



# Designing Your Conference Presentations

Designing a great multimedia presentation is an art in and of itself. The following few guidelines might be good to keep in mind when you are creating your next presentation. You will find the following tips most relevant for 10-15 minute conference presentations. The step-by-step points are specific to Microsoft PowerPoint 2010.

## Slide Design:

- Keep it simple - keep your colour scheme as well as your tables and graphs simple and well balanced – this is important if you don't have a lot of time to explain tables and graphs in great detail.
- Check if your organisation has a slide template; some companies and organisations like to keep the appearance of their presentations consistent.
- Balance text and graphics; a photo image often personalises a presentation, however, too many can detract from it.
- Use contrasting colours for text and background to ensure your text is legible.
- Be creative but avoid the overuse of clip art and animation. It detracts from the focus of your presentation, and the audience will walk away remembering the animation, not your main messages.

## Font Size:

- Use sans serif fonts (e.g. Calibri or Arial). A sans serif font is one without the bits on the end of the letters e.g. Times New Roman. These types of fonts are easier to read on-screen and from distances.
- If you are in a large lecture theatre, you may have to increase your font size. The text should be large enough to be seen by the people in the back row.
- Font size should never be smaller than 20pt.
- When using unusual or decorative fonts remember to embed them so they are saved within the slides: File> Save As> Tools> Save Options> Embed fonts in the file> click OK and continue saving normally.

## Number of Slides:

- To keep the presentation focused on your main messages, don't have too many slides.
- Aim for an average of one slide per minute:
  - some slides take longer to present, particularly graphs and tables
  - aim for a maximum of 12 slides for a 10 minute presentation.
- Use a minimum of 30 seconds per slide, to make sure the audience has had enough time to grasp the key concepts.

Point to Remember: If your slides were viewed (e.g. downloaded from the website) without your presentation, would they portray the main messages?

### Try to Stick to the Following “666 Rule”:

- 6 bullets per slide
- 6 words per bullet
- 6 bullet slides in a row (max)

### Technical Specifications:

- Presentations containing pictures and multimedia can be quite large, and it can be important to compress the file size: select any of the pictures, Format> Compress Pictures> you can choose to compress just that picture or all pictures> click OK.
- You can save your presentation to the web: File> Save & Send> Save to Web> specify a Web server> Save As.
- If your presentation contains movies or sounds, these files won't be saved in the presentation. You will need to save the original source in the same folder or on the same USB memory stick you save your presentation on.
- During your presentation you can move among your slides by typing in the number of the slide and pressing Enter. To apply slide numbers go to Insert> Slide Number> select Slide number and Footer> Apply to all.

### Slide Content:

- Your first slide should include:
  - the title of your presentation
  - your name
  - your organisation
  - the date and event you are presenting at.
- Focus on your audience and what they would like to hear in a short presentation, often it may be the results of what you have done which of most interest (more information about the background literature etc) should be available in the paper/extended abstract you have prepared if people want further information.
- Keep the information on each slide concise. Use dot points where possible.
- Keep abbreviations and acronyms to a minimum. Always write the full name out of an acronym the first time you use them.
- Have a concluding slide that covers the key “take-away” messages.
- Present research implications for the specific audience.
- Include a slide with your contact details at the end of the presentation.

### Trouble Shooting:

- Bring your presentation on multiple forms of media to avoid conversion problems:
  - USB memory stick
  - Cloud (e.g. Dropbox)
  - CD
- Before your presentation check your slides on the computer you will be using. Check for inconsistencies as well as formatting and spelling errors. Note that some decorative fonts may revert to a default font.
- Keep an eye on the audience's body language, it will let you know to move on or create more interest and excitement.
- Become familiar with the location in which you will give your presentation. How big is it? Will you need to raise your voice? Can the lighting be changed for your particular needs?