Making PowerPoint Slides

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Bad Slides

Tips to be Covered

- Outlines
- Slide Structure
- Fonts
- Color
- Background
- Graphs
- Spelling and Grammar
- Conclusions
- Questions

Outline

- Make your 1st or 2nd slide an outline of your presentation
  - Ex: previous slide
- Follow the order of your outline for the rest of the presentation
- Only place main points on the outline slide
  - Ex: Use the titles of each slide as main points

Slide Structure – Good

- Use 1-2 slides per minute of your presentation
- Write in point form, not complete sentences
- Include 4-5 points per slide
- Avoid wordiness: use key words and phrases only
- Use your PowerPoint as an aid to your presentation, not as your presentation

Slide Structure – Bad

- This page contains too many words for a presentation slide. It is not written in point form, making it difficult both for your audience to read and for you to present each point. Although there are exactly the same number of points on this slide as the previous slide, it looks much more complicated. In short, your audience will spend too much time trying to read this paragraph instead of listening to you.

Slide Structure – Good

- Show one point at a time:
  - Will help audience concentrate on what you are saying
  - Will prevent audience from reading ahead
  - Will help you keep your presentation focused
- Do not use distracting animation
- Do not go overboard with the animation
- Be consistent with the animation that you use

Use at least an 18-point font
- Use different size fonts for main points and secondary points
  - this font is 24-point, the main point font is 28-point, and the title font is 36-point
- Use a standard font like Times New Roman or Arial

If you use a small font, your audience won’t be able to read what you have written
- CAPITALIZE ONLY WHEN NECESSARY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO READ
- Don’t use a complicated font

Use a color of font that contrasts sharply with the background
- Ex: blue font on white background
- Use color to reinforce the logic of your structure
  - Ex: light blue title and dark blue text
- Use color to emphasize a point
  - But only use this occasionally

Using a font color that does not contrast with the background color is hard to read
Using color for decoration is distracting and annoying.
Using a different color for each point is unnecessary
  - Using a different color for secondary points is also unnecessary
Try to be creative can also be bad

Use backgrounds such as this one that are attractive but simple
- Use backgrounds which are light
- Use the same background consistently throughout your presentation
Background – Bad

- Avoid backgrounds that are distracting or difficult to read from
- Always be consistent with the background that you use

Graphs - Good

- Use graphs rather than just charts and words
  - Data in graphs is easier to comprehend & retain than raw data
  - Trends are easier to visualize in graph form
- Always title your graphs

Graphs - Bad

- Minor gridlines are unnecessary
- Font is too small
- Colors are illogical
- Title is missing
- Shading is distracting
**Spelling and Grammar**

- Proof your slides for:
  - spelling mistakes
  - the use of repeated words
  - grammatical errors you might have made

- If English is not your first language, please have someone else check your presentation!

**Conclusion**

- Use an effective and strong closing
  - Your audience is likely to remember your last words

- Use a conclusion slide to:
  - Summarize the main points of your presentation
  - Suggest future avenues of research

**Questions??**

- End your presentation with a simple question slide to:
  - Invite your audience to ask questions
  - Provide a visual aid during question period
  - Avoid ending a presentation abruptly