

How to prepare and show presentations

(for people who do this sporadically)



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On 2015-07-21, I envisioned this file to help community leaders for whom I do tech support. And as a reminder for me, when tired, hungry and grumpy! I base this on the concept that **we should be kind to our audience**, and contains recommendations by [Rick Darke](#) and others, and lessons learned from my own experience. For date this file last updated, please see page footer. For information on green or programming subjects, please see a list of [this document's sister docs](#).

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1 Weeks before the presentation

1.1 Prepare your presentation

- **NEW** If collaborating with a distributed team, please do with:
 - **Google Docs, Sheets and Slides**, running on **Google Drive**, very good, free. If you have a **Gmail** email account, you already have access to Google Docs, Sheets and Slides through your email account. [Spaces Forms](#).
 - **Microsoft Office Online**, running on **Microsoft OneDrive**. If you have an **Outlook.com/Live Mail** (formerly **Hotmail**) email account, you already have access to Microsoft OneDrive and Office Online through your email account.
 - Or share files with your team via **Dropbox**, **Apple iCloud**, or the secure **sync.com**. I **love** the former!
- **NEW** In your presentation, cover **Why** before **How** before **What**, as in [TED talk "Start with Why" by Simon Sinek](#) or [TED talk "Start with Why" by Simon Sinek](#).
- To be displayable on most equipment, try to get your presentation in a **common format**, such as **.pdf** documents, **.ppt .pps .pptx .ppsx** presentations, or **.avi .mp4 .3gp .mpg .ogg** video. For more help, please see my [tools document](#).
- If your presentation is in format **Adobe PhotoShop Elements PSE**, or other unusual format, consider Exporting it to **.pdf**, or rebuilding it as a **.pptx**.
- If building it in **Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, LibreOffice Impress, OpenOffice Impress, Google Slides** or other presentation software:
 - Build your presentation with **aspect ratio** of:
 - **16:9** if displaying it on HDTV high-definition TVs over **HDMI**, or many computers these days, or
 - **16:10** if displaying on most **Apple** and some other computers (very near the *golden ratio*), or
 - whatever you will be projecting on.
 - **4:3** (VGA, PowerPoint's default), please **discontinue** using this aspect ratio, unless you **know** you will be showing your presentation in **VGA** format.
 - **NEW Change the aspect ratio**, by:
 - To the **presentation as a whole**, use technique in <https://google.com/search?q=powerpoint+aspect+ratio+change> (in PowerPoint 2010 use ribbon tab **View** > **Normal** view, then ribbon tab **Design** > group **Customize Page Setup** > **Slide-Size Page Setup** > the aspect ratio you chose above > **OK**), then . . .
 - **For each slide:**
 - For each image** that got squished, right-click that image > **Size and Position...** > tab **Size** > **Width** down 1 and up 1 > **Close**.
 - Readjust as needed the **layout** of elements on that slide.
 - Continue for all slides.
 - Save** the presentation.
 - Use **graphics/images/photos** of as high quality as possible. No small **.jpg** files, with their visible image bubbles. Find a **.jpg** with more pixels. Or if scanning or making your own image, use a lossless format, such as **.tiff .psd .png .bmp**. For more help, please see my [tools document](#).
 - Push the images out to the **edges** of your slide, **maximizing** image size, and **minimizing** margins.
 - Put **minimal text** on your slides, just enough so you can remember what you are talking about. **Never read your slides.**
 - If you are going to just **read your slides**, you should make a **video** of the presentation, post it on **YouTube**, and have everyone watch it from **home**.
 - If during your talk you need some **prompts** or see your **notes**, and you are using Microsoft PowerPoint, set your presentation to use **Presentation Mode**:
 - **Connect your computer to a projector or TV, via an HDMI or VGA cable or Chromecast or other wireless device.**
 - **Set WindowsLogoKey+P to Extend.**
 - Bring up your presentation under **PowerPoint**, and drag its window to appear on your private display.
 - In **PowerPoint** tab **Slide Show**, group **Monitors**, check checkbox **Use Presenter View** and set dropdown **Show On** to be your public display.

