



Online Presentation Accessibility & Inclusivity Guide

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This guide was created by GSOLE's 2020 Conference Committee, with content development efforts led by Miranda Egger and Amy Cicchino



GSOLE's Commitment to Accessibility & Inclusivity

“A culture of access, then, is a culture of transformation.”

—Elizabeth Brewer, Cynthia L. Selfe, and Melanie Yergeau, “Creating a Culture of Access in Composition Studies”

GSOLE participates in the “collective responsibility” (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Mingus et al., 2019) of contributing to progressive disability justice and, thus, stands in solidarity with scholars/researchers/practitioners who aim to design professional events that protect and foster the “conditions [necessary] for all people to connect, create, and lead if they so choose” (Hubrig & Osorio, 2020).

With a spirit of care, GSOLE adopts a definition of *access* “as the dynamic, collective movement of creating spaces where multiple marginalized disabled people with a wide range of needs can engage in whatever manners they choose” (Hubrig & Osorio, 2020). Further, GSOLE borrows from Titchkosky (2011) its relational, intersectional, dynamic understanding of access that focuses not only on making virtual spaces physically accessible to individuals who identify as disabled, but on developing broader methods of access that invite full participation and help put all people in productive relationships with their surroundings (Titchkosky, 2011).

With this guide, GSOLE aims to illustrate its attempt to value disabled bodies and minds, neurodiverse perspectives, marginalized populations, particularly those often excluded based on race, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, class, dialectical patterns, and sexuality--seeking inclusion for all normative and non-normative bodyminds. We suggest presenters, chairs, and attendees review the accessibility and inclusivity guide and design their presentations and sessions with these practices in mind.

Because we have much to learn from those that join this effort, GSOLE is committed to recursively and critically examining its practices within a larger social network that must, as Hubrig & Osorio (2020) assert, reimagine systemic structures dictating who belongs and what shape that belonging might take. This effort is on-going and we invite your feedback to those ends.

Online Presentation Accessibility & Inclusivity Guide

In addition to the suggestions below, GSOLE is providing CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) services. To set up CART services, please select that option on the conference registration form.

For Presenters to Read...

This section describes best practices for design to increase access for attendees.

Slide Design

- **Present and Share:** To ensure slides are accessible to all, provide slides in a PDF file format to participants in the chat in addition to displaying them through screen share.
- **Use an Accessible Slide Design Platform:** Consider which platform will allow you to make the most accessible presentation. For instance, Google Slides has an option to turn on automated, synchronous closed-captioning.
- **Provide Overview of Presentation:** A short overview can help attendees anticipate the different points of your presentation and follow along.
- **Give Expectations for Participant Engagement:** Attendees will come to your presentation with different experiences and expectations for a virtual conference. Please tell them how you would prefer they engage with you during your session (e.g., through the chat, by unmuting their microphones, during interactive activities).
- **Design Slides Consistently:** Design slides consistently, preferably using a premade template with embedded reading order. If you would like to check slide reading order, the resources included at the bottom of this section can help you do that.
- **Design Slides with Contrast:** High-contrast colors between the font and slide background make slides easier to read and understand. [WebAIM has a color contrast checker](#). Recommended levels of minimum contrast are 4.5:1.
- **Limit Words on a Slide:** Listening to a presenter speak while reading a wordy slide can lead to cognitive overload for some attendees. Text should be no smaller than 18 pt, be left-justified when possible, and should balance text with white space.
- **Use Concise and Clear Language:** Try to limit overly wordy text. When using jargon, provide definitions.
- **Use Embedded Navigation and Heading Systems:** Using designations like title, heading, and text can help those with screenreaders read your presentation. It is also helpful if each slide has a unique title for navigation purposes.
- **Add Alt Text to Images:** Alternative text provides image descriptions for those with visual disabilities or those who do not have the internet connection needed to download media. [Here is a resource on how to write good alternative text](#).
- **Provide Transcripts, Audio Descriptions, or Alternative Formats for Videos and Media:** If you are playing a video during your presentation, consider linking attendees to a transcript or narrative description using the chat in addition to providing captions or subtitles.

