Accessible PowerPoint presentations

Introduction

PowerPoint presentations are frequently used in education. A prepared PowerPoint provides both students and teachers with a handhold. PowerPoint presentations are orderly and easy to read for many but not all students. Students with visual impairments may not be able to read the PowerPoint when it is shown at a distance. It helps them a lot if the PowerPoint presentation is made available to them before the teaching starts. Students who have difficulty keeping track and/or have reading difficulties appreciate a clear, structured PowerPoint with not too much text. Here are some tips on how to make your PowerPoint presentations accessible.

Tips for improving accessibility

- **Availability.** Make the PowerPoint presentation available in the learning environment before the teaching starts. In this way, you make the information available to students with a visual impairment who are unable to observe at a distance. This also helps students with disabilities who have difficulty keeping track. They can run through the PowerPoint before the course starts in order to recognise the line of the presentation.
- **Accessibility check.** Use the option 'Check accessibility' (Check > Check accessibility). Use of this option provides advice on how to improve accessibility.
- **Structure.** Create a clear, simple outline with not too much text and not too many pictures. Use short sentences and/or a few key words. Many students with disabilities have difficulty reading and listening simultaneously. Present only the essentials. Limit the number of slides. Start the presentation with an overview of the structure. Summarise the presentation on the last slide(s).
- **Title.** Give each slide a title. This way, students who use screen readers don't have to go through the whole slide to determine the topic.
- **Language.** Preferably use one language. Students with dyslexia sometimes have difficulty with other languages.
- **Font and font size**. Avoid changing the font and size in order to make parts of the text stand out. Preferably use sans serif fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, Verdana or Calibri, font size .20, line spacing 1.5.
- **Colour contrast.** Make sure there is sufficient contrast between foreground and background colours. Preferably use light letters on a dark background. that colour is not the only means of conveying text. For graphics, use shading rather than colour contrast.
- **Images.** Ensure that images are accompanied by alternative descriptive text. Images are not discernible to visually impaired students using screen readers. Avoid using text in images as the only method of conveying information. Otherwise, provide a brief description of the image in the alternative text and state the presence and purpose of the text.
- **Hyperlinks.** Add relevant text for hyperlinks and screen info. Do not use 'click here'. Students with screen readers sometimes scan a list of links. Links should therefore convey clear and accurate information.
- **Tables.** Use a simple table structure and provide information on column headings. See "Checking Accessibility". Otherwise screen readers cannot read the information.

- **Numbers.** Write numbers as numerals except when they do not represent specific facts (several hundreds). The same applies to ordinal numbers (2nd and 3rd).
- **Formulas.** The best way to write formulas is with MathML. If that does not work, the formulas can also be written out.
- **Slides**. Use the built-in design examples for slides. Use read view ((Check > accessibility check > read view) to correctly display the reading direction for screen readers. Screen readers read slides differently in the order they are placed.
- **Subtitles**. Use subtitles for spoken text. For instructions, see ECIO's fact sheet 'Subtitling of learning materials'.
- **Presentation**. Use the split/share screen functionality in online teaching so that both teacher and presentation can be seen.

More information:

- [Microsoft](#)
- [ECIO Subtitling of teaching materials](#)
- [Contrast and Color Accessiblity](#)
- [W3C Math Home](#)
- [Writing out formulas](#)

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