CREATING ACCESSIBLE POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS

A SUMMARY OF HOW TO MAKE A BASIC PRESENTATION ACCESSIBLE USING MICROSOFT POWER POINT

When creating presentations, it is always best to ensure that you are creating content that is going to be accessible to a broad audience. Here are some important things to remember when creating an accessible presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint:

SLIDE LAYOUT

- PowerPoint slides should always have properly structured headings and lists.

SLIDE TITLE

- When structuring your document, use properly formatted headings. Headings should follow a natural order: Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc. Try to avoid skipping a heading level.
- Heading colors should maintain a high contrast. Avoid using lighter shades of a color. Use darker colors.

FONTS

- Make sure font size is sufficient.
- For ease in readability, the font size may need to be a little larger when projected from a projector.

IMAGES, GRAPHICS, MAPS AND GRAPHS

- Make sure to provide alternative text descriptions (ALT text) for all images and graphics.
- Be thoughtful to describe the image so that it reflects the reason you added the image or graphic in the first place. If it is purely decorative, then you can simply describe it as such.
- Alternative text descriptions for graphs should describe the information that is being displayed.

DATA TABLES

- In order for a data table to be accessible, it requires the addition of table header information so it can be identified by a screen reader. Since Microsoft PowerPoint does not have this capability, try to keep any tables very simple and straight forward.

LINKS

- When writing links, don't use the web address (URL) as the display text. Use the title of the page or indicate the links destination that you are linking to (ie: Adobe Support Site, New York Times article on snow removal).

COLOR

- Don't use colors to convey meaning. Individuals who are color blind may not be able to distinguish the color and associate its meaning. Screen readers may pass over the color of text as well.
- When using color with text, make sure there is a high contrast ratio. Use darker colors on white / light backgrounds.

TESTING YOUR DOCUMENT

The current versions of Microsoft PowerPoint have built in Accessibility Checker. After running your document through the Accessibility Checker, it will provide you with a list of errors, warnings and tips on what you need to do to make the document more accessible. While it doesn't automatically fix the issues for you, it is a great way to make sure your document will reach the broadest audience.

Note: The Accessibility Checker will only work with .pptx files

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

While these are the fundamental considerations to take when crafting a document, there are other components to a more complex Word document that also require a similar attention.

- Portland Community College has created a wonderful in-depth tutorial on making PowerPoint documents accessible. It provides you with step by step instructions on how to structure and craft all aspects of a PowerPoint presentation for overall accessibility.
- Syracuse University's Answers website has an Accessible Technology Toolkit chock full of resources for Microsoft PowerPoint and other programs as well.
- The National Center on Disability and Access to Education has a cheat sheet for Creating Accessible Microsoft PowerPoint 2013 Presentations (Windows) and Creating Accessible Microsoft PowerPoint 2011 Presentations (Mac). The information contained within the cheat sheet is still relevant to the current version of Office.