

# Using Microsoft PowerPoint

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"A live orchestra, costumes, scenery, fireworks, jugglers, elephants, the Rockettes? Can't you just use Power Point like everyone else?"

### *Basic principles*

1. You are the lecturer – be sure that the PowerPoint presentation supplements you, not the other way around. Speak to the audience, not the screen.
2. A little humor, pep and creativity are often appreciated, but too much will cause your audience to question your professionalism. Stress substance and simplicity over style.
3. PowerPoint is a visual medium – use it primarily for visual concepts. If all you have on your slides are words, why not just say them?
4. Just because you can do something, doesn't mean you should. Avoid clutter and excessive animation, color, clip art, sound, and other kinds of distractions. Include on each slide only what is needed.

### *Tips for presentations*

1. Design a master slide template before you begin to create the presentation. The master template will be assigned to each of the slides you create, but you can change individual slides as you wish. Use dark backgrounds and high-contrast colors, with big, easily read, light-colored fonts (sans serif, such as Arial, Helvetica or Tahoma; at least 40 pt for titles, 30 pt for headings, and 24 pt or greater for text; white, pale yellow, light green or blue). Avoid pastels. Use shadows for all text. Use a single font throughout. Downloaded templates are almost always cluttered and noisy. If your background is textured, make sure that it isn't distracting and doesn't interfere with the ability to read text.
2. Use contrasting colors for text and backgrounds so that the text will show up across the room. A slide that looks good on the computer screen might not look as good on a projector screen. Red and dark green are difficult to read on almost any background.
3. Resist the temptation to put too much information on each slide. If a slide is too busy or crowded, your audience won't read it. Step back about 10' from the computer screen and

look at the slide – if you can't read the finest print from that distance, then your audience probably won't be able to read it from the back of the room.

4. Leave an adequate margin at the sides and the top and bottom of your slides. Text and graphics that reach to the edges of the slide appear to be crowded. Avoid placing text at the bottom of your slides. Often, people in the back of your audience cannot clearly see the bottom one-third of each slide.
5. A common mistake made by PowerPoint users: if you intend to transfer your presentation either to the printed page or to film, be certain that your page is set up for letter paper or 35 mm slides rather than the on-screen show, which is the default condition. Because the dimensions of these other media are different from the screen dimensions, the contents of a page may be truncated or distorted on the sides if you fail to do this.
6. Use the outline feature to create an outline of your presentation, using as few words as possible. After the outline is complete, it's relatively easy to individually reformat slides (usually by splitting one slide into two or more) and insert graphics.
7. If you have a list of major points or topics that you intend to discuss, create one slide containing a numbered or bulleted list of brief summaries of the topics. Duplicate this slide to make as many copies as there are topics, use a contrasting color to highlight a different topic on each slide, and insert them at the appropriate points within your presentation. This technique will allow your audience to sequentially follow each topic within the context of all of them.
8. Take advantage of PowerPoint animation features to make visuals come alive; for example, animate the lines or bars on graphs so that you can walk your audience through the data. However, use simple animation. In general, "appear" is the best choice for animating text. Use fancier animation sparingly, and only when it makes sense.
9. Resist the temptations to use unnecessary 3D graphics (histograms, pie charts, etc.). Such graphic devices are favored for business presentations (where style is considered to be a key ingredient), but they are distracting and, especially for scientific presentations, may be misinformative or misleading.
10. Practice your presentation, using your notes and timings if they are helpful. Most people rarely get all of the animations and transitions right on the first try. Find this out before you are in the middle of your presentation and discover that something doesn't work the way you had planned. Make sure that you are familiar enough with the presentation so that you aren't surprised by the next slide.
11. If you're preparing a research presentation to be given at an off-campus meeting or symposium, consider placing a TTU symbol (such as the double-T or university seal) on the title slide, and perhaps in a lower corner of each content slide ([http://www.tlhc.ttu.edu/content/asp/main/poster\\_printing.asp](http://www.tlhc.ttu.edu/content/asp/main/poster_printing.asp)). Such symbols can be downloaded as graphics (GIF) files from university web sites by right-clicking on images and saving them to your hard disk, and can be used freely so long as (1) you are officially associated with the university, (2) you are giving a professional presentation, and (3) the

symbols are not modified or misrepresented in any way (unless you want to risk a one-on-one with the university law office).

