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Carolin Fuchs
Creative and Effective Presentations

PowerPoint Info

Microsoft PowerPoint is a presentation program for PC, Mac, or mobile devices. It can create presentations from scratch or a template. Users can add text, images, art, audio and videos; use professional designs with PowerPoint Designer; and add transitions, animations, and motion. Presentations can be saved to OneDrive and shared to work with others.

Tips for making creative and effective presentations

1. **Keep it simple:** The less clutter you have on your slides, the more powerful your visual message will become. Your slides should have plenty of "white space" or "negative space."
2. **Limit text and bullets:** An effective PowerPoint presentation should have a small amount of text on each slide. The audience should listen to you, not read along!
3. **Use graphics and charts:** Use graphs and charts to visually communicate data and information. Graphics and charts should be high-quality, accurate, and self-explanatory.
4. **Use fonts that are easy to read:** Sans serif fonts are typically the best for presentations. Do not use more than two complementary fonts; for example Arial and Arial Bold for emphasis. Also, be generous with spacing between lines.
5. **Use colors that improve readability:** Try to keep it simple and do not use too many colors. In general, three to four colors is sufficient for a presentation.
   ○ Follow the 60-30-10 rule—if you've chosen three colors, then you should devote 60 percent of the space on your slides to the primary color, 30 percent to the secondary and 10 percent to the accent color.
   ○ Don't be subtle with your color palette. Use bold colors and high contrast that make your text stand out clearly from the background.
   ○ Be careful about layering text over images—make sure the contrast is strong. Use a color contrast checker and aim for a color contrast ratio for text to interactive element ratio of at least 4.5 : 1.
6. **Use animations judiciously:** Animations can help direct the audience's eye and can also help engage audiences who are facing presentation fatigue. Animation can be a powerful communication tool; however, the type of animation matters!
   ○ Some types, like Appear, Fade-in, Fade-out are subtle while Spin or Fly-in can be highly distracting.
   ○ Using too many animations can make the presentation look less serious.
7. **Use audio/video for impact:** Audio or video can make the presentation more interesting and improve the impact of the message you are trying to communicate. However, make sure you have access to the audio-visual facilities in the location where you are making the presentation, for in-person presentations. In a Zoom meeting, you will have to share your

computer audio along with the screen.

8. **Be consistent and organized:** The color scheme, design choices, and animation effects in a presentation need to be consistent, unless there is a clear and specific reason to bring in variation.
   - An easy way to achieve this is to get your Master slides in place before you build content slides. You should also organize your content with section headers and guideposts.
   - Keep your images consistent on a slide—do not mix visual types. If you want to use photos on a slide, then use just photos. Don't get tempted to insert a clipart on the same slide. If you use a 2D image on a slide, don't insert a 3D image right next to it.
9. **Consider Accessibility:** Accessibility Checker verifies your presentation against a set of standards that identify possible areas of concern for people who have disabilities. Running the Accessibility Checker is a critical process in optimizing your presentations for accessibility. This can be done when you have completed your project, or you can get notified of issues as you are working.

How to Use Voiceover

In PowerPoint, you can insert audio to create a voiceover for your slides. When you add audio, you can upload it from your computer or record it within PowerPoint.

1. Go to the slide where you would like to add audio.
2. Select the Insert tab.
3. Select Audio from the Insert menu and choose the source.
4. Upload or record audio.

Your audio will appear on the slide as a speaker symbol. When you hold your mouse over the speaker symbol, a play button will appear that you can click to play the audio.

How to Use Themes and Designer

PowerPoint Themes are design templates containing color schemes, slide and title masters with custom formatting, and styled fonts designed for a particular "look." When you apply a design template to your presentation, the slide master and color scheme of the new template replace the slide master and color scheme of the original presentation. You can also choose to use a basic design template and create your own design as you go.

Designer improves slides by automatically generating design ideas to choose from. When you put content on a slide, Designer works in the background to match that content to professionally designed layouts. You can choose to accept the layout proposed by the designer, or continue making your own design choices.

Themes
1. Select the Design tab.
2. Select one of the Themes—click on the down arrow for the drop-down menu.

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3. Select one of the Variants.

Designer

1. When you insert one or more pictures, a list of items, or a list of dates, the Designer panel will open.
2. You can also open the Designer panel by selecting the Design tab then selecting Designer
3. Select the design you want.

Resources on Improving Accessibility

- Carnegie Museums web accessibility guidelines: http://web-accessibility.carnegiemuseums.org/design/color/
- Accessibility support for PowerPoint: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/topic/accessibility-support-for-powerpoint-9d2b646d-0b79-4135-a570-b8c7ad33ac2f
- Northeastern University Library Accessibility Hub, Presentations: https://subjectguides.lib.neu.edu/c.php?g=1256415&p=9254700
- WebAIM Color Contrast Checker: https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/
- "It's Complicated": Negotiating Accessibility and (Mis)Representation in Image Descriptions of Race, Gender, and Disability by Bennett et al. (2021): https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~jbigham/pubs/pdfs/2021/description-representations.pdf

Additional Resources

- Get Started: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-presentation-in-powerpoint-422250f8-5721-4cea-92cc-202fa7b89617
- Animations and Multimedia Resources: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/animations-and-multimedia-7a01ed05-b0f9-435a-b1b8-113912657c11?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US
- Design Resources: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/design-your-slides-53c20bd5-e594-4837-a7ad-525706e09960?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US
- Northeastern University Colors: https://brand.northeastern.edu/guide/design-elements/colors/
- Copyright and Fair Use: https://github.com/NULabNortheastern/digitalassignmentshowcase/blob/c5dc8d2c686915d45d1ede5174a5e11b3366f260/handouts/general/Copyright-Fair-Use.pdf
- Data Privacy: https://github.com/NULabNortheastern/digitalassignmentshowcase/blob/c5dc8d2c686915d45d1ede5174a5e11b3366f260/handouts/general/Handout_%20Data%20Privacy.pdf