Creating PowerPoint Presentations

Tips & Techniques for Designing Effective Lectures Using PowerPoint

Provided by:
Johns Hopkins University - Engineering for Professionals
Instructional Technology and Distance Education
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Introduction:

PowerPoint is an excellent visual tool to use when delivering online lecture materials. When using PowerPoint it is important to remember that slideshows should enhance your lectures, not detract from them. This guide contains known best practices and simple tips that will help you create quality online lectures using PowerPoint.

Preparing Your Slides:

General Presentation Design

• Number slides and give each one a title.
• Proof read everything, including visuals and numbers.
• Consider using the template provided by EP for consistency.

Text

• Font size must be large enough to be easily read. Size 28 to 34 font is recommended. No slide should contain text with a font size below 20.
• Avoid using too many sizes of fonts this can be distracting to the viewer.
• Overuse of text is a common mistake.
  o Too much text makes the slide unreadable. You may just as well show a blank slide. Stick to a few key words to guide your presentation.
  o Large blocks of text should only be used when quoting and should convey the entire message.
• If your students are reading the slides they are not paying attention to what they hear. If possible, you can consider making your point with graphics instead of text.
Graphics

- Use quality graphics. Be careful about stretching or scaling graphics within the slide as this often causes the images to look blurry or disproportionate when viewing the presentation.
- The SmartArt feature, images of processes, or pictures can be used to convey text in a more interesting way.

Charts

- Charts need to be clearly labeled. You can make more interesting charts by adding elements from the drawing toolbar.
- Numbers in tables are both hard to see and to understand. There is usually a better way to present your numerical data than with columns and rows of numbers. Get creative!
- PowerPoint deletes portions of charts and worksheets that are imported from Excel, keeping only the leftmost 5.5 inches. Plan ahead.

Backgrounds

- Backgrounds should never distract from the presentation.
- Using the default white background without some type of colored border is hard on the viewer's eyes. You can easily add a design style or a color to the background or use the standard EP template.
- Use dark backgrounds only for live presentations, light backgrounds are preferred for on-screen viewing and printing.
- Consistent backgrounds add to a professional appearance. Choose one background for the entire presentation.

Excitement

- Slides should retain a professional look and feel. You don’t want to distract your students with excessive animation.
- Sounds and transition effects can be annoying. Use sparingly if not at all.
- Animation effects can be interesting when used in moderation.
  - Too much animation is distracting.
  - Consider using custom animation to demonstrate processes or problem solving.
  - Animation of talking points or images is normally unnecessary.
- Consider inserting video clips into your presentation. They will be recorded when you “deliver” the presentation using one of the lecture recording tools.
Recording the PowerPoint Lecture:

**Opening**

- Welcome the students to the lecture.
- Briefly state the topic you will be discussing.
- Briefly summarize the highlights of the presentation.
- If this is a continuance of another presentation, let the student know that is the second, third, etc. part of the topic presentation.

**Speaking**

- Relax! Make sure you are in a comfortable and quiet environment.
- Talk at a natural, moderate rate of speech.
- Project your voice.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Repeat critical information.
- Pause briefly to give students time to digest the information on each new slide.
- Don’t read the slides aloud. The students can read them far faster than you can talk.
- If using a script, try not to sound as though you are reading word for word from paper. Using a sheet of key talking points may work better for you than a script.
- Be personable yet professional. Don’t be afraid to personalize the lecture with short words of advice, a personal experience or scenario, or some subject related humor.

**Conclusion**

- Concisely summarize your key concepts and the main ideas of your presentation.
- Resist the temptation to add a few last impromptu words.
- End your talk with the summary statement or question you have prepared.
  - What do you want them to do?
  - What do you want them to remember?
  - If there are additional presentations direct them to the next one.
  - If you would like them to read, answer a discussion question, work a practice problem, or instruct them to do so at the end of the presentation.