Cambridge Earth Science Department - Presentation guidelines

This document presents a few tips to make your slides and posters more accessible and generally easier on the eye for everyone. If you have any suggestions to improve this list, please get in touch with Marie-Laure Bagard (mlb63@cam.ac.uk) or any other member of the EDI committee.

❖ **Fonts**

➢ Use sans serif fonts, such as Arial or Comic Sans. Alternatives include Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic, Trebuchet, Calibri, Open Sans.

➢ Avoid underlining, italics and capital letters; use bold for emphasis.

➢ Larger inter-letter/character spacing improves readability; ideally it should be around 35% of the average letter width.

➢ If your software allows you to customise this, inter-word spacing should be at least 3.5 times the inter-letter spacing.

➢ Larger line spacing improves readability and should be proportional to inter-word spacing; 150% is preferable.

➢ For headings, use a font size that is at least 20% larger than the normal text.

➢ Left align text, without justification.

➢ Avoid overlaying text on top of images.

➢ Use font sizes that are large enough to be read from some distance.

■ **Posters**: It is recommended that the types are at least 2.5cm high. Prepare diagrams or charts in a size sufficient to be read at a distance of 2 metres; paragraph and figure captions should be at least in a

24-point font (0.9 cm height) and headers at least in a 36-point font (1.2 cm height).
- **Slides:** Use a font size of 20 points or larger. For titles / take-away messages, use a font size of 28 points or larger.

❖ **Colours**

- ➢ Use dark coloured text on a light background (not white but rather off white, cream or light pastel). Avoid using light text on a dark background.
- ➢ Use single colour backgrounds. Avoid background patterns or pictures.
- ➢ Use sufficient contrast levels between background and text.
- ➢ Avoid green and red/pink as these colours are difficult for those who have colour vision deficiencies.
- ➢ Figures:
  - Avoid the rainbow colour scale or the parallel usage of red and green since it is not distinguishable for everyone.
  - Keep the colour palette minimal.
  - Use both colours and symbols to convey a message.
  - Use patterns and textures to show contrast.
  - Avoid bad colour combinations: Green & Red; Green & Brown; Blue & Purple; Green & Blue; Light Green & Yellow; Blue & Grey; Green & Grey; Green & Black

For a list of colour scales that are legible to most readers, you can visit ColorBrewer 2.0.

You can also check that the colour palette of your figure is legible for colour-blind people on this website:

https://www.color-blindness.com/coblis-color-blindness-simulator/

❖ **Animations**

➢ Only use animations/videos if they are essential to the demonstration.
➢ Warn the audience before playing any animated content.
➢ Avoid using animated GIFs and, generally, avoid all animations that start automatically and/or play on a loop.

Sources and additional resources:
- British Dyslexia Association guidance: https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- UK government guidance for pdf documents: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents
- World Blind Union PowerPoint Guidelines: https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/wbu_visual_presentations_guidelines.pdf
- University of Oxford Centre for Teaching and Learning guidance for accessible presentations: https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/creating-accessible-powerpoint-presentations
- University of Liverpool Centre for Innovation in Education, tips to design accessible presentations (video): https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/centre-for-innovation-in-education/resources/all-resources/accessible-presentations.html
- Birkbeck tutorials for creating accessible contents: http://app1.its.bbk.ac.uk/xerte2/play.php?template_id=468
- Microsoft recommendations: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us