



PowerPoint™ Guide

This guide is to serve as a tool to help develop/create an effective PowerPoint™ presentation to be presented at the Structures Congress. The content of the guide shall be viewed as a recommendation, but not a requirement.

1) Introduction

A PowerPoint™ presentation is supposed to be a visual tool to help the presenter presents his or her finding. More often than not, the PowerPoint™ presentation itself is the complete finding of the work, without any filtering, thus forcing the presenter to read the content directly from the presentation itself. Such presentations are most often regarded as ineffective communication, despite of what one might tell the presenter.

The goal of the guide is to help authors put together an effective presentation, thus improve the overall experience of Congress attendees at the annual Structures Congress.

In general, a presentation can be broken down to two major aspects: The format and the content.

2) The Format

- Text size usually ranges from 18 to 60 pts. The size of the text is directly related to room size and lighting of the room. Since it is difficult to predict the size of the room where the presentation will be given, **a minimum text size of 30pts should be used**. This will ensure the readability of the slide regardless of room size or the lighting situation.
- SanSerif font, such as Calibri and Arial, is easy to read when projected on a big screen. Serif font, such as Times New Romans, is harder to read. Hence, **use SanSerif font** to achieve an effective presentation. **Use only one type of font**. **Avoid using italic** if at all possible. Also **avoid using all capital letters**. They are hard to read when projected. **Upper and lower case letter combination is easier to read**.
- There should be **no more than 6 lines of text in a slide, and no more than 7 words** in a line. Avoid writing sentences to convey the message. A person tends to read everything projected immediately. Hence, by writing the entire idea/concept of what one is trying to convey on the slide itself will force the audience to get ahead of the presenter. Use short sentences in a slide and convey the message verbally instead will greatly enhance

the overall presentation. In this case, the texts on the slides are essentially acting as bait to get the audience's attention.

- **Use dark background and lighter texts** as general format for the entire presentation. Dark background will be less taxing to audience's eyes. It is the same reason why an overwhelming majority of the CADD user uses black color as the background.
- **Use suitably contrasted color text, or bold**, to emphasize something important.
- **Avoid clipart and unnecessary graphics.** They are only distraction on the screen, and they also take away usable screen space for presentation.
- **No more than two vital graphic (picture, table, or graph) on one slide.**
- **Use numbers for lists with sequence. Use bullet for everything else.**
- Despite of its popularity, **effects, animations, & transitions are distracting in general, and do not serve any functional purposes.** "Appear" and "Disappear", however, are strongly encouraged in place of all other transition.

3) The Content

- **Plan carefully. Know the audiences. Time the presentation. Practice the presentation to fit into allotted timeframe.**
 - **Limit the information to essential/vital information on the slide, and on the overall presentation only.** Audiences will get a copy of the presenter paper, thus will be able to obtain any secondary information later on if they so choose.
 - **Avoid developing multitudes of slides in hope of a "Shock and Awe" effect. Effective presentations are usually 2mins/slide (or less) for a fluent speaker, but no more than 3mins/slide.**
 - **Keep the table/graph simple to improve comprehension.**
 - **Likewise, use of proper transition effect to show content of a graph will also greatly enhance the comprehension of a concept. The key is to progressively convey the message.**
 - As mentioned previously, audiences will follow the texts on the screen as soon as they are projected. Hence, to circumvent the potential problem of having the audiences be ahead of the presenter, **use "Appear" and "Disappear" if necessary, to control the flow of the presentation.**
 - **If a presentation can be easily followed on a laptop from 7ft away, then it should, in theory, be easily followed when projected on a big screen.**
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