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.

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:** Sans 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.
   - 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 (2013).