

Recommendations to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of in-person conference presentations and posters.

Preparing conference materials in an inclusive and accessible format helps to maximise the reach of your work by broadening your audience and enhancing their comprehension. This document provides a collection of considerations aimed at improving the accessibility and inclusivity of in-person events attended by members of the Canadian Society of Zoology. These considerations have been collected from a variety of sources, including literature and discussions amongst different individuals.

Please note that the content of this document is not meant to be exhaustive and should be continually improved by the Society's Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee.

General considerations

- Try to incorporate inclusive language in your conference materials whenever possible.
 - For example, instead of using gendered terms such as “chairman/chairwoman”, use the gender-neutral alternatives of “chair” or “chairperson”.
- CSZ is a bilingual community and welcomes content and audience questions submitted in both English and French.

Considerations for individuals with hearing or auditory challenges

- Do your best to stand in a well-lit area and make yourself visible.
 - Many deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals rely on lip (speech) reading, which requires the speaker's face to be visible and, ideally, illuminated.
- Please use a microphone when available during in-person events.
 - Unamplified voices can be difficult to hear, even if you believe that your voice ‘carries’ well.
- Repeat questions from the audience before you respond.
 - This helps ensure that the audience can follow the discussion, especially if a microphone is not available to the audience member who asked the question.
 - The section chair should already repeat the question for you.
- Presenters who are comfortable doing so may consider removing their face masks during their presentations.

Considerations for individuals with visual challenges

- Use appropriate theme fonts and sizes for posters and presentations.
 - Sans serif fonts are recommended.
- Use high contrast colours in your content.
 - Avoid using several shades of the same colour or highly similar colour patterns that can be difficult for the visually impaired to follow.
 - Utilise a combination of colour and shade patterns to optimise the clarity and visibility of figures.
- Avoid using common colour-blindness patterns.

- Approximately 1 in 12 men are colour blind (according to nei.nih.gov). Red-green colour blindness is the most common; however, blue-yellow colour blindness also occurs.
- Avoid using red-green or blue-yellow colour schemes, especially on colour-patterned data sets (e.g., heatmaps, density plots).
- Color Oracle (colororacle.org) simulates different types of colour blindness and is a useful free tool to ensure that your images can be easily understood by individuals with colour blindness.
- If you are comfortable sharing your data, including a downloadable format of your presentation for your audience (e.g., downloadable link *via* QR code, qr.io) can allow individuals with visual challenges to more closely follow the content on their own personal device and at a later time.
 - This can also allow your content to be presented in multiple formats (e.g., linking a video to your poster presentation to explain behavioural data, figures/graphics that can be expanded for greater clarity on a mobile device, *etc.*).

First Nations Acknowledgments

- Formally acknowledge the traditional territory where the work was completed. This is often done on the first or last slide of an oral presentation or in a section of a poster.

Other considerations

- To accommodate individuals with sensory challenges, conditions like epilepsy, or those that are neurodivergent, do not use flashing or strobing animations in a presentation. If you absolutely must include such content, provide a very clear warning beforehand and briefly pause before showing the material to the audience.

Sources

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- North Carolina Office on Disability and Health (2004). Removing barriers: Planning meetings that are accessible to all participants. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, NCODH.
- rootedinrights.org/how-to-make-your-virtual-meetings-and-events-accessible-to-the-disability-community/