- **Practice** with it!
- Put your text **over** your images. It's OK, it will be just fine. *Especially if you follow the next three major (and two minor) bullets.*
- Use **fonts large enough** for gray-hairs wearing trifocals. Even if you can *temporarily* read the microscopic print common in BMW ads, some day you, too, will get [presbyopia](#)!
- No **ALL-CAPS**. That is SHOUTING, annoying, and hard to read.
 - In almost all places, use **sentence case**. It is easiest to read.
 - For titles, it is OK to use **Title Case**.
- Use **colors** that **contrast** with each other. No gray-text-over-gray-backgrounds! There are some good guidelines out there about choosing colors across each other on the color wheel, either two colors straight across from each other, three colors that cut the color wheel in thirds, etc.
 - **NEW** If your text does not yet stand out from a busy background, select your **text box** object (the text box itself, not any particular text within it), and if using PowerPoint > ribbon tab **Format** > group **Shape Styles** > control **Shape Fill** > **More Fill Colors ...** > select a background color, and set transparency to about **50%** > **OK** > experiment.
- Do **not** use PowerPoint's fancy **transitions**, e.g., pulling in from the right, or pixeling in in squares. They are annoying, and distract from what you are saying. Just make slides **snap** to the next slide.
- Try **very hard to not** use **timed transitions**. If the timing is so tight you can't take a question or comment in the middle, consider making this into a video, posting it on YouTube, and having everyone watch it from home. Instead, do any one of:
 - Drive the slides **yourself**, by at transition time, walk over to your computer and hitting **Enter** or **spacebar** or **→**. Then you can walk back to the middle and point and stuff.
 - OR-
 - Get (and practice with!) a [presentation wireless remote control](#) to advance the slides fore and aft. **M's** has a built-in laser pointer--very nice to have.
 - OR-
 - Delegate a **minion** to sit in front of the computer and drive. Instruct said minion to advance the slide whenever you twirl your right hand, or other signal you arrange.
- If you have **embedded videos**, decide whether you want them to auto-launch. If Yes, then do that by **(TODO: say how to set that)**.
 - NEW** I had great success by cloning a video slide into two:
 - The first slide was the first frame of the video, so the speaker could introduce it.
 - The second slide was the video, auto-launch. Audience reaction was awesome as the "still" photo now started to move!
- Verify videos and presentations always show **fullscreen**, without taskbar, volume level nor other overhead. Don't distract your audience.
 - For **.PDFs**, use **Ctrl+L**, or **View > Full Screen Mode**.
 - For **.PPTs** and **.PPTXs**, use **F5**, or **Slide Show > From Beginning**.
 - For video files, your media player should have a **Fullscreen** button, or **View > Fullscreen**.
- If **time** for your presentation is tight:
 - **NEW** Arrange to have a **minion** keep you on time, with a set of cards or hand signals.
 - Have your local geek, seeking to break into mobile, code you a mobile app that turns your phone's display **blue**, then **green** when you have used your minimum time, **yellow** a minute before the end, and **red** to cut it off. Sounds fun!
- **Spellcheck** everything!
- If you think people are going to **take notes**, make paper handouts of your slide **(TODO: say how to do that)**, or tell your audience that your conference organizer will email them a link to where they will be posted.
- If you have real 3-D meatspace **visual aids**, awesome. **Delegate** some minions to demonstrate them!

1.2 Internet access

- Do **not** trust that your site will have Internet access:

- At **AY_CM**, they have Wi-Fi only in the more-common conference rooms, for which we can sometimes drag credentials out of the staff, or figure out for ourselves. One room I know of has wired Internet, which I used once to download a file to a thumb-/jump-/USB-/flash-drive. The presenter (who had expected good Internet access) talked without visuals for the first third of the talk, until I had connected to the Internet, downloaded to a thumb-drive, and sneaker-netted it across the room.
 - At **CC's MCLH** (and elsewhere at CC), they have wired Internet, and Wi-Fi with a complicated sign-on process that you must repeat every 24 hours.
 - **DVC** has Wi-Fi, but they won't let us use it.
 - **SLC** has **no** Wi-Fi in our part of the site (I checked, with app [Wifi Analyzer](#)), and I see no Ethernet ports. The far part of the building has Wi-Fi, but we don't know the codes. If we do get the codes, I could see if my Wi-Fi extender will extend it far enough.
- **NEW** If you want to use a video on **YouTube**, see if the page has a **Download** button.
 - If **Yes**, press it, and save it to a known filename and location.
 - If **No** and a close friend, please let me know, I will walk you through my [tools document](#).
 - **NEW** If you want to use a website, see if you can:
 - Do some print-screens (**Start** > "**snip**" > desktop app **Snipping Tool** > **New** > mouse drag rectangle you want > **Exit** > Save=**Yes, .png**). -OR-
 - Save off a working copy of the website (I know some ways of doing that).

