

A

Powerpoint Basics

Fonts

- DO: Use sans serif - e.g. **Arial/Helvetica** - easier to read than serif fonts like **Times**.
- DO: Use large, readable fonts – 18-36.
- DO NOT: Use all caps - hard to read, and appears like shouting
- DO NOT: Capitalize all title words – slows reading

Color

- DO: Use high contrast and simplest background – e.g. BLACK letters on WHITE background. No fancy backgrounds (e.g. logos).
- DO: In dark halls/conferences, WHITE text on black BG
- DO NOT: Use low contrast text on colored BG. e.g. This is BAD

Content

- DO: Every slide headed by statement
- DO NOT: Have text blocks – audience reads them, and doesn't listen to you.
- DO: Unveil list items as you get to them
- DO: Include simple image on every slide - appeals to visual senses (text + image + sound from speaker)- maximum communication
- DO: Give audience simple images - EXPLAIN graphs – the audience isn't familiar with them.
- DO: Simplify images to remove extraneous info that is not explained

General

- DO NOT: Use fancy transitions (boring, and worse, annoying)
- DO: Unveil text and new images - especially if need to maintain context
- DO NOT: Drown audience with data - "less is more".

Structure

- DO: Construct a story if possible – much more memorable.
- DO: Start with interesting broad question, show details, end with summary and broad ending.
- DO: Have last slide (after acknowledgements) repeat conclusions.

UC Merced, Center for Research on Teaching Excellence (CRTE)
Workshop: Effective Scientific Presentations
Presenter: Alex Tolley (atolley@ucmerced.edu)
Powerpoint and Presentation Dos and Don'ts

B

Presentation Basics

DO

Face audience

Make eye contact – individuals or groups in large hall

Smile – friendliness is infectious

Be enthusiastic – shows interest and engages audience

Speak clearly.

Pace delivery. Slower delivery has more “gravitas”. Fast delivery sounds nervous, and may be difficult to follow.

Plant yourself and move only a little if needed.

Exaggerate gestures – like theater actors. Emphasizes words.

DO NOT

Turn and gesture at, or point to, screen

Talk to back of room or ceiling

Pace the stage.

Mumble. Project your voice.

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C

Selected Resources

1. Angelika Hofman, *Writing in the Biological Sciences*, OUP 2013
2. Susan McConnell – Designing effective scientific presentations: using Powerpoint and structuring your talk
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp7ld3Yb9XQ>
3. Edward Tufte – *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*
4. David Rubenson, *Opinion: Communication Crisis in Research*,
The Scientist, 01/30/2013
<http://www.the-scientist.com//?articles.view/articleNo/34196/title/Opinion--Communication-Crisis-in-Research/>