Guidelines for Presenters at the AIC In-person and Virtual Annual Meeting

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The following guidelines are designed to help speakers prepare and deliver presentations, both in-person and online. Their purpose is to clarify the process and ensure that presentations and conference sessions are accessible to all attendees. The guide also intends to help avoid some common communication pitfalls of presentations.

Producing presentations and sessions inclusive of all members is a high priority for AIC. We seek to include participants with different learning styles and non-native English speakers. Presentations may pose accessibility obstacles for those who are hard-of-hearing, deaf, or with low visual acuity or cognitive issues regardless of format. Transcriptions may be useful for those with slow internet connections.

Please keep in mind that disabilities may not always be visible or obvious. Good communication is key regardless of the audience. AIC aspires to provide a full, enjoyable learning experience for speakers and attendees. We encourage everyone to continue to learn and strive to make their presentations engaging, inclusive, and accessible. Resources and further reading are included at the end of the document.

Preparations for Presenters

Authorship guidelines

Scholarship
- AIC expects authors to have made substantial, direct, and intellectual contributions to the work being presented.
- This is true regardless of format—whether oral presentations or posters.
- Contributions include conception, design, analysis, and/or interpretation of data and technical images.

Authorship roles
- All authors play a role in the drafting and/or revision of a presentation or poster.
- Authorship is not limited to colleagues in the conservation field. If a project has involved collaboration with an artist, a community, or outside organization, appropriately acknowledge them as authors.
- All capable contributors have an opportunity to participate in:
  - 1) scholarship,
  - 2) authorship,

   3) review, and

   4) approval.

  Our profession has a moral commitment to include as an author anyone who contributed to any of these four aspects of authorship.

- Ensure that the author list is appropriate.
- All named authors must approve the inclusion of their name on the presentation/poster.

Review and Approval

- All authors must approve that their contributions are accurately noted.
- Authors must be satisfied with the quality of description of their portion of work.

Responsibility

- All authors are responsible, to the best of their ability, for the integrity and accuracy of their work.

These guidelines are taken from the "Authorship and AIC Annual Meeting Presentations and Posters" document, which is available in English, Spanish, and Arabic on AIC's website.

Creating Accessible Presentations

Ratio

- AIC uses a 16:9 slide ratio as its standard presentation format; slides will look best when the presentation is created with this format.

Outline

- Begin your talk with an introductory outline.
  - Doing so sets up the proper expectation for your presentation and will help attendees follow your path.

Templates

- Provide a hierarchy to the information on a slide
  - This enables screen readers to read the slide elements in the intended order.
  - Templates make it easy for slides to be turned into outlines.
- Help ensure any inserted text boxes are read in correct order by screen readers.
- Use your software program's accessibility features to check reading order prior to delivery.

Headings

- Use your software program to create semantic Headings that are organizationally significant. See [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.3.1 Information and Relationships](#).
- Begin with Heading 1 and use headings in numerical order; don't skip a heading.
  - Simply increasing font size will not enable a screen reader to interpret a Heading as such.
  - If the heading you select appears too large, adjust the heading styles to fit what you need.
  - Headings assist navigation and Can make text searchable.

Color and Contrast

- Never use color alone to differentiate information. See [WCAG 1.4.1 Use of Color](#).
  - Always use colors with patterns, symbols, or text.
- Always use sufficient color contrast. See [WCAG Success Criterion 1.4.3](#)
  - Ensure that background and text are clearly distinct.
- Use a color contrast checker to verify that text and background contrast is sufficient.
  - Be certain that text or images can be seen from the back of the presentation room.
- Be mindful of how colors may appear to those who are colorblind.
  - Colorblindness refers to the ways some see color.
  - Their photoreceptor cones may be missing or working incorrectly.
  - There are a number of forms of colorblindness; red/green is the most common.
- Keep visuals clean and simple to avoid overwhelming the viewer.
  - Avoid busy backgrounds and lots of patterns.