- **Create Disclaimers for Media with Sensory Experiences:** Please warn attendees before you play videos that involve flashes occurring more than 3 times per second or loud sounds.
- **Limit Slide Animation:** If slide animation is not essential to the presentation's content, we suggest you avoid using it as animation can cause some to experience nausea or distraction.
- **Choose Sans Serif Fonts:** Sans serif fonts, such as Arial or Calibri, are easier to read, especially for those with dyslexia.
- **Do Not Use Color Alone to Signify Meaning:** Attendees who have low vision or are colorblind may not understand the meaning being conveyed by color alone. Consider altering the display another way (e.g., bolding, underlining) in addition to a color difference.
- **Be Intentional Describing Embedded Links:** Describe links in such a way that they give attendees information about their destination. You can see this modeled throughout this resource.

For additional information on accessible slide design, see [this resource from Microsoft Support](#) or [this resource from Google Slides](#).

Handout Design

If you plan on distributing a handout during your presentation, please take note of the following accessibility requirements.

- **Provide Materials in Multiple Formats:** Consider providing the handout in multiple formats (e.g., PDF and Word) so individuals who need to resize the handout can do so easily.
- **Use Embedded Headings:** As you design the handout, use correct heading identifiers in the document's Style section.
- **Add Alt Text to Images:** Alternative text provides image descriptions for those with visual disabilities or those who do not have the internet connection needed to download media. [Here is a resource on how to write good alternative text](#).
- **Use Concise and Clear Language:** Try to limit overly wordy text. When using jargon, provide definitions.
- **Consider Font Choice and Size:** We encourage you to use size 14, sans serif font, left-justified, when possible. Sans serif fonts, such as Arial or Calibri, are easier to read, especially for those with dyslexia.
- **Design Document with Contrast:** High-contrast colors between the font and slide background make slides easier to read and understand. [WebAIM has a color contrast checker](#). Recommended levels of minimum contrast are 4.5:1.
- **Do Not Use Color Alone to Signify Meaning:** Attendees who have low vision or are colorblind may not understand the meaning being conveyed by color alone. Consider altering the display another way (e.g., bolding, underlining) in addition to a color difference.

- **Be Intentional Describing Embedded Links:** Describe links in such a way that they give attendees information about their destination. You can see this modeled throughout this resource.

Sharing Your Materials

We encourage presenters to share their conference materials, such as slides, speaking notes, and/or scripts with attendees.

- **Designing Accessible Materials:** Materials can include, but are not limited to, slides, handouts, speaking scripts, or videos. Please see the sections above to learn more about accessible design across these resources.
- **Intellectual Property:** Sharing materials can raise concerns about intellectual property, especially if you are hoping to develop publications on your presentation topic or are presenting on an ongoing research project. No presenter is required to share their materials, but we do understand offering materials in alternative formats is an issue of accessibility. Further, you might be excited and willing to allow attendees to adapt your materials for use in their online learning contexts. Therefore, we encourage you to explicitly state how you would like attendees to view and/or re-use your materials.

You can do this by adding re-use statements to your materials. Sample statements have been provided below for your consideration, and you can adapt these statements, as needed. Some of the language has been modeled after [Creative Commons licensing options](#).

- **Do Not Re-Use (most restrictive):** These materials are being shared only for accessibility purposes. The author asks that you do not re-use, adapt, or share these materials.
- **Re-Use with Credit for Non-Commercial Purposes:** These materials can be shared and re-used in any medium or format in unadapted form only, for noncommercial purposes only, and only so long as the author is credited.
- **Re-Use and Adapt with Credit:** These materials can be shared, re-used, and adapted as long as the original author is given credit.
- **Re-Use and Adapt Freely (least restrictive):** Materials can be shared, re-used, adapted, and built upon in any format with no conditions.

Staging Your Presentation

We first want to acknowledge the privilege related to being able to choose your presentation environment. While not everyone can do this, we encourage those able to do so to consider how staging can enhance the accessibility of your presentation.

- **Lighting:** If you are sharing your camera, lighting can help attendees see your face, which can be important for reading lips, emotive cues, and gestures. Position yourself so that light is in front of—not behind—you.

