So, You Would Rather Do It Yourself

Remember that NAFRI AV staff can create a PowerPoint presentation for you. Or we can create just a template for you to use in creating your own presentation, as well as provide custom designed backgrounds and dramatic title slides, graphics, illustrations, cartoons, photo retouching, or charts/graphs. You may choose to do your own text layout and request final edit assistance from AV. Any resource materials will be returned to you. Please allow adequate time before the course for us to do the work. AV will not edit or make changes to your presentation without your permission. AV will maintain a master file for you.

If you have completed your own presentation, we will upon request, preview your presentation in our auditorium or classrooms to make sure it presents well on our big screens and with our lighting. Please feel free to ask for assistance at any time. We understand how busy an instructor can be.

The industry and government standard presentation program is Microsoft PowerPoint. The projected image in our auditorium is 16 feet by 12 feet. You may choose to present from our computer, as most presenters do, or from your own laptop computer. Please format your Display/monitor for our projectors at 1024 x 768 pixels if using your own laptop. It is best to set your monitor at thousands or millions of colors to prevent banding of gradations and harsh color separations in photos. Any imperfections in your image will be greatly magnified on our big screen. One recommendation is that if you need to use a low quality or "bad" photo – use it small. A bad photo looks especially bad on the big screen and can be hard to decipher. Using a bad photo or graphic in a smaller size (or even in black and white) will actually be easier to see and will look better on the big screen. (If you have a "bad" photo and really need to use it, let us take a look at it, perhaps we can retouch it and improve it for you.) Spend some time choosing your color choices and background images.

Be sure to always use high contrast colors (dark vs light) in your presentation. Our projector is very bright and audiences generally prefer to leave some lights on during the presentations.

Instructors are usually surprised to find that the rules for smaller screens still generally apply to using the big screen. A big projection screen does not mean you can use a lot of tiny type on a PowerPoint frame.

USING FONTS

NAFRI AV recommends 40 to 60 point type for simple headers and titles with few words, 36 points for multiple line headers and titles.

For body text, 36 points is average. The smaller the type size and the more lines of text, the harder it will be to read. If necessary, split the frame into a "continued" frame.

A good guide is no more than 8 lines of text to a frame…10 is maximum. Of course there are always exceptions to the rules. If you have a frame that is impossible to split and so it may be difficult to read, please provide a handout of that frame for the participants for reference. (This should be done for any difficult to see frame.)

Use an upper and lower case mix for body text. Large amounts of all upper case text can be difficult to read. A serif font (such as Times Roman) is generally considered easier to read in large amounts than a san-serif font (such as Ariel). But a san-serif font generally looks better and is easier to read if using light text on a dark background.

Keep font styles to a minimum, no more than 3 different fonts on a frame, and it is best if they are related in style. If you want to make an impact and use a really wild font, that's great, but keep it to a minimum. Choose readability for presenting.

COLOR

There should be a good contrast between the background and the text or graphics. If you are using a photograph as a background, watch for split areas of light and dark, such as sky and dark ground areas. This can present a problem when choosing consistent text colors for your presentation. A solid color background will eliminate this problem, but you may consider that choice a little bland. Again, choose for readability.

- The color gray is one of the most difficult colors to contrast with.

- Bright red is difficult for the eye to read for any extended period of time. Use bright red for emphasis only – avoid blocks of red text. Deeper shades of wine or brick would be better.

- 10% of your audience will have some sort of color perception impairment. The following combinations should be avoided:

  Red text on blue and vice versa

  Red text on brown and vice versa

  Red text on green and vice versa

  The same value of green and blue together. A better choice would be, for example, light lime green text against a navy blue background. Go for contrast.

- Remember that color projected onto the screen will not be as bright as the color lit from behind on your small computer monitor.

USE OF LINE WEIGHTS

Line or the combination of lines, direction arrows, or sweep arrows need to be big enough to be seen well, without overpowering the image. As stated previously, red may be hard to see. Soft pale colors, when used small, may not show up well either. Underlining of words and phrases does not work well in presentations because the underlining blurs out the word or cuts off the descender letters. Again, choose for readability. Use bold text and/or a contrasting color for emphasis, not underlining.

TEMPLATES

Templates are provided in the PowerPoint software package. Some of these are very nice and, well, others are not. You must remember that the audience has probably seen some of these backgrounds many times already. Be creative and design your own! As an alternative, NAFRI AV will have available a CD of different templates, backgrounds, and textures that you can use as is, or change for your own style. Also, upon request, a short "how to" class on designing PowerPoint presentations can be given by AV staff. Also, one-on-one time with an AV staff member can be arranged if you have PowerPoint how-to questions or want a private review of your presentation. Talk to any AV staff member for details.

FINAL TIPS…

- Always make and take a backup copy of your presentation – **always.**

- Be aware of and respect copyright laws.

- A PowerPoint presentation should only *support* what you have to say. Do not read aloud every word of every frame in your presentation. The audience can read it themselves. Remember that we read to our children to put them to sleep! Yes, it is possible and OK to have a presentation without any text. Allow 1 – 2 slides per minute and time for questions.

- Be conservative with animations, sounds, and whiz-bang effects. There is a fine line between enhancing and distracting.

- Don't forget to bring a backup copy of your presentation, even if it is not the final version.

- To reduce file size, use the Master page to place or color your background. Also, "Format" full frame size photos and graphics into the background instead of just "Insert Picture" – go to "Format/Background/Fill Effects/Picture". This takes a little longer but is worth the effort.

  Use photos and graphics at 72 dpi for PowerPoint. Most universal PowerPoint file formats: *bmp, gif, jpeg, tiff, avi* for video, and *wav* for sound – good in most versions and laptops.

- The most common mistake associated with video clips is not including the video file with the PowerPoint file. *They must be kept and moved together,* in one folder preferably, to run properly after being copied or moved.

- And, of course, don't forget to always make and take a backup copy of your presentation.

- Be creative, try new things, make the presentation all yours, and have fun!

The information offered in this section is just that … information. These guidelines have been acquired from AV's experience in the design and development, and most importantly, by observing instructors' presentations in the NAFRI auditorium and classrooms. It is not meant to take the place of any service AV offers. Our concern is that you are successful with your presentation. NAFRI AV staff will continue to be available to design and develop your material, answer you other AV equipment and presenting questions, and provide assistance to you even if "You Would Rather Do It Yourself".

NAFRI AV wants you to enjoy the experience of presenting here during your course. Please feel free to ask for assistance at any time.