

## MAKING THE POWERPOINT

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### 1. Slide Aspect Ratio

- Your slide size should match the projector dimensions. Ask the venue for projector resolution, but you can safely use the default aspect ratio of **4:3** (1024x768 pixels, known as XGA) on all screens. Design > Page Setup > On-screen Show 4:3.
- If *and only if* you present on a widescreen device like an HDTV and want to utilize the entire screen width, change the aspect ratio in Design > Page Setup > On-screen Show 16:9 (1920x1080 HDTV format) or 16:10 (1920x1200 WUXGA format). Use with caution – if you project this format on a 4:3 capable projector, your slide ends may be cut off.

### 2. Text

- Choose a legible, standard font that will work on PC and Mac. Keep it simple. Avoid bold, underline, italic unless for a special effect.  
Options include: Arial, Calibri, Courier, Garamond, Helvetica, Verdana, Georgia, Times New Roman.
- Line length: **Rule of 6** - no more than 6 words per line, no more than 6 lines per slide.
- Size: Large and legible. I use **40-32pt** for headings, **28-24pt** for outlines, **16pt** for photo captions.
- Legibility: **10H Rule** - measure the height of your computer screen, multiply that by 10. Stand that distance away from your computer screen. Is the text legible? If not, shorten line length and make things larger.
- Bottom 1/3 of slide: Often not visible from the back of the auditorium. Put important text and images at the top.
- Text should remain on screen as long as needed to read it out loud.

### 3. Color

- Mid-to-dark neutral gray background is best (15-25%), with yellow or yellow-orange text. This is the easiest combination to see in a dark room. Deep blue background with white/light-toned text also legible. Black backgrounds work, but caution with dark photos or very bright transitions.
- Avoid white backgrounds (too much contrast with photos in a dark room), patterns and gradients (distracting), and bright colors (often illegible or painful, especially bright red).

### 4. Inserting Photos

All photos must be resized, or your presentation will be too big. The photo resolution should match your projector's resolution; if your projector can show 1920 x 1080 pixels, that's what your photo should have. If your photo has more pixels than the projector can show, it's unnecessarily big. Fewer pixels will make a blurry photo.

- You can resize images in 2 ways:
  1. **PowerPoint:** On all PCs, and Mac Office 2011 and newer, you can resize images directly in PowerPoint. Insert photo to slide. Jpegs are best. Click on the image for Picture Tools toolbar > Compress Pictures > **220ppi**. Check "Apply only to this picture" or uncheck to apply to entire document. Select "Delete cropped areas of pictures" if you're done editing and cropping. If inserting Tiffs, compress each one immediately or the document size will be too big and may crash.  
*Caution:* Do this AFTER your slide design is completed. These steps are final and unalterable.
  2. **Photoshop:** Resize the longest dimension to match your projector. If unsure, default to **1920 x 1080** pixels. Don't change the dpi. Save as a jpeg, with PPT at end of file name (ex: filenamePPT.jpg). To resize many photos at once, you can use a batch command. Google "how to batch resize images."
- Always credit the photographer or website under each photo. For art objects, include brief curatorial information.
- Images should stay on screen long enough to fully comprehend them, minimum of several seconds. If you have multiple images per slide, make sure details are legible from far away.

## 5. Inserting Video

- Link a video:** The movie is only linked to your presentation, and does not increase your file size. Insert > Video from file > Select the movie on your computer. Where it says “Insert”, click the arrow for more options and select “Link to File.” Put the PowerPoint file and movie file together in the same folder, and move this folder to the presentation computer.
- Insert a video:** This option will greatly increase your file size. Good for shared presentations sent through the Cloud, as the video is completely embedded. Same as above, but select “Insert” instead of “Link to File.”
- Edits:** Click on your inserted movie for the “Video Tools” toolbar. “Format” allows cropping, color, and border edits, like a photograph. “Playback” allows Start on click/Automatically, Trimming, Play full screen, Looping, and Rewind after playing.
- For further descriptions of avoiding broken links, see [www.pptfaq.com](http://www.pptfaq.com).

## 6. Practice Laser Pointers

- It’s hard to use a laser pointer well - It’s often shaky and doesn’t hit the target. Practice using one. Alternatively, use arrows and shapes in PowerPoint for targeted emphasis. This will add to your preparation time, but will result in a more polished presentation. For tips on how to do this, see the [ECPN Webinar “Presenting Talks and Posters”](#) on AIC’s YouTube Channel.