Text

- Use an easy-to-read sans-serif system font such as:
  - Arial
  - Calibri
  - Source Sans Pro
  - Verdana
- Avoid complicated and fancy fonts; these may not appear as you expect.
- Do not use italics, or bold, or all caps.
  - They are not picked up by screen readers and can reduce the legibility of text.
  - Only use underlining for links.
- Keep Font size above 18 pt.
  - The appearance of a font's size can vary greatly by typeface.

- Provide minimal text on each slide.
  - Try to stick to only a few points or bullets.
  - Keep to a block of 6 lines of text or less.
- Never use images of text.
  - Using text as text enables a viewer to make visual adjustments, if needed.
  - "Screenshots" cannot be read by screen readers and are also difficult to read because of their small text.
- Keep text away from edges and bottoms of slides.
  - Be sure not to cut off Closed Captioning (CC).
  - Text near edges and bottoms of slides can be hard to read on small screens.

Special Effects

- See [WCAG Success Criteria 2.3.1.](#)
- Avoid flashing lights or quickly changing graphics.
  - Flashing lights can cause trauma for those with chronic migraines, epilepsy, or other neurological issues.
- Best to avoid animation or use it sparingly.
  - They can be harmful to those with epilepsy or other neurological issues.
  - Animations are problematic in a presentation setting because they do not allow a user to control them. It is desirable for users to be able to pause, stop, or hide moving content.

Use An Accessibility Checker.

- Microsoft PowerPoint has a built-in Accessibility Checker.
  - It can identify accessibility issues for screen readers and other Assistive Technologies (AT).
  - Check accessibility for presentations that may be distributed in other formats.
  - Do not, however, rely on it solely to check for your presentation's accessibility.

The Live Presentation

- Speakers will be provided with instructions on when and how to upload their talks by the Meeting Organizer and/or Session Moderator.
  - If a speaker is unable to arrive and load their presentations at the recommended time, they must be willing to provide the session moderator with a copy of their talk in advance.
- In person speakers must use the computers provided in the session room.

- Speakers may use the AIC's PowerPoint template or their own; remember to set the presentation size ratio at 16:9.

General Guidelines for Delivery

- Speak clearly and use simple language.
- Avoid idioms, unnecessary jargon, and undefined acronyms.
    - Idioms can be particularly difficult for those who are not native speakers.
    - They may also pose challenges for some individuals with cognitive issues and be taken literally.
    - If geographically specific, idioms may be less comprehensible outside that region.
- Use gender-neutral language when possible and appropriate for inclusivity. "They" is increasingly acceptable for plural and singular gender-neutral pronouns.
- Read or describe the content of slides.
    - People who are blind or with low visual acuity may not be able to see or read images or text.
    - Describe what the images or graphs show. For example, say "After aging, all samples showed increased yellowing and darkening."
        - This informative statement does not rely on the listener's ability to quickly examine and interpret the image/graph.
        - Do not say, "As you can see, the samples didn't age well."
- Provide content warnings for sensitive material and topics.
    - Sensitive topics might include human remains, excavation of burial materials, photographs of specific groups or with sensitive or violent imagery, or historic descriptors (like words or phrases) that would be considered disrespectful today.
- Know your audience, as much as possible, and use culturally and socially appropriate descriptions.
- Avoid using flashing lights and changing graphics or animation.
    - If you cannot avoid these, provide a warning to the audience. Do this at the beginning of your presentation and again just before the slide's appearance.
- It may be respectful to name individuals shown doing work or engaging in an activity; consider including their names in your remarks or in captions for the images.

Contributor Acknowledgements
- Include photo credits, throughout the presentation or poster, for all images that were not produced by you or your coauthors.

- At the end of the talk, formally recognize those who contributed to the project, but are not authors. These individuals may include:
  - technicians who acquired data or images and scans
  - a lab head or key administrator who obtained funding
  - a colleague who helped with the work in a tangential but valuable way, such as providing a key material or sample
- Include a formal acknowledgment slide in the presentation to list contributors and supporters of a project. On a poster, include an acknowledgment section.

