Accessible Information Design
Ensuring your PowerPoint slides are accessible for all students

Why is accessibility important?

It is important to design teaching materials so that they are equally available to all students. Ensuring the information you present on your PowerPoint slides is easy to see, read, process, and understand will increase the likelihood of key messages reaching all of your students. Follow the tips presented on this tip sheet to help you create accessible PowerPoint slides for your lectures and presentations.

Text on PowerPoint

- Each slide should cover only one theme/topic
- Use a minimum of 24 point font size in sans serif, such as Arial
- Avoid italics and underlining as it makes letters appear like they merge into one another
- Avoid using uppercase in whole words
- Use left alignment for text
- Include 5 or less points per slide and 25 or less words per slide (e.g. 5x5 rule)
- Use plain English, short sentences and avoid jargon
- Use clear headings that indicate to the reader what they are about to read in the body of the text

Accessible example of text on PPT

Accessible example of text on PPT

- The slide covers one topic
- There are no italics
- Text is left-aligned
- 5x5 rule is followed
- Arial 32 font is used

Non-accessible example of text on PPT

Non-accessible text and what is accessibility?

- When centred or justified text alignment is used we tend to focus more on the varying point of where the text line starts or the varying size of the spaces between words
- USING UPPERCASE MAKES WORDS LOOK LIKE RECTANGLES. WE RECOGNISE WORDS BY THEIR SHAPES – WHICH IS LOST WHEN IN UPPERCASE
- *Italics and underlining make letters appear like they merge into one another*
    - *Too much text makes it hard to process and understand the points*
        - *Too many topics per slide makes it hard to process and understand the information presented*
- Serif fonts have small features called serifs at the end of the strokes. These 'strokes' make the text harder to read. This is an example of a serif font.

Images, animations, and colour on PPT

- ‣ Make sure pictures and diagrams match what is being said in the text and are not overused
- ‣ Avoid watermarks
- ‣ Avoid text over graphics and other busy backgrounds
- ‣ Avoid using blurred or pixilated images
- ‣ Avoid overuse of animations
- ‣ Avoid flashing words or images
- ‣ Ensure that there is strong colour contrast between the text and background

Don't put more on a slide than you would on a t-shirt!

Accessible example

Accessible use of colours and images

- The colours are highly contrasted
- The background is not busy
- There are no animations
- There are no unrelated images

Non-accessible example

Non-accessible use of images and colours on PPT

- The picture on this slide is not related to the topic
- The picture is blurry with no distinct lines
- The text overlaps the picture and is hard to read
- The lines on the page make a busy background that disrupts the flow of the text
- If the colour contrast is slight many people will be unable to distinguish between the text and the background. Vision Australia has a 'Colour Contrast Analyser' which can assist with checking the colour contrast.

Providing alternative formats

- Provide information in alternative formats when requested by a person with a disability
- Choose an appropriate alternative format or medium for PowerPoint presentations according to an individual's specific communication requirements, these can include the use of:
  - handouts
  - videos
  - an email
  - audio
  - large print test on a Word document

Overall tips

- Use PPT's recommended templates - they are designed for maximum accessibility
- Avoid using colour to convey information, e.g. do not refer to something as 'red' - in other words, don't use the colour to emphasise a point
- Be careful not to make too much use of 'mouse-over' techniques - they are often inaccessible to those using screen-readers
- Watch out for PowerPoint navigational buttons and hyperlinks - or at least test them with a screen-reader such as JAWS as many cannot use these features

Delivering your PPT face-to-face

- Read the content aloud for visually-impaired students
- Allow time for hearing-impaired students to lip-read or have their interpreter help them with content
- Keep the slides visible for longer periods of time for students with learning difficulties

Further Information

For more information, please contact Equity, Diversity, and Disability (EDD): studentequity@ecu.edu.au or 9370 6960. You can also view the Equity, Diversity and Disability Service Blackboard Community site.

For more information about different teaching technologies that can help you create an alternative format or medium, please contact the Centre for Learning and Development http://www.ecu.edu.au/centres/centre-for-learning-and-teaching/overview