

Presentation Guidelines

Joint SSRC Annual Stability Conference and North American Steel Construction Conference

SSRC appreciates your willingness to present a paper at the 2012 Joint Annual Stability Conference and North American Steel Construction Conference. The Conference is scheduled for April 18 - 21, 2012 in Grapevine, TX.

A speaker presentation room will be available at the Convention Center and each seminar room is equipped with a computer projector that can be hooked up to your laptop, slide projector and screen, podium and microphone. If you require any other audio/visual equipment, please contact Christina Stratman at ssrc@mst.edu as soon as possible.

What follows are some suggestions on the design of your visual aids. Visual aids are used to enhance presentations by emphasizing ideas, clarifying structure and more readily presenting ideas. While visual aids usually enhance a presentation, poorly executed visual aids can sometimes negate the message being presented.

We recommend that you review your slides and other graphics prior to your presentation with either your session moderator or Task Group Chairperson.

Suggestions

1. **Make Them Legible.** No matter how much time and money you've spent on the production of your visual aids it's wasted if your audience can't read them. No one's ever been criticized for graphics that were too big.

- Try to use at least 24 point lettering for slides done in all capitals and 32 point lettering for slides utilizing both upper and lower case.

24 PT. CAPITALS

32 Pt. Upper & Lower

- As a general rule of thumb, if your using slides you should be able to hold a slide out at arms length and still be able to read the text. If the slide isn't legible from that distance, it won't be legible to most of your audience when projected on a screen.
- Use a "sans serif" typeface such as Helvetica or Arial, for your slides rather than a "serif" typeface such as Times or Century Schoolbook.
- Try to use contrasting colors, such as yellow against a black background or white text on a dark blue background (not that light text against a dark background works better than dark text against a light background in slides). However, don't use too many colors in your presentation; too many colors can add confusion and reduce contrast and legibility.
- Use colors to highlight a particular item or for emphasis (for example, to contrast actual from projected data or to emphasize a particular thought).

2. **Keep Them Simple.** Visual aids are designed to quickly present an overview of data. They shouldn't be used to present highly detailed statistics.
 - Round off numbers and cut decimal places.
 - Use a scale along the horizontal and vertical axis of a graph or chart instead of number at the end of each bar or column.
 - Substitute symbols for words (\$ is better than “dollars” and % is better than “percent”).
3. **Use each slide to convey a single point.** If you're not sure whether you have too much material on a slide, you probably do. It's better to err on the side of too many slides than too few.
 - It takes the same amount of time to show six slides with six ideas as it does to show one slide with six ideas.
 - It's easier to keep an audience's attention when they don't have to look at the same slide while you make several points.
4. **Visual aids should present an overview, not the entire paper.** Slides should be used to add to your presentation not replace it.
 - Don't simply read from the slides.
 - Likewise, don't simply read your paper.
5. **Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.** Practice giving your presentation as often as possible prior to the Conference. Start by presenting privately; then do a “dress rehearsal” with a colleague.
 - Please send a copy of your visual aids to either your session moderator or the track manager for your session. They can help refine your presentation and offer feedback.
6. **Remember that each presentation has a set time limit.** A good rule of thumb is that you can plan on one slide per minute of presentation.