Tips on Preparing PowerPoint Presentations

Conference attendees often complain speaker slides are difficult to read. Here are some tips to assist you with creating better PowerPoint presentations.

1. The Craft of Scientific Presentations

Even the most seasoned scientist will appreciate this online publication and find helpful tips on improving the effectiveness of poster and slide presentation design. "The Craft of Scientific Presentations: *Critical Steps to Succeed and Critical Errors to Avoid*" by Michael Alley of Penn State. [writing.engr.psu.edu/csp.html]

2. Top 10 Slide Tips

Here are some tips by Gary Reynolds, a best-selling author, and professional speaker. http://www.garrreynolds.com/preso-tips/design/

3. Widescreen is Here!

And that's a good thing for you because the 16:9 format provides a larger display area, ideal for graphs, charts and high impact visuals. Still want to use the 4:3 format? That's okay. PowerPoint fills in the extra space. Check out these links for more information on using widescreen.

https://blogs.office.com/2013/01/24/powerpoint-2013-widescreen-presentations/

https://blogs.office.com/2010/06/23/ready-for-widescreen-how-to-manage-aspect-ratios-in-powerpoint-169-vs-43/

> "There is no point in making a single slide until you know some of what you want to say, . . . If you make slides first, you become a **slide slave** perfecting your slides, instead of perfecting your thoughts."
>
> Scott Berkun, author of five popular books on creativity, leadership, philosophy and speaking.

4. General Tips for Slide Preparation

Here are some guidelines for creating slides that can be easily viewed in a large meeting setting.

- To ensure presentation visibility from any seat in the room, use the following minimum font sizes:

Title:	Bold Typeface minimum 40 pt size
Subtitles:	Bold Typeface minimum 32 or 36 pt size
Text and Figures:	Bold Typeface minimum 24 or 28 pt size

  Note: San- Serif fonts e.g. Arial or Verdana are easier to read in a large room

- The 6x6 readability rule: *no more than six words per line and six lines per "page"* (i.e., Arial font size 40).
- Use upper and lower case letters rather than block: ALL CAPS CAN BE DIFFICULT TO READ.
- Lines that are used for emphasis should be bolder than background lines or borders.
- Choosing Colors for Slides: http://www.thinkoutsidetheslide.com/choosing-colors-for-your-presentation-slides/
- To ensure a safety zone for over-projection, leave a ¼-inch border, with no text or graphics, around your slide. Otherwise, anything close to the border of your slide may be cut off.
- For a quick readability check: Stand back ten feet from your 14" monitor. If you cannot read the text clearly, your point size is too small for the audience to see.

NOTE: We use Microsoft PowerPoint (2016)

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