Guidelines for design of slides used to present an EMWA workshop

**Keep your slides simple and clear**

EMWA recommends designing simple slides for live oral presentation rather than detailed slides that one might design as a resource to be viewed at leisure after the workshop.

The primary purpose of slides for an EMWA workshop is as non-distracting visual aids to the presentation. This necessitates simplicity and minimal text. However, workshop leaders often also want their slides to act as an information repository for participants to refer to after the workshop. This would require much more text on the slides. This is a challenge, and you can’t have it both ways!

* Please keep your slides as simple and clear as possible
* EMWA advises that any additional detail needed in written format is provided as a separate set of notes after the workshop

**Number of slides is irrelevant**

Sometimes specified is ‘one slide per minute’. This may work, but far more important is ‘one point at a time’, keeping what participants see at any one time as simple and non-distracting as possible.

Therefore, rather than hitting participants with just one slide containing a considerable amount of information/graphics all in one go, consider one of the following more elegant methods.

* Present a sequence of simpler slides …or…
* Present a slide with bullets/graphics that appear sequentially in an animated ‘build’ (see ‘Graphics’ below)

**Other good practice**

* Use an alternative to text when possible
* Use minimal text when text is needed – don’t be afraid to be ruthless and edit out text

**Things to avoid**

* Clutter
* Words too small to read
* Words at different angles
* Images that are too detailed
* Distracting and unnecessary animation
* Anything irrelevant and unnecessary slides

**Fonts and bullets**

* Keep to one font for body text and perhaps one different font for slide titles
* Many believe that a sans serif font (e.g. **Arial**) rather than a serif font (e.g. **Times New Roman**) is easier to read on a slide – but at least as important is to use a font size of at least 20 pt whenever possible
* Avoid too many bullets on one slide – seven maximum and try to keep any bullet to one line only
* AVOID ALL CAPS – Sentence capitalisation is easier to read for both slide titles and body text

**Emphasis**

* Use one method of emphasis only, particularly for separately emphasised words on one slide
* Coloured text for emphasis may be missed on greyscale handouts
* So, consider underlining or even **bold underlining** as the best way to emphasise

**Spacing**

If a bullet/paragraph does need to run to two or more lines (but see above – try to keep to one line per bullet), keep sufficient space between the lines of text and between separate bullets/paragraphs.

*Cramped spacing*

* These two bullets look close together and the text within each bullet is too close, giving the impression of text being cramped
* These two bullets look rather close together and the text within each bullet is too close, giving the impression of text being cramped

*Good spacing*

* These two bullets are a sensible distance apart and the text within each bullet is nicely spaced
* These two bullets are a sensible distance apart and the text within each bullet is nicely spaced

**Alignment of text**

* Try to align slide title, bullets and footnotes along one straight left margin – it looks more professional than a ragged left margin
* Particularly on sequential bulleted slides, try to keep the first bullet on the same line (and same left margin) on each slide – this stops text from appearing to jump around when changing from one side to the next

**Backgrounds, contrasts and colours**

Any coloured background may reduce the visibility of overlying text and graphics if screen/projection facilities are not as good as your you on own screen.

* Good contrast and strong colours are key
* It’s best to stick to a white slide background without any gradient colouring
* Use dark text – interestingly, on a white background, some find a dark grey text (e.g. R85 G85 B85 or Hex #555555) more pleasing on the eye than pure black text
* Use strong-contrast graphics unless images are unavoidably light
* Try to keep a simple colour scheme for other design aspects – one consistent ‘theme colour’ and perhaps a varying shade of a second colour if needed

**Graphics**

When using boxes, arrows and other graphics, particularly in flow diagrams or algorithms, do use the many alignment tools provided by presentation software to help create a professional-looking slide.

* If graphics/text boxes are supposed to be the same size, use guides to make them the same size!
* Ensure objects are aligned and, where appropriate, evenly spaced
* Ensure that arrows, when appropriate, are perfectly vertical or horizontal and start and end on the graphic border rather than looking mis-aligned and/or haphazardly piercing the graphic
* If presenting a complex diagram or process, consider using simple animation to allow sections of the graphic to appear sequentially/separately

**Abbreviations and proofing**

* Please define any unfamiliar abbreviations at first use
* If available, view your deck on a large screen or even using a projected image; colours and contrasts that look great on a your desktop or laptop may not be as clear when projecting in a live workshop
* Please get someone else to proof your slides, both for typos and an independent impression about overall appearance