1.3 Test it!

- If you think you can run without access to the Internet, turn off your Internet access, show your presentation, and **verify** that you can see all photos, videos and audio, with no hovertext!
- Verify videos and presentations always show **fullscreen**, without taskbar, volume level nor other overhead. Don't distract your audience.
 - For **.PDFs**, use **Ctrl+L**, or **View > Full Screen Mode**.
 - For **.PPTs** and **.PPTXs**, use **F5**, or **Slide Show > From Beginning**.
 - For video files, your media player should have a **Fullscreen** button or **View > Fullscreen**.
- **NEW** Verify your presentation covers **Why** before **How** before **What**, as in [TED talk "Start with Why" by Simon Sinek](#) or [TED talk "Start with Why" by Simon Sinek](#).
- **Spellcheck** everything!
- If at all possible, put your content on:
 - Your computer **harddrive** (and know where it is).
-AND-
 - A thumb-/jump-/USB-/flash-drive (and know where it is).
 - On here, if your presentation is a **.ppt** or **.pptx**, also save it with the PowerPoint **runtime** by doing a **Save As .pps** or **.ppsx**. If your computer should die, it should be showable on someone else's computer without PowerPoint (not sure what operating systems are supported).
-AND-
 - Any location knowable by your presentation site.
- **NEW** If collaborating with a distributed team, please do with:
 - **Google Docs, Sheets and Slides**, running on **Google Drive**, very good, free. If you have a **Gmail** email account, you already have access to Google Docs, Sheets and Slides through your email account. [Spaces. Forms](#).
 - **Microsoft Office Online**, running on **Microsoft OneDrive**. If you have an **Outlook.com/Live Mail** (formerly **Hotmail**) email account, you already have access to Microsoft OneDrive and Office Online through your email account.
 - Or share files with your team via **Dropbox**, **Apple iCloud**, or the secure **sync.com**. I **love** the former!
- If you have real 3-D meatspace **visual aids**, awesome. **Delegate** some minions to demonstrate them!

1.4 Kit

- You probably want to make a kit of stuff to bring. Some ideas:

- **L's kit:**
 - Computer with DVI port, DVI/VGA converter, powercord.
- **M's kit:**
 - Computer with HDMI and VGA ports, in case with powercord and a mouse. Old, but I keep resurrecting it.
 - Projector in case, with power cable, VGA cable, and cordless clicker.
 - Bag with extension cord, power strip, external speakers including power cable and headphone cable.
- **My kit:**
 - Computer with HDMI port, in backpack with powercord.
The backpack also contains, all nice and neat in a blue pencil box I call my TARDIS . . .
 - **NEW** HDMI/VGA converter.
 - Two thumb-/jump-/USB-/flash-drives (for people who forgot one).
 - North American outlet splitter (can charge three devices from a single outlet).
 - Small Ethernet "Cat-5" cable (for wired Internet).
 - Small Wi-Fi router/range-extender/public-hotspot-firewall (NETGEAR Trek N300 PR2000), connectors below.
 - USB/micro-USB cable (connects most Android and WP to computers, and charges them).
 - USB/mini-USB cable (connects most cameras to computers).
 - North American outlet/USB converter (to charge devices that do so over USB cables).
 - Car outlet/USB converter (to charge devices that do so over USB cables).
 - Battery pack (to run or slowly charge mobile phones when away from grid and car power outlets).
 - Other batteries (AA, AAA, ha).
 - Bag of zip-ties, string, paperclip, etc.
 - Small cheap headphones, extender cable, 6.35 mm/3.5 mm converter, RCA phono/3.5 mm converter.
 - Chromecast device, with extender and power cord, if I made a note to remove from my TV and bring it.
- If you are going to **buy a projector:**
 - If possible, get one that projects **Full HD 1080p (1920x1080 at 16:9 or 1920x1200 at 16:10)** or better. I am told the Epson 1980WU is great for larger venues.
 - Unless budget drives it, try not to get one that projects just **720p (1280x720 at 16:9 or 1280x800 at 16:10)**--that has only 44% of the pixels above. I am told the Epson 1771W works well on screens up to 6 m (20 ft) wide.
 - If you are a professional, I am told the industry is moving toward **4K (3840x2160)** or **8K (7680x4320)**.
 - **HDMI** or **wireless** input is more important than **VGA**, and probably **DVI**. I saw one workplace where people connect wirelessly to their projector, apparently via a **Chromecast** app and device.

