

TIPS FOR USING ELECTRONIC SOFTWARE PACKAGES LIKE MICROSOFT POWERPOINT FOR PRESENTATIONS

When using electronic presentations it is easy to be carried away by its amazing capabilities forgetting the aim of the presentation (i.e) to deliver a message. To avoid being carried away the following guidelines may be helpful.

The key to effective presentation is preparation, preparation and preparation (ie.) a three phase preparation process. The three phases are :

Preparation phase 1 - Session content

Preparation phase 2 - PowerPoint features and presentation

Preparation phase 3 - Technological rehearsal

Preparation phase I – Session content.

Tip 1 : Develop a Visual Story Board.

This is a paper representation illustrating all of the text, techniques and interactions and sequence. What you want to convey and in what sequence is decided first, before colour and dynamic events are added.

Do not think that once you have decided on the order you cannot change the sequence. You can change the sequence of the slides at any time using the PowerPoint slide sorter.

After preparing the outline review :

- * Is there a theme ?
- * Should text include illustrations ?
- * What multimedia are appropriate ?
- * Should video and sound be incorporated ?

You can incorporate video and sound using the PowerPoint: go to the Menu Bar and choose: Insert object, sound/video. Since sound and video take up a lot of space you have to be very careful. Alternative options are :

Option 1: Link to sound and video clips from CD-ROM.

Option 2: Play sound and video externally to the computer presentation.

Tip 2: Use Sound and Video only for Educational Purposes.

When designing the outline, wherever possible provide students with effective learning cues.

Tip 3 : Look for ways to Provide Relevant ‘Learning Cues’ in your Presentation.

Till now everything is done on the paper representations only. Having done that you can go to the next stage-feeding into the computer.

Preparation phase 2 : PowerPoint features.

You can use Autocontent Wizard or create your own slide design. Whatever you do remember the following rules. The text must be Legible and Clear. For this use a font (i.e.) letters without the small tail added to the ends of letters.

Helvetica and Arial are Sans Serif letters

Times New Roman and Dutch are examples of Serif letters.

Tip 4 : Pre-select a standard Sans Serif font for Clarity and Readability

The size of the letters must be such that the person in the last row in the venue of your presentation can see clearly. If the venue has > 200 seats

USE : Headings - 42 points
Main text - 36 points

Tip 5 : Always consider the size of the Room at the Presentation Venue when Choosing Font Size.

When designing the text remember the rule of six :
Six lines per visual
Six words per line

In addition remember to :
Present one idea per screen.
Use lower case letters for readability.

Tip 6: For Maximum Presentation Effect, Choose Predominantly Lower Case Letters.

Guidelines for colour :

You have a wide choice of colours combinations with PowerPoint.

Colour is used for

1. Highlighting key messages
2. Providing learning cues
3. Emphasizing relationships
4. Discriminating between objects
5. Arousing interest

Plan the colour scheme for the whole presentation before choosing colours for individual elements. Limit colour regions on any one slide to maximum of four.

If the text colour is white/pale, background should be dark. If text colour is black/blue choose a light background. Also consider the psychological effects of colour : Bright colour denotes energy. White is more cheerful than black.

Caution : When choosing colours consider the type of output. Colours displayed on your monitor may not be the same when viewed on large screen projection system.

Blue as the main background for presentation is a good choice.

Tip 7: Preview the effect of your chosen colours.

Fine Tuning your Slide Show :

The presentation of your slides is called the Slide Show. You can see the slides as you will see them during presentation by going to the menu bar and clicking on the Slide Show.

Now you must decide :

1. How information will be displayed on each slide. This is called "Build", you can reveal progressively, you can create dynamic effects. You can dim previous points.

2. How each slide moves to the next. This is called “Transition”. There are a variety of ways of going from one slide to the next. You can also control the speed of appearance and disappearance.

These are all on the Slide Show menu.

Tip 8: When choosing the Build and Transition features give priority to the effect on audience learnings.

Clipart-pictures : To reinforce your presentation you can insert pictures

1. From Clipart gallery
2. By Drawing
3. From CD-ROM
4. By Scanning diagrams/photographs/any other with a scanner

Remember :

1. To limit the number of pictures on each frame
2. To avoid covering text by picture
3. To choose Pictures which are relevant

Tip 9: Choose pictures and clipart that enhance presentation message.

Now is the time to spell check and review the presentation.

Preparation phase 3: Technological rehearsal.

This can be considered under the following headings

1. Technical considerations
2. Presentation skills

Technical considerations

You must answer the question :

How well does the graphics capability of your computer match that of the presentation equipment.

Quality of the projected image depends on resolution and range of colours

If you are using LCD panel with an OHP please remember that the OHP is a special one with a powerful Halogen lamp. Ordinary lamp present in the usual OHP will give a very dim picture.

Find out what is the PowerPoint version and verify whether the required fonts are available at the venue of presentation. If you have included pictures and video, the size of your file may be very large and it may not fit into one floppy.

How well does the capability of your computer match those of the presentation equipment ?

Tip 10: Identify the version of PowerPoint available at the venue where you are presenting, and discuss your needs with the technical staff.

Tip 11: Always be prepared for the unexpected and have a back up plan if the technology should suddenly fail.

Presentation skills :

The more you practice, more confident you will be. You have to rehearse timing of slides and how to control the build function and transition. Are you going to use the mouse/ remote control ?

Tip 12 : Always conduct a full dress rehearsal in the venue where you will be presenting.

Conclusion :

PowerPoint presentations are interesting, dynamic and effective. Software is user friendly and fun to use. Have Fun.

REMEMBER: When you give a slide show, the content should be center stage. Use tools - such as animations, transitions, sounds and movies - to emphasize your points, to help learning NOT draw the audience's attention away to special effects.

TWELVE TIPS FOR POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Tip 1

Develop a Visual Storyboard

i.e. a paper representation illustrating all of the text, techniques and interactions in sequence.

Tip 2

Use sound and video only for Educational Purposes

Tip 3

Look for ways to provide relevant 'learning cues' in your presentation.

Tip 4

Pre-select a standard Sans Serif font for Clarity and Readability

Tip 5

Choose Font size appropriate to the size of the presentation venue.

Tip 6

Choose predominantly lower case letters.

Tip 7

Pre-view the effect of your chosen colours

Tip 8

When choosing the Build and Transition features give priority to the effect on audience learning.

Tip 9

Choose pictures and Clipart that enhance presentation message.

Tip 10

Identify the version of PowerPoint available at the venue where you are presenting.

Tip 11

Always be prepared for the unexpected and have a back up plan if the technology should suddenly fail.

Tip 12

Always conduct a full dress rehearsal in the venue where you will be presenting.

Reference : HOLZL, J. (1997) Twelve tips for effective PowerPoint presentations for the technologically challenged, Medical Teacher, Vol. 19, No. 3, p 175-179.