- **Camera Placement:** If you are using a movable camera, the preferred angle is to position the camera lens just above eye-level.
- **Contrast:** If you are sharing your camera, try to wear colors that contrast with your background. Avoid busy patterns, which can blur on camera or blend into virtual backgrounds.
- **Backgrounds/Virtual Backgrounds:** If you are sharing your camera, avoid virtual backgrounds if your computer processor cannot differentiate the virtual background from your face.
- **Upload a Profile Image:** If you are not sharing your camera, upload a photo, image, or avatar image to your Zoom account [by following these directions](#).
- **Limited Background Noise:** To help attendees and closed-captioning software better understand what you are saying, make an attempt to limit background noise, if possible.
- **Microphone:** Using a microphone can sharpen the quality of your speech, which can help attendees and closed-captioning software better understand what you are saying.
- **Rename Your Participant Name to Include Pronouns:** If you feel comfortable sharing your pronouns, you can edit your display name to include pronouns [by following these directions](#).
- **Positioning Statement, Statements of Land Acknowledgement, or Support:** In staging or framing your presentation, we invite presenters to consider giving positioning statements, statements of acknowledgement, or statements of support to ethically position, or stage, their presentation. A sample Land Acknowledgement for Old Dominion University, the site of the technical support center associated with GSOLE's virtual conference, is available below, but you could also craft a Land Acknowledgement statement for the land you will be on when you present using the sample statement provided below. [This resource](#) will help you research the Indigenous Peoples' and/or Nations' territory on which you are presenting.
 - *ODU Land Acknowledgement:* As we begin this virtual event, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of the land which now holds Old Dominion University, our hosting institution. A land acknowledgement is a statement that formally recognizes the historical and continuing connection between indigenous peoples and their native lands. In this spirit, we humbly make this land acknowledgement. We honor the ancestral grounds of the Chesapeake, the Powhatan, Nanticoke, and Piscataway peoples, in particular.

While a land acknowledgement is not enough, it is an important social justice and decolonial practice that promotes Indigenous visibility and a reminder that we are on sacred land. Let this land acknowledgement be an opening for all of us to contemplate the ongoing struggles to resist colonial indoctrination through various Indigenous movements for identity, sovereignty, and self-determination.

- *Creating Your Own Land Acknowledgement*¹: As we begin this event, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of our various regions. A land acknowledgement is a critical step towards working with native communities to secure meaningful partnership and inclusion in the stewardship and protection of their cultural resources and homelands. However, as a presenter we want you to authentically engage with the act of acknowledging your presence on indigenous lands and not merely perform an acknowledgement.

Let's take a moment to honor these ancestral grounds that we are virtually gathered upon and support the resilience and strength that all Indigenous people have shown worldwide. I am currently presenting from my home in xxxxx which is on the unceded territory of the xxxxxxxxxxxx.

Please use the chat to type in the name of the nations in your area.

Oral Presentation

- **Rename Your Zoom Participant Name to Include Pronouns:** If you feel comfortable sharing your pronouns, you can edit your display name to include pronouns [by following these directions](#).
- **Use a Microphone and Auto-Captioning:** Using a microphone can sharpen the quality of your speech, which can help attendees and closed-captioning software better understand what you are saying. While all presentations will have captions in their recorded format, we encourage presenters to consider using a live-time automatic closed-captioning technology to increase the accessibility of the presentation in the moment. [Google Slides has an auto-caption feature you can learn more about here](#).
- **Speak Clearly at an Easy Pace:** Pacing will help attendees process your presentation and is especially helpful for translators and CART specialists.
- **Articulate Slide Content:** You should not assume everyone can see your slides. Describing slide content, especially visuals, is helpful for attendees calling in or with low-vision.
- **Summarize Chat Conversations:** Please summarize conversations happening in the chat. Individuals calling in cannot see the chat, and individuals using different devices may struggle to toggle between the chat and shared presentation.
- **Summarize Activities:** Please summarize activities, notes, or engagement as it is happening in a secondary platform (e.g., Padlet or Google docs) if they're being projected.
- **Provide Thinking, Processing, and Transitioning Time:** Attendees process information at different paces. Consider building in wait time as you shift between topics, ask for commentary and feedback, or move into interactive activities.

¹ This statement was adapted from California State University, San Marco's [Land Acknowledgement Toolkit](#), developed by the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center and CSUSM's American Indian Studies program.