12. Because slide preparations take time, try to make slides that will be reusable in other presentations.

### ***Using PowerPoint for posters***

1. Set poster size first. Posters should be formatted as one large slide (File>Page Setup>Custom). Some poster templates are available at [http://www.tlhc.ttu.edu/content/asp/services/poster\\_printing.asp](http://www.tlhc.ttu.edu/content/asp/services/poster_printing.asp).
2. Typical font sizes are 72 pt. or larger for titles (1" tall), and 26-36 pt for body text (depending largely on how much text is to be included). Arial or Times New Roman provide a good look and are easiest to read.
3. Set your zoom to "fit" when working on your poster. This will allow you to see your poster all at once. Set your zoom to "100%" to show the actual printed size. Then move away from your monitor to see if you can still read it from 3 ft. away (or the anticipated distance of your viewers.)
4. Avoid using graphics downloaded from the web. Even if they are not copyrighted, they are typically of low resolution and will not print well. If you do use downloaded graphics, give proper credit (including the web site address).
5. Formatting your text boxes with a solid color (including solid white on a dark background) will make your text stand out when using a background design or image. However, avoid using heavy solid color backgrounds. Extensive ink saturation will give your paper a wavy appearance.
6. Posters can be laminated at local copy centers for charges ranging from \$15–90, so call ahead. Some copy centers require two days, others a few hours.

### ***A few pretty good web sites for additional PowerPoint templates***

(Do a web search for "+powerpoint +templates" to locate more than 10,000 others.)

#### Public sites:

<http://desktoppub.miningco.com/msubmenu18.htm?pid=2827&cob=home>

<http://www2.kumc.edu/ir/ppt/templates.htm>

<http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/downloadDetails/pptraipk.htm>

<http://plato.acadiau.ca/sandbox/ppt/template/template.htm>

[http://softseek.com/Business\\_and\\_Productivity/Microsoft\\_Office/PowerPoint\\_Add\\_Ons/D\\_18821\\_index.html](http://softseek.com/Business_and_Productivity/Microsoft_Office/PowerPoint_Add_Ons/D_18821_index.html)

#### Commercial sites with free samples:

<http://www.viciousfishes.com/>

<http://www.graphicsland.com/powerpoint%20templates.htm>

<http://www.schaferdesign.com/>

<http://www.PresentationPro.com/LibraryMain.asp>

<http://www.kmt.com/>

<http://www.presentersuniversity.com/default.cfm>

<http://www.hotchillimedia.com.au/powerform.htm>

Commercial sites:

<http://www.PresentationCenter.com/>

<http://www.CrystalGraphics.com/index.html>

### ***PowerPoint files and the Lasergraphics slide printer (room 405)***

Transfer the PowerPoint PPT files to the “slide-printing” computer in room 405, run PowerPoint on that computer, and print the slides to the slide printer. The PPT files can be transferred on floppy or zip disks.

#### *Printing slides*

1. Load a role of Kodak 35 mm Ektachrome Elite 100 film into the camera on the slide printer.
2. Execute Powerpoint and open your PPT file on either a floppy disk, zip disk, or CD. You can temporarily copy your file onto the desktop, but please remember to delete it when you are finished. *Note: this is a PC system, and therefore Macintosh-formatted disks cannot be used.*
3. Drop the FILE menu and click on PAGE SETUP. Make sure that the page is formatted for “35 mm slides” (the default is “On-screen show”).
4. Drop the FILE menu and click on PRINT. The printer is identified as LFR via Rascol II on LPT2:”, and the item to be printed should be “Slides”. Click on “Properties” to make sure that the film type is correct. Continue. Click on the green dot to start. A window will appear indicating that the slides are being printed; actually, they are being queued into a disk file. Once the window disappears, you can shut down Powerpoint. Alternately, if more slides are present in another PPT file, the file can be opened and the slides queued behind the first set.
5. Open the WinRascol window on the desktop, and click on the Print Manager. This is a program that indicates the status of the slides as they are printed. Click on the green dot to begin processing. Slides take approximately 1 min each to print, with separate red, green, and blue exposures.
6. After your slides have been successfully printed, remember to delete your PPT file. You can do this with the File Manager, located in the Main menu on the desktop. After the last slide is done, you must hold down the rewind button for 5 seconds