

Guide to Making Accessible PowerPoint Presentations, Part 2

Description

This guide was made to provide the resources (i.e. links and tutorial videos) to help AIC presenters make accessible PowerPoint slides. PowerPoint was chosen because it is the most widely used presentation software. This guide focuses on advanced topics. For basics on how to make your presentation accessible, please refer to **Part 1**.

Please keep in mind that this guide was made for PowerPoints versions available in April of 2020: **2016**, **2019**, **Microsoft 365** and **online** versions. Some alternatives may be available for **2010** and **2013** versions. Also, there may be slight variations between PowerPoint versions for MacOS and Windows.

The PowerPoint program is constantly being updated, so some functions may no longer be available or have been upgraded. Also, this guide is targeted to English version users. Some accessibility features may not be available in other languages.

Please use **“Ctrl” + Click** on a link to follow it.

5 Advanced Topics

I. Reading Order of Slide Contents

The main appeal of using built-in slide templates is that they all have elements (e.g. text boxes, graphics) organized in a way to convey a logical reading order for the screen readers. However, if you make any changes to the layout by adding, removing or rearranging the elements, in particular text boxes, the semantic makeup will be affected; in other words, the screen readers will not be able to read the content in the same visual order as it appears on the slide. All newly added element will be read last, regardless of where they may appear visually. It is like getting a *spoiler* at the beginning!

If you would still like to change the slide layout, the reading order can be modified using the *Selection Pane* to change the order of layers within the slide.

- [Selection Pane on Windows](#)
- [Selection Pane on MacOS](#)
- [Selection Pane on online](#)

If the above instructions are not clear, tutorial videos can be found. Below are examples:

- [Activia Training's How to Use Selection Pane in PowerPoint](#)
- [The Teacher's How to Use Selection Pane in PowerPoint, Word and Excel Tutorial](#)

II. Accessible Math Equations & Chemical Formulas

Please use [MathML 3.0](#), or provide alt texts. MathML is an accessible format, in a sense that the structure and content of the mathematical and chemical notations can be readily translated to *Braille* or read correctly by screen readers. Tutorials on MathML are available on [Connexions Guide to MathML](#).

MathType can generate equations in MathML format. Just like STAMP plug-in (for captioning), MathType has to be downloaded and installed from the [StoreMathType](#). This video tutorial, [Mathtype 6.9b in MS Word and PowerPoint 2016 by Chandras Has](#), provides a nice summary on how to download, install and use MathType.

MathType is, unfortunately, not free. I am still looking into free alternatives. If you find or know any, please contact me.

III. Accessible Tables

Tables are considered “complex images”. To make tables accessible for screen reader users, it is very important to identify *headers* for columns and rows as a frame of reference. The instructions are available on [WebAim's Tables](#). Otherwise, the screen reader will only read one cell at a time linearly.

Alternatively, please provide the table's purpose and summary as alt texts.

IV. Accessible Hyperlinks

Please avoid saying, “Click Here” or “More”. Please clarify the links' destinations. The information will help the screen reader and assistive technology users better navigate the document. PowerPoint can automatically make a hyperlink, but if you want to edit the link's descriptive text, please refer to [WebAim's Links](#) for instructions.

V. Accessible Document Properties

Document properties are specific meta-data (title, author, subject, keywords) that makes your PowerPoint presentation file easier to be located amongst other Microsoft documents. Sometimes the document properties are automatically generated. Still, it would be helpful if you could edit and add relevant keywords.

The instructions to customizing document properties are available in the links below:

- [View or change the properties for an Office file for PowerPoint 2013, 2016, 2019, Microsoft 365 versions](#)
- [View of change the properties for an Office file for PowerPoint 2010 and 2013](#)

Conclusion

This guide was made to help raise awareness on accessibility issues with PowerPoint presentations and to provide solutions and alternatives to the addressed issues for the AIC presenters. *University of Illinois* offers a nice summary on how to make PowerPoint accessible in [MS PowerPoint: Accessibility Best Practices \(PDF\)](#).

Majority of the resources for this guide comes from *Microsoft Support* and *WebAim*. These two websites provide good step-by-step procedures. I would recommend contacting them directly for any accessibility-related question or information. I am still learning how to do captioning and make accessible math and chemical equations.

- [Microsoft Office](#) – Live Chat, Phone Calls, ASL Video Calls and Be-my-Eyes Video Calls are available.
- [WebAim](#) – E-mail and Phone Calls are available.

However, if you experience problems with the guide (e.g. invalid links), please do not hesitate to contact me. Also, I would appreciate any information and feedback that could help contribute to this list. I can be reached by e-mail: sgkim@williamstownart.org.

This guideline was made possible thanks to encouragement from EIC. Sally G. Kim would also like to thank EIC for reviewing and providing feedbacks.