not convey information with color alone.
- Limit the number of bullet points and total quantity of text per slide. (5 words per bullet, 5-7 bullets per slide)

2. Consider incorporating slide transitions that include sound. This allows audience members who are blind or visually impaired to know when you are moving to a new slide.

- With PPT set to Normal View, open the **Slide Show** menu and select **Slide Transition**. A Slide Transition pane will appear on the right side of the screen.
- In the Modify transition section, select **Sound**.
- Choose a sound from the select box: "Click", "whoosh", "chime", or "camera" are good choices. Some of the others might become annoying to the audience.

3. Verbally describe all graphics including tables, charts, and images during presentation.

- See <http://www.csun.edu/cod/conf/2001/proceedings/0031alonzo.htm> for suggestions on verbal descriptions.

Part 2: Making Your Handouts Accessible

All handouts **must** be provided in large print and braille. Just reading the slides is not adequate. Follow the suggestions below to assist in this process.

1. Create your presentation using the Outline view as suggested above.

- To check that the slide content will be available in alternate formats, make sure the text that appears on a slide also appears in the Outline view within the left sidebar.
- Assign "Alternative text" to all graphics. (See Part 3, #1 below for specific directions.)

2. Once your presentation is completed follow the steps below to create the necessary files for large print and braille.

- Open the **File** menu in PPT.
- Select **Send To**, and choose **Microsoft Word**.
- Choose the **Outline** option and select **OK**. This will only include the text visible on the slides.
- You must now add the "Alternative text" created in #1 above in the appropriate place in the Word document. Follow these steps.
 - a. Switch to **PPT** and go to a slide with a graphic.
 - b. Select the graphic you want.
 - c. Open the **Format** menu and choose either **AutoShape**, **Picture**, or **Table** depending on the type of graphic it is.
 - d. Then choose the **Web** tab.
 - e. Select and copy the text in the "Alternative Text" box.
 - f. Close the dialogue box.
 - g. Switch to **Word** and move to the appropriate place in the document.
 - h. Type "Image:" and paste the text you copied from PPT.
 - i. Repeat these steps until all alternative text for tables, charts, and images is in the document.
 - j. Save the file.
- For Braille: Open the file in your braille translator, format as needed, and emboss.
- For Large Print: Change the font and point size as needed (APHont or Arial 18 pt recommended), format as needed, and print.
- For help on creating regular print handouts search for "handout" in PPT **Help**.

Part 3: Making Your Presentation Accessible For the Web

1. Create a written description (Alternative text) for all graphics including tables, charts, and images.

- In PPT select the graphic you want.
- Open the **Format** menu and choose **AutoShape**, **Picture**, or **Table**.
- Choose the **Web** tab.
- In the "Alternative Text" box, type the text you want. The text can be as long as you want, but some Web browsers might be able to display only a limited number of the characters. **Note** By default, the text you enter in a WordArt object is used as the alternative text description.
- Select **OK**.
- For additional suggestions on writing descriptive txt, see "How to Create Descriptive Text for Graphs, Charts & Other Diagrams," at <http://www.cew.wisc.edu/accessibility/tutorials/descriptionTutorial.htm>

2. To post your PowerPoint to the web in an accessible format see <http://cita.disability.uiuc.edu/software/office/>

An additional resource that you will find helpful is, "How to Create Accessible PowerPoint Presentations from Scratch," at <http://www.cew.wisc.edu/accessibility/tutorials/pptmain.htm>