
POWERPOINT

PowerPoint was designed for live presentations, but it is also popular on web sites. PowerPoint slides have a number of accessibility issues, however, so before putting in the effort to make your PowerPoint presentations as accessible as possible, consider whether they really provide an advantage over a simpler format.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

SLIDE LAYOUTS

Use the pre-formatted slide layouts available within PowerPoint and use the sections as designed. For example, put the title in the area the template set up for the title. This will help screen readers navigate the information on the slide correctly.

ALTERNATE TEXT

When you have images, provide descriptions of them in the alternate text field. Right click on the image and choose “Size and Position”. Choose the “Alt Text” tab and enter in the text that you would like the screen reader to read when it comes to the picture. Focus on the important elements of the image and what you want the students to gain from it. Keep it short! (Note: The exact method for adding Alt Text will depend on the version of Microsoft PowerPoint that you are using. This method is for Office 2007).

KEEP IT SIMPLE

In general, simple is better. Avoid fancy transitions and unnecessary animations. Keep the design clean, with clear text and good contrast between the text and background.

ALTERNATE FORMAT

Unfortunately, even with using the techniques above, it is likely that some students with disabilities will not be able to access the PowerPoint. It’s a good idea, therefore, to create an alternate format of the information, which can be provided in addition to the PowerPoint presentation.

Go to the Outline View of your presentation. Copy and paste the text from the Outline View into a blank Word document. Apply appropriate formatting, as described in the “Word and PDFs” tip sheet. Compare the PowerPoint and new Word document to make sure that the information is equivalent and that you provide descriptions for images (images will not transfer to the Word document using this method). It is also helpful to add slide numbers to the Word document. This way, if an instructor refers to “Slide 5”, students using the Word document alternative can easily find slide 5.