**VOCAL**EYES

# Guidelines for making your conference presentation accessible to blind and partially sighted people

## Benefits

Presentations that are accessible to disabled people are inclusive to many more audiences as well, including people who are not fluent in the language and people with different learning styles.

## Introduction

When you introduce yourself, explain the format of the session and when you will take questions.

### General rule:

**If you display it, say it**. Imagine that you heard a recording of your presentation on the radio. Would it make sense and would the listener fully understand all the information that was being put across? You should never find yourself saying 'you can read it on the slide' or 'as the graph shows'.

### Showing text on slides

- Only include the key points of your presentation;
- Limit the number of slides used and allow adequate time for the audience to read the visual aids;
    - Speak in well-paced and well-modulated tones. Regularly monitor how fast you are speaking and try not speak too rapidly. At the beginning of the presentation, let people know that notes will be available in appropriate formats.

## Font

- Recommended text size for Powerpoint etc: no less than 32 point;

- Use sans serif font types such as **Helvetica**, **Arial** and **Verdana;**
- Use mixed upper and lower case letters, not all capitals;
- Avoid italics;
- Do not use more than one font type per slide / presentation.

## Layout

- Do not overlay text over an image or busy background;
- Use left justification;
- Have up to six lines of text with only about five or six words per line.

## Contrast

- The colour of the text and background should offer a high  contrast: using complementary colours;
- The highest brightness contrast is between black and white;
- A high colour contrast without brightness contrast cannot be read by colour blind people. In particular, they have difficulty with red-green perception;
- Use dark background colours and bright colours for the text to avoid glare;
- A white font on a deep blue background is a very good combination.

## Figures and graphs

- Keep figures and graphs as simple as possible;
- Use brightness and contrasting colours in the same way as with text;
- Use sans serif font types for the text in the figures;
- Keep animation to a minimum;
- Explain figures and graphs;

## Images

- Describe images on your slides if you have included the image as content. The length of the description should be dependent on the importance of the

image to the subject of your talk, and its importance to the thread of the argument. If images are included as 'wallpaper' then there is less need to describe them.

- For example, if your slides are mainly bullet points, but you have included a series of images alongside them showing visitors at your museum, then it would be simplest to state this at the start, and give a brief description of your museum and the type of visitors that attend - and what activities they are shown engaging in, rather than describing each one. However, a talk about conservation with detailed images showing the results of treatment should each be described in more detail.

- Explain each slide in an expressive manner so that the audience understands which area of the slide you are referring to.

- Explicitly mention the region of interest in the slide, do not just point to it.

## Video

Depending on the specific video, you will likely need to do some audio description to support a person who has visual impairments to be able to get the most out of it. You have 2 opportunities to provide this:

- before it starts
- during the video (in gaps between recorded speech / dialogue)

We recommend giving a short summary of the video before it starts, describing the setting, what or who is shown in general terms. During the video, if possible describe in short phrases any action, objects or scenes shown, if key to understanding. Voice the names of speakers if they are identified by captions, or any other text on screen. If there is little space for description during the video, then you will need to provide more beforehand.

We recommend taking the time to prepare your audio description, writing the script into your notes, and practising a few times beforehand.

If you have never heard audio description of film or TV before, we recommend browsing some examples on BBC iPlayer

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/categories/audio-described/highlights) and try some out.

For an example of a written audio description of a video: Disabled Leaders in Dance on the British Council's Disability Arts International website.

See also VocalEyes' **Guidelines for digital accessibility: film**

## Describe other visual information

For example, if you ask a question of the audience, summarize the response, e.g. 'Please raise your hands if you are from a local authority museum'...then you need to say 'About half raised their hand.'

## Handouts

- Have some large print copies of your slides available for people before your presentation.

- Be aware that colour / contrast is lost in grey scale printing.

- Have your material available on a memory stick (USB) or available for download, so that people who use text-to-speech software (screenreaders) can put it on their own laptops.

See also Making your Powerpoint documents accessible.

This document includes a summary of the main points from WBU PowerPoint Guidelines: Guidelines on how to make the use of PowerPoint and other visual presentations accessible to audience members who have a vision or print impairment, published by the World Blind Union. Please refer to the WBU document for a full account of the guidelines summarized in this document.

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VocalEyes is a charity that works to increase opportunities for blind and partially sighted people to experience and enjoy arts and culture.

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