Minimum Expectations of Conference Presentations

Using PowerPoint

These tips will help you make your presentations accessible to the greatest number of people and limit the amount of work you need to do to accommodate people with disabilities. This document is divided into 2 sections: General tips on making PowerPoint presentations accessible and an elaboration on effective use of Alt text.

General tips
- Ensure that the type is large enough to read easily. If your presentation will be viewed via projector, the type should be larger than on printed handouts; 30-point type is recommended.
- Make sure there is a high contrast between the background and the text. If your presentation will be viewed via projector, the contrast often needs to be more pronounced than on printed material.
- If you use colours, use ones that are highly contrasting.
- Make sure the content can be interpreted in grey-scale, in case someone prints it in black and white.
- Use titles on each slide, so the flow of the presentation is easy to navigate.
- Use simple slide transitions or avoid animation-like effects altogether. Complex transitions, such as checkerboards, can be distracting during presentations; they may also cause problems with screen readers or other assistive technologies if someone views the presentation electronically.
- Use simple language.
- Don't overcrowd slides with text. Three to seven bullet points per slide is a good rule of thumb.
- If you embed video, make sure it is captioned and that the player controls — start, pause and stop — are accessible.
- If you embed audio, make sure a transcript is available.
- If your slides contain animations, make sure they are brief and do not distract from the most important content on the page.
- Use Alt Text to explain pictures, images, graphics, graphs, tables and flowcharts, so that a screen reader can access them.

Effective Alt Text (also applies to verbal descriptions during presentations)
Alternative text describes an image so that the user's assistive technology may convey what information is being provided. It appears when you move your cursor over a picture or object. In situations where the reader cannot see the image, Alt Text ensures that no information is lost.

- Communicates the purpose of the image accurately and succinctly.
- Contains a short description of the image that is important to the user's understanding of the information conveyed and a longer description for complex or detailed diagrams and images.
- Does not repeat the text of an adjacent caption. Screen readers read both the caption and the Alt Text, so avoid having the same details in both.
- Does not contain the words "Image of" at the start of the Alt Text. Screen readers tell the user that there is an image and then read the Alt Text.

Taken from: http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/educators/teaching-tips/using-powerpoint/

- Does indicate "Screen shot of…" if it is an image taken from a computer screen.
- Does indicate "Photo of…" if it is a photo.
- Requires no text if an image is purely decorative. Simply provide two quotation marks (" ") as the Alt Text.
- Uses punctuation for full sentences.

More info on alt text can be found here