Additional Guidelines for Virtual / Online Delivery

- Face the audience/camera and try not to obscure your mouth.
  - Masking is okay, if you need to wear a mask.
  - If not, try to make sure your mouth remains visible; this is important, when possible, for those who use speech reading techniques.
- F/AIC now provides live automated Closed Captioning (CC) for online workshops and events.
  - CC can be activated in the menu bar along the bottom of the screen in Webinar.
- Hardwire your internet connection, if possible.
  - Hardwired connections can help alleviate issues with an unstable Wi-Fi connection.
  - This can help minimize problems with audio quality, sound drop out, and issues with speech-to-text program difficulties.
- Minimize background noise and notifications.
  - Find a quiet place to host or call into your session.
  - If this is not possible, use a headset with a microphone to help reduce background noise.
  - Turn off all potentially distracting notifications such as cell phones, messaging apps, and mail clients.
  - Setting your status to "do not disturb" can help reduce interruptions.
- State your name when you begin to speak; this helps the audience to know you have begun your talk. In a panel, state it each time you speak, to help the audience know who is speaking.
- Be mindful of clothing, accessory choices, and your background.
  - Wear solid color clothing (instead of patterned).
  - Be mindful of accessories or jewelry if you are expressive with your hands.
    - Their noise and movement can be distracting and interfere with audio for participants.

- The positioning of light and certain virtual backgrounds can make speech reading techniques difficult.
    - Limit backlit speakers, sun glare, and low light settings.
- Wait to share your screen until you are ready to start presenting.
    - Sharing your screen before the presentation starts can cause difficulties for those using speech reading techniques.
        - They will not be able to see participants and speakers.
- Read out or describe the content of slides.
    - Users with low visual acuity may find the small format of individual screens difficult to see.
        - Their standard text reader cannot be used.
- Alternative text (Alt text) allows screen reading software to describe an image.
    - Incorporate alternative text of meaningful images, graphs, and charts on your slides.
        - Example: "After aging, all samples showed increased yellowing and darkening." Never say, "As you can see, the samples didn't age well."
- Caption all videos.

Resources and Further Reading

British Dyslexia Association, Dyslexia friendly style guide
https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/employers/creating-a-dyslexia-friendly-workplace/dyslexia-friendly-style-guide

Web Accessibility In Mind, Contrast Checker
https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Coblis — Color Blindness Simulator https://www.color-blindness.com/coblis-color-blindness-simulator/

Web Accessibility in Mind, PowerPoint Accessibility
https://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/

Special Interest Group on Accessible Computing, Accessible Presentation Guide
https://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible-presentation-guide/

Microsoft Office, Make your PowerPoint presentations accessible to people with disabilities https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-powerpoint-

presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25

Web Accessibility Initiative, How to Make Your Presentations Accessible to All https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/

Purdue University Online Writing Lab, Using Gender-Neutral and Gender-Inclusive Language
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/pronouns/gendered_pronouns_and_singular_they.html

Best Practices for Hosting a Digital Event https://www.zoom.com/en/blog/best-practices-for-hosting-a-digital-event/

7 Best Practices for COVID-19-Necessitated Online Meetings | Learning Innovation https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/learning-innovation/7-best-practices-covid-19-necessitated-online-meetings

University of Washington, Hosting accessible online meetings | Accessible Technology https://www.washington.edu/accesstech/meetings/

Accessibility in Video Conferencing and Remote Meetings https://www.drakemusic.org/blog/becky-morris-knight/accessibility-in-video-conferencing-and-remote-meetings/

Guide to making your online events accessible for autistic people https://www.autistica.org.uk/what-is-autism/accessible-online-events

American Foundation for the Blind – 5 Accessibility Actions You Can Take When You're Moving Your Conference or Classes Online https://www.afb.org/blog/entry/accessibility-online-conferences-classes

Accessibility Issues in Conservation. AIC Wiki. https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Accessibility_Issues_in_Conservation#Resources_for_making_accessible_presentations

About This Resource

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