CMU
CENTRAL MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY

Presentation Skills Center

308 Park Library

Utilizing Presentation Media

Electronic slide presentations are a popular way to gain an audience's attention and provide relevant information about your topic. However, many people make errors when utilizing these presentations. Keep the following tips in mind as you prepare your slide show:

Consider this first: Does this presentation require a slide show?

- A presentation can often be successful without adding unnecessary visual aids. Make sure that the slide show will add something to your presentation before you choose to include it.

Edit your message to maximize presentation effectiveness.

- Consider keywords or phrases when possible to reduce the amount of information on each slide.
- Use high-resolution clip art and other images so they will be clear when projected on a large screen.

Utilize properly-sized visuals in your slides.

- Fonts should be large, contrasting, and easy to read, images should be clear and appropriately sized.
- Practice with the presentation and walk to the back of the room to see if you can read it.

Select appropriate design elements.

- Legibility of the message is of foremost concern; overly-patterned backgrounds and under-contrasting color schemes (light letters on light background or dark colors on a dark background) should be avoided.
- For backgrounds, neutral colors, greens, greys, or blues are effective. Choose warm colors, such as orange, red, or yellow, to highlight numbers or text.
- Too many animated elements or sound effects can be annoying; use them sparingly.

Learn about and practice with your presentation tools.

- The equipment and the software available to you will vary; know what you can use in the room.
- Using slides and images adds time to your speech. Practice sessions beforehand help with timing.
- Presentations may also appear differently on other computers. Try the presentation in the room where you will speak a day ahead of time, if possible.

Focus your delivery on your audience—not a screen.

- Maintain eye contact with the audience, then check the slide on the computer monitor.
- If possible, utilize a "clicker," which will allow you to walk and talk away from the computer.

"Plan B" is not optional; it is essential.
- Plan on technological failure; computers crash, the LCD projectors bust, your thumb drive will fail.

Adapted from:
Presenting with Presentation Software. (2017) *Agnes Scott Center for Speaking and Writing.* Retrieved from https://www.agnesscott.edu/writingandspeaking/handouts/speaking.html

- Prepare notes for your presentation, and consider printing slides if your audience will need them.

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