2 Business day before the presentation

- **Inspect** the site, doing **everything possible** in the next section, thus **verifying** that everything will work.
- If you are going to use that site's **computer** and/or **Wi-Fi** and/or **wired network**, get the **access credentials** (e.g., userName and password) for them, and record them **below**.
 - At **AY_CM**, call your contact _____ at **231-861-2262**.
 - At **CC**, call their **IT** group (open **M-F 1-5p**) at _____ **-526-8555**.
 - **DVC** has Wi-Fi, but they won't let us use it.
 - **SLC** has **no** Wi-Fi in our part of the site (I checked, with app **Wifi Analyzer**), and I see no Ethernet ports. The far part of the building has Wi-Fi, but we don't know the codes. If we do get the codes, I could see if my Wi-Fi extender well extend it far enough.
- **Spellcheck** your documents again!

3 Hour before the presentation

- **Inspect** the site again.
- Find a **TV** or **projection screen** or **blank wall** of neutral color.
 - If needed, **lower** the projection screen.
 - At **CC's MCLH** or **KC/MSUE**, lower the screen using the up and down buttons on the wall column to the right of where the screen will be.
- If your site already has a **computer attached to the projector**, and you are going to use it:
 - If needed, **power on** that computer.
 - Logon to that computer, using the access credentials obtained **before**:
 - At **CC**, use username="**visitor**" and password="**c c yy**".
 - Bring up your content, over the Internet, or via a thumb-/jump-/USB-/flash-drive.
- If you are using your **own computer**:
 - If needed, supply power to that computer.
 - **Power on** that computer.
 - Bring up your **content**, over via a **thumb-/jump-/USB-/flash-drive** (preferably) or via the Internet.
 - If you need **Internet** access, acquire that:
 - Using **wired** Internet, over an **Ethernet cable**, either "Cat-5" or "Cat-6".
 - OR-
 - Over **Wi-Fi**, using access credentials obtained **before**.
 - **DVC** has Wi-Fi, but they won't let us use it.
 - **SLC** has **no** Wi-Fi in our part of the site (I checked, with app **Wifi Analyzer**).
 - At **AY_CM**, SSID="**A Public**", psw="**b s nnnn**", ??= "**IDYnnnn!**".
 - At **CC** (**MCLH** and elsewhere):
 - Be prepared to receive an SMS text message, or an email.
 - Tell your computing device to select Wi-Fi SSID="**Guest**".
 - Launch a web **browser** to some webpage **not** on their approved list (e.g., www.ericpiehl.com).
 - When instead of your expected webpage, **CC's** system displays its own **Guest Registration** access page:
 - Check the box to say you accept their terms,
 - Identify yourself by name, organization, phone number and email address,
 - Choose the proper **Register** button, depending on how you want to **authenticate** yourself:
 - (1) **SMS text** to you [usually fails, occasionally succeeds],
 - (2) **email** to you [most reliable and quickest if you can receive email], or
 - (3) **email to your CC sponsor** who is monitoring their email right now [have not tried this],
 - If the **Guest Registration** access page now says "**Your network access should be available. Close your current browser, and open a new one to start browsing**", you now probably have 10 minutes of access. So get your presentation going. But don't forget to . . .
 - If you receive a response on your phone via **SMS text**, type the code into the webpage above.
 - If you receive a response by **email** to you, open the email and click its link.
 - If a new browser tab says "**Access Granted!**", you are **good to go (!)** for 24 hours.
 - After 24 hours, your access will expire, and you must repeat this whole process.
- If you are using your site's **projector**, connect it to your **computer** wirelessly or with a **cable**:
 - If **Windows** computer, use a **HDMI** or **VGA** cable.
 - If **Apple Macintosh**, use a [if possible, **HDMI** cable?, or a] **DVI/VGA converter** to a **VGA cable**.
 - Do **not** use a **USB** cable.
 - I saw one workplace where people connect wirelessly to their projector, apparently via a **Chromecast** device. If so, install the **Chromecast app** on your computer, and **verify** it connects to their Chromecast device. *If you see a site that uses a different wireless technique, please let me know the details!*
- If you are using your **own projector**:
 - If needed, supply power to that projector.
 - Connect your **computer** to your **projector** wirelessly or with a **cable**:
 - If **Windows** computer, use an **HDMI** or **VGA** cable.
 - If **Apple Macintosh**, use a [if possible, **HDMI** cable?, or a] **DVI/VGA converter** to a **VGA cable**.
 - Do **not** use a **USB** cable.

