How can you make your PowerPoint presentations more accessible?

Introduction

PowerPoint presentations are often used in education. A detailed PowerPoint presentation offers support to students and lecturers alike. PowerPoint presentations are orderly and easy to read for many but not all students. Students with a visual impairment are sometimes unable to read PowerPoints if they are displayed at a distance. You can greatly help students by providing them with the PowerPoint presentation before class. Students who struggle to maintain an overview and/or who experience reading difficulties benefit considerably from clear, structured PowerPoints without too much text. Below you will find some tips to make your PowerPoint presentations more accessible.

Tips for improving accessibility

- **Availability.** Make your PowerPoint presentation available before class in the learning environment. In this way, you can make the information available for students with a visual impairment who are unable to read from a distance. This will also help students with an impairment who struggle to maintain an overview. They can go through the PowerPoint before the lecture so they recognise the structure in the presentation.
- **Accessibility check.** Run the Accessibility check (Review > Accessibility check). This feature produces recommendations on how to improve accessibility.
- **Structure.** Create a clear structure without too much text or too many images. Use short sentences and/or a few keywords. Many students with an impairment struggle to read and listen at the same time. Only communicate the essence. Limit the number of slides. Start the presentation with an overview of the structure. Summarise the presentation on the last slide(s).
- **Title.** Give each slide a title. That way, students who use screen readers do not need to go through the whole slide to find out what it's about.
- **Language.** Preferably use a single language. Students with dyslexia sometimes have trouble with multiple languages.
- **Font type and size.** Avoid changing font type and size to emphasise certain parts of the text. Preferably use fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, Verdana or Calibri, font size 20, line spacing 1.5.
- **Colour contrast.** Make sure there is enough contrast between foreground and background colours. Opt for light colours on a dark background. Make sure colour is not the only tool you use to get your text across. Opt for shading contrast rather than colour contrast for graphs.
- **Images.** Make sure your images are accompanied by descriptive alt text. Images cannot be perceived by students with a visual impairment who use supporting reading software. Avoid using text in images as the only method for conveying information. You can always use the alt text to provide a description of the image and point to the presence and function of the text.

- **Hyperlinks.** Add relevant text for hyperlinks and screen information. Don't use 'Click here'. Students who use screen readers sometimes scan a list with links. Links should therefore convey clear and accurate information.
- **Tables.** Use a simple table structure, and provide information about column headings. See Accessibility check (Review > Accessibility check). Otherwise, screen readers will not be able to read the information.
- **Numbers.** Write figures as numbers, unless they do not refer to specific facts (a few hundred). The same applies to ordinal numbers (2nd and 3rd).
- **Formulas.** The best tool for writing formulas is MathML. If that does not work, you can also write out the formulas.
- **Slides**. Use the built-in design examples for slides. Use reader view (Review > Accessibility check > Reader view) to display the right reading direction for screen readers. Otherwise, screen readers will read the slides in the order in which they were placed.
- **Captioning.** Use captions for spoken text. For instructions on how to do this, see the ECIO fact sheet 'Captioning of lesson materials'.
- **Presentation.** Use the split/share screen option when teaching online so that both the lecturer and the students can see the presentation.

More information:

     [Microsoft](#)
     [ECIO Subtitling of lesson materials](#) (Dutch only)
     [Contrast and Colour Accessibility](#)
     [W3C Maths Home](#)
     [Writing out formulas](#)

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