## 7. Acknowledgements Slide

- Essential! List all who assisted, inspired, and funded your work. Double-check name spellings and titles online. You don’t have to read this slide, but make sure it’s on screen long enough to be read by the audience.

## 8. Final File Size

- Most PowerPoints will be under **30MB**. Image-heavy presentations are typically 50MB – 80MB. If your PowerPoint is larger than this, you likely forgot to resize your images. Do it.

## 9. Technical Setup

- PC vs Mac: Ask in advance for the operating system and PowerPoint version that will be used at your venue. Make sure your talk opens on both PC and Mac. If it is important to present using your own computer, ask the venue organizers as early as possible for permission to do so.
- Ask about projector resolution and aspect ratio if you’re showing HD video or HD-formatted slides.

## 10. Script

Unless you are supremely confident in your speaking ability and timing, you should speak from an outline or script.

- Large font. I prefer **16-18 pt** Times New Roman for legibility in a dark room.
- Final script length: Approx. **150 words/minute**. Use MS Word “word count” tool. Do not go over allotted time.
- For animations and slide changes, use a cue. I insert **\*CLICK\*** into my text.
- Include notes such as “slow down reading” or “look up at audience” or “pause” when needed.
- Don’t staple. Easier to slide pages across or under; flipping can hit the microphone.
- Add page numbers, in case the script gets shuffled or dropped.

## 11. Practice

- Do several timed run-throughs, including slide advancing. Use these rehearsals to make sure you can deliver the talk without going over time. This will also help you sound natural while reading your script. Practice looking up at the audience often.
- Get honest and constructive feedback from colleagues.

## 12. The most important rule of all:

- Do not go over allotted time.** You may be cut off by a moderator, or worse, run into another presenter’s time or a lunch break. This can be avoided by monitoring your script word length, practicing at full volume and timing yourself, and having a 5 minute and 1 minute warning from someone in the audience. Know what slide you should be near at the halfway point, 5 minutes, and 1 minute, and mark these points on your script.

### Bring to the talk:

- Memory stick** with presentation, including media files.  
Make sure the memory stick is formatted to work on PC and Mac. [Several file systems will work](#). I use [FAT32](#) (note: file sizes are limited to 4GB). Google “format a memory stick to fat32” for instructions.
- Script**: Printed, or pdf loaded on charged iPad/tablet with charger.
- PDF** version of your presentation as a back-up. Caution: Animations will only be supported in a pdf if viewed with Acrobat Professional. To be safe, remove animations from this back-up version.
- Presentation and script stored in the **Cloud** (ex: [Dropbox](#), [Box](#), [OneDrive](#), [Google Drive](#)).
- Laptop**, including power cord and projector attachments (HDMI, DVI, & VGA most common, but check with the venue).
- Timer** (ex: phone timer, with screensaver disabled and airplane mode on, or the PowerPoint Presenter Tool timer).  
Have the moderator or a friend in the audience cue for 5 minutes and 1 minute.
- Pen/Pencil** (for notes during Q&A).
- Water, mints, chapstick, contact rewetting drops**.

### When the Presentation is loaded on the venue computer:

- Know the location of your file. Putting it on the desktop, or creating a shortcut to the desktop is best. Make sure the filename is appropriate and easy to locate, including last name (ex: O'Connor\_ECPNWebinar\_2015). Ask if you or the moderator will open the file.
- Click through each slide. If text or images are misaligned, fix the problems on this copy. Adjust contrast on images that may be difficult to see. If you can't fix these problems, at least you won't be surprised during the presentation by an unexpected change.
- Check inserted videos/media. If link doesn't work, re-insert. Don't forget to put your media file on the computer next to your presentation.

## AFTER THE PRESENTATION

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- Delete old versions** of the presentation or poster. Make sure your final version is labeled correctly for future reference. Do this now. You won't remember which version is the final one in 6 months.
- Save a pdf** as an archival copy. If appropriate, you can offer this pdf version to colleagues or to download online. If you have images layered on top of one another, separate them onto individual slides. Remove animations and transitions.
- Solicit feedback** from friends and colleagues who saw the talk. Constructive criticism will help you improve for the next time you give this talk, or prepare a new one.