# Tech Snacks: Accessibility Part 2 – Slideshow Do's and Don'ts

We all have our own habits and pet peeves when it comes to slideshow presentations. Preferences aside, it's important to remember that the features we decide to use (or not use) have accessibility implications for students with disabilities. OTLE has some basic recommendations to help you make your slideshows more accessible for everyone.

## Color Use

Slideshow programs like PowerPoint, Google Slides, and Canva have dozens of template options that make presentations look more creative and "exciting." As slideshows are often used as a visual focal point for live presentations, the goal is to maintain the visual interest of the audience.

**Do use sufficient color contrast —** Keep in mind how the colors you choose might cause contrast issues for the audience. Without sufficient color contrast between the font color and the background color, people who are color blind or have other visual disabilities will struggle to read your slides. Generally it is better to have white text on a dark background than the reverse, as it reduces glare.
➔ Think: *If I print my slideshow on paper in black and white, will I be able to read the text easily?* If not, consider changing the color scheme.

**Don't use color to convey meaning —** If you use color to convey importance, anyone who is color blind or has other visual disabilities will not understand the meaning.

## Images and alt-text

When using images in your slideshows, it is important to keep in mind how you plan to use images within your presentation. Some images are decorative and some images are used to convey meaning and are necessary to develop understanding.

**Do use alt-text —** Use alt-text if the images convey important information. Students who rely on screen readers will miss the information provided in the image if alt-text is not present to describe it. Even if the image is decorative it should be stated as such.
➔ **Adding alt-text —** to add Alt-Text to an image in Google Slides or PowerPoint, right click on the image and select "Alt-Text."

**Don't use images as backgrounds —** Images used as backgrounds for slides usually cause contrast issues when text is laid overtop. Even when the font is black or white, images often contain multiple colors and make it hard to read the overlaid text.

➔ If the image is necessary, both Google Docs and PowerPoint allow you to create a text box using shapes with solid color backgrounds. Alternatively, you can highlight the text in black with white (or vice versa) font to make it more visible.

# Reading order

The reading order of slides is the order in which a screen reader will read the content. Typically, the automatic order directly correlates to the order in which content was added to a slide. This can be problematic as content is constantly changing during the editing process. When content is read out of order it can cause confusion and frustration for students. PowerPoint and Google Slides have the ability to edit the reading order.

**Do check the reading order —** Tab through the slideshow to find the order that content will be read through a screen reader. If the order is wrong, you can edit the order.

➔ In Google Slides and PowerPoint, click on **Arrange > Order** in the toolbar
   **Bring to Front** will make the object the first thing read in the order
   **Send to Back** will make the object the last thing read in order
   **Bring Forward** will raise the object to a higher reading order (from 3 to 2)
   **Send Backward** will lower the object to a lower reading order (from 3 to 4)

➔ In PowerPoint, **Arrange > Selection Pane** allows you to drag them into order.

# Noteworthy features

**Captioning in Google Slides**
Google Slides has an exciting [new feature that automatically provides live captions](#) in slideshows. Captions are not saved, but you can make a video of them with a screen recorder. (PowerPoint does not have this feature, but you can import a .pptx file into Google Slides by clicking **File > Import Slides** and uploading your PowerPoint.)

**Accessibility Checker in PowerPoint**
In PowerPoint, there is a tool that will run an accessibility check on your presentation. Click **Review > Accessibility Checker** to initiate the check.

**Screen Readers and Magnifiers in Google Slides**
Google Slides can be optimized to work with 3rd party screen readers and screen magnifiers. The creator must manually turn on Accessibility Settings to enable this. Click **Tools > Accessibility Settings** and select the applicable options.