- **Provide Time Expectations for Activities:** When asking attendees to participate in activities, please let them know how much time they will have to work. Because attendees will be in various time zones, give timing expectations in minute increments (e.g., “We will spend the next 10 minutes...”) instead of end times (“At 1:10, we will stop working...”).
- **Use Inclusive Terms:** Consider if the terms you are using to describe communities and peoples are inclusive. Please refer to [this APA guide on inclusive and bias-free language](#).

Participant Engagement

- **Use of External Technologies in Presentations:** You may want your attendees to visit another site, complete a Padlet prompt, or complete a poll. Please only select additional technologies if they function across devices and are [WCAG 2.1](#) compliant.
- **Give Expectations for Participant Engagement:** Attendees will come to your presentation with different experiences and expectations for a virtual conference. Please tell them how you would prefer they engage with you during your session (e.g., through the chat, by unmuting their microphones, during interactive activities).
- **Summarize Chat Conversations:** Please summarize conversations happening in the chat. Individuals calling in cannot see the chat, and individuals using different devices may struggle to toggle between the chat and shared presentation.
- **Do Not Require Participants to Turn on Cameras or Mics:** Please respect the privacy of your attendees. While some attendees may engage best using their videos and microphones, others may have valid reasons for preferring not to engage with your presentation in these ways.
- **Mute Mics When You Are Not Speaking:** To limit background noise, please request that any individual not speaking mute their microphone.
- **Interactive Activities Should Be Flexible in How People Participate:** Design interactive activities with an understanding that we all are working in different contexts. Interactive moments should allow individuals a range of activity and engagement options and consider that some participants may not be able to participate in all engagement activities. When introducing these activities, consider if you want to give explicit directions or invitational directions.
- **Give Breakout Room Directions in Multiple Formats:** Give attendees directions for Breakout Rooms on slides and in chats for reference. Once individuals are sent to Breakout Rooms, they can no longer see the shared slide but can still access the chat.
- **Group Breakout Rooms Strategically:** Placing a minimum of 3 members in each Breakout Room ensures that a discussion can still occur if an individual chooses not to participate in the Breakout Room discussion or is unable to participate given the context where they are listening from.
- **Debrief or Share Breakout Room Conversations:** If appropriate, consider giving Breakout Room participants a way to summarize their conversations as recordings will not include Breakout Rooms.

- **Provide Thinking, Processing, and Transitioning Time:** Attendees process information at different paces. Consider building in wait time as you shift between topics, ask for commentary and feedback, or move into interactive activities.

For additional resources related to accessibility, please see [this resource from the Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) on web presentation accessibility](#).

Asynchronous Presentation Technologies

While you can use any platform you choose, we suggest using one of the following: PlayPosit, Nearpod, and VoiceThread. If using one of those platforms, please see the linked accessibility guides: [VoiceThread & Accessibility](#), [PlayPosit & Accessibility](#), and [Nearpod & Accessibility](#).

No matter the platform, please review the various suggestions for [slide design](#), [sharing your materials](#), [staging your presentation](#), and [oral presentation tips](#) (all detailed above). Tips related to the following are of particular importance:

- **Captioning:** *While all presentations will have captions in their recorded format, we encourage presenters to consider using a live-time automatic closed-captioning technology to increase the accessibility of the presentation in the moment.*
 - Google Slides has an [auto-caption feature](#) you can learn more about.
 - YouTube's [auto-captioning tool](#) is also helpful for captioning videos.
- **Adding alt. text when possible:** *Add Alt Text to Images : Alternative text provides image descriptions for those with visual disabilities or those who do not have the internet connection needed to download media. [This resource gives further instruction on writing good alternative text](#).*
- **Describing important visuals aloud:** *Using heading styles when available: Use [Embedded Navigation and Heading Systems](#) : Using designations like title, heading, and text can help those with screenreaders read your presentation. It is also helpful if each slide has a unique title for navigation purposes.*

For Attendees to Read...

This section describes resources made available by GSOLE to both presenters and attendees.

- **CART Accommodations:** Upon request, CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) is available. You can request this accommodation when you complete registration.
- **Role of the Session Chair:** While each individual presenter can choose their preferred methods, the session chair is there to support the access and inclusivity of both presenters and attendees during each panel. See the section below titled "For Chair's to