

## GUIDE TO POWERPOINT® PRESENTATIONS

The following is a summary of observations gathered over many presentations, meetings, and conferences. The goal is to simplify and minimize problems with presentations at meetings. Others may not agree with some of these observations.

– David Brekke, EERC Quality Assurance Manager

**Major principle:** What you see on your computer monitor may not be the same as what you see in the projected image on a big screen. This goes for colors, fonts, font and line clarity, etc. This is because monitors and projectors form images in different ways and actual pixel size is relatively large on the screen.

### Fonts

- Use standard fonts. You may have fonts on your computer that no one else has. This means the other computer guesses at what will work the best. The computer may guess wrong.
- Nonserif fonts, like Arial or Tahoma, are better than Times, etc. The serifs on the letters become smaller than the projector pixel size and thus fade out or disappear. This is very hard to read except in very large type sizes.
- When inserting symbols, first try to use the “normal text” font and see if your symbol is in there. Then try the “Symbol” font.
- PowerPoint has a built-in equation editor. Access this by: Insert – Object, select Microsoft Equation 3.0 from the list – OK. The equation placeholder has open circle handles.
- Do not use a light-colored font, unless it is on a black or very dark-colored background. The font washes out on a light or medium background in the projected image.
- Do not use a font size that is too small. You want the people in the back of the room to read the slide. This problem usually results when there are too many words on the slide.
- Be careful when using words on top of a picture. The letters may disappear when going from trees to sky, etc. Using a dark shadow on the letters helps.

### Photos/images and drawings

- Keep image size in check (file size). Images are great, but if they are all 10 MB in size, your presentation will be unnecessarily huge. There will be a loading delay between slides.
- Image file size only needs to be about 100 dpi resolution to look acceptable on the screen. PowerPoint gives you the option to compress an image for Web/screen (96 dpi) or print (200 dpi). Use 200 dpi so you can print out the slides later if you want to. The image will also look a bit sharper. Do not paste in 1200 dpi images and leave them that way even though your scanner can do it.
- Line drawings may need to have higher resolution than 200 dpi. Thin lines that look great on your computer screen may disappear in the projected image. Use thicker lines and make the diagram less complicated. A diagram with very fine lines will disappear.
- Photos will usually stretch and resize acceptably. Line drawings or graphs may not, especially if there is small lettering in the image itself. Since the images are bitmaps, you could shrink the image so that the lettering and line thicknesses are smaller than projector pixel size or the interpolation algorithm fails. They disappear or appear intermittently.

- Try to paste the photo/image/drawing in a size that will not have to be resized on the slide. You should be able to do this using the originator program or a photo edit program.
- The PowerPoint on-screen slide is 7.5 x 10 inches. If you want to use a photo as a background, save it from the originator program in this size. Put the photo on the Slide Master, and it will appear on all slides. Do not repaste the photo onto every slide.

### Tables and charts

- Be sure to sever all links to the table or chart. That is, when the presentation is run from another computer, it will not find the database or spreadsheet (because the database or spreadsheet is on your computer).
- Cutting and pasting tables and charts from other programs is hit or miss. It works best from Excel or Word. Try to save them from the originator program in the size you want for the slide. You may run into the same resizing problems as images.
- If you have a simple table or chart to display, it may be better to recreate it within PowerPoint. Then sizing and editing is much better and easier to do.
- Subtle color differences on chart elements will not translate well to the screen. In line graphs, use a line thickness that can actually be seen. Yellow lines on a white graph cannot be seen unless they are extremely thick.
- If you are making a complicated table, use vertical text boxes for each column, and line them up. Using spaces to make columns may not work well.

### Colors

- See “**Major principle**” above.
- If you hope to exactly reproduce the cool color transitions that you created or that really snappy template background downloaded from the Internet on the big screen in the front of the room, you may be disappointed. If you can, try out your presentation with a projector and see if it is acceptable. You may want to make adjustments to the colors.
- Try not to use too many font colors on the same slide. It is distracting to the reader.

### Slide transitions/animations/sounds/movies

- All of this stuff is cool, just do not overdo it.
- If you edit a lot, do not forget to check the animation. You may not have deleted the animation, and you will end up sending blanks to the screen.
- If you put in sounds or movies, the computer actually running the show needs the sound or movie file on it.

### Media

- If you are planning to carry your presentation with you, put it on a USB flash drive.
- A CD-R is acceptable. It is not a good idea to use a CD-RW because not every laptop will read it.
- Please don't use zip discs (if anyone still uses them). Unless you bring your zip drive unit along, there is no guarantee that another computer can read your presentation.
- Please do not send PowerPoint presentations in PDF format. The file size is smaller, and it is possible to project the presentation by using Pgup/Pgdn, but the remote will not work, and every other presentation will be in PowerPoint. You can email your presentation in parts and we will reassemble them into one file. Just label them Filename Part 1, Filename Part 2, etc.

## Presentation Requirements

### What we are requesting from you:

- Use Microsoft® PowerPoint®.
- Send us your presentation by e-mail in PowerPoint format. See guide for PDFs.
- If you bring your presentation to the meeting in person, please put it on a USB flash drive or a CD-R.
- Some tips<sup>1</sup>:
  - Try to use standard nonserif fonts like Arial or Tahoma. Serif fonts like Times New Roman start to disappear at small font sizes.
  - Consider the contrast between lettering and the background. Yellow lettering disappears on light-colored backgrounds.
  - Thin lines on graphs may disappear. Consider thicker lines and larger dots.
- Please understand: as with all projector systems, what you see on your computer monitor may not be exactly the same as what you see in the projected image on a big screen. This goes for colors, fonts, font and line clarity, etc. This is because monitors and projectors form images in different ways and actual pixel size is relatively large on the screen.

### What we will do before the meeting:

- We are requesting that you submit your presentation to us before the deadline for the following reasons:
  - We will test your presentation on the actual machines used at the meeting.
  - We will make minor corrections if anything looks odd (spelling, format problems like objects or text boxes that are offscreen, etc.). We will contact you to make sure your presentation is the way you want it.
- If you are using sounds or movies in your presentation, or will present a DVD, we highly recommend this early testing. We will likely have to set up an auxiliary sound system in order to be sure it can be heard by the audience.
- We strive to resolve any presentation issues before the meeting.

### What we will do at the meeting:

- We will have a machine available for you to preview your presentation.
- We will set up and start your presentation and be available in the session room during the presentation.
- We will supply you with a remote to control your slides and a laser pointer.

### Making changes to your submitted presentation:

- Prior to arrival at the meeting, you may send changes to us by e-mail.
- Changes will be accepted up to the day before your scheduled presentation.

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<sup>1</sup> A more thorough guide to presentations is attached.