- If you have a **Chromecast** device on your projector, install the **Chromecast app** on your computer, and **verify** it connects to your Chromecast device. *If you know of a different wireless technique, please let me know the details!*
- If using a **projector**:
 - If the project is **off**, press its power button **1/0** **once**, and delay panicking until the projector has had 60 seconds to warm up.
 - At **CC's MCLH**, on the podium-top box, press its side button **Projector ON**.
 - If nothing on screen, open the **lens cap**.
 - If your computer content is **not** being projected, but instead says "**No Signal**" and "**Source: not yours**", press the projector's **Source** button.
 - At **CC's MCLH**, on the podium-top box, press its side button **Desktop** or **Laptop**.
 - If needed, **zoom** the projector, by a dial or moving the projector stand, maximizing use of the screen.
 - If needed, **focus** the projector. Respect your audience--do a good job.
 - If needed, **raise** or **lower** the projector, usually so your content reaches near the top of the screen.
 - If needed, **keystone** the projector.
- Bring up your **content**.
- **Test** that the system **shows it** OK.
 - Fullscreen (no taskbar, volume level nor other distractions).
 - For **.PDFs**, use **Ctrl+L**, or **View > Full Screen Mode**.
 - For **.PPTs** and **.PPTXs**, use **F5**, or **Slide Show > From Beginning**.
 - For video files, your media player should have a **Fullscreen** button, or **View > Fullscreen**.
 - Lighting.
 - Glare.
- If your presentation has **audio**, **test it**.
- After adjusting the **computer's volume control**, if still insufficient:
 - Look around for **external speakers**. If two speakers, one speaker has one cable going to the other speaker; the other speaker also has:
 - Batteries or a power cable (if needed, supply **power** to it).
-AND-
 - A cable ending in a **headphone plug**. Connect it to your **computer's headphone jack**.
 - At **CC's MCLH**, there is a **headphone plug** sticking out of the podium somewhere. Find it, and connect it to **your computer's headphone jack**.
 - Adjust the speakers' **volume control**.
 - At **CC's MCLH**, on the podium-top box, press its side buttons **Prog Vol+** or **Prog Vol-**. If needed, press button **Proj Mute**.
- If your venue is large or you have a small voice, **test the microphone**.
 - If **cordless**, great, try it on, **off a corner of your mouth**, turn it **on**, and set the **level**.
 - If in-a-**stand-but-removable**, **remove** the microphone, turn it **on**, hold it just off your **chin**, and set the **level**.
 - If in-a-**stand-and-not-removable**, turn it **on**, **bend** the **stalk** to be off your **chin**, **practice** not wandering away from it, and set the **level**.
 - If venue is equipped with **T-coil / telecoil / hearing induction loop** (a technology that transmits to good hearing aids), find the little electronic box that controls it, and **verify** is turned **on**!
 - **Practice!** Too loud is better than too quiet. If you have a tech person, ask him/her to keep an eye on sound levels, and if conditions change, adjust the levels.
- **Breathe deep**.
- Talk to your peeps.
- Go to the **bathroom**.
- Get some **water**.
- Turn **on** your **cordless clicker**.
- Move the **mouse cursor** over to an edge. So it will disappear in a moment.
- Walk up to your **microphone**.
 - Verify it is **on**.
 - Use it just like you practiced above--right off your **chin** (or edge of your mouth).
- **Breathe deep**.

4 During the presentation

- **Never** just read your slides! Talk more.
 - If you are going to just read your slides, you should have made a **video** of the presentation, posted it on **YouTube**, and had everyone watch from **home**.
- **Use** your **microphone**.
 - Keep it right off your **chin** or edge of your mouth.
 - Too loud is better than too quiet.
- **Relax**. You are **totally prepared**. Engage with your audience. Take questions. Take comments. **Have fun!**
 - If the questioner is not mic'ed or is not making good use of their microphone, always **repeat the question**.

5 After the presentation

- Power down the **projector** by pressing its power **1/0** button. If it says "**Power?**", then push it **once more**.
 - **At CC's MCLH, on the podium-top box, press its side button Projector OFF. Twice.**
 - To let the projector's fan cool it down, wait for a couple minutes before you unplug it.
- Shut down the **computer**, your cordless clicker, speakers and any other equipment.
- Undo any cables, and pack away yours.
- Set the site's screen and equipment back to its **original configuration** (like you were *never there*).
- Take **notes** on any **lessons learned**, and . . .
- **Follow up!**

-End.- [send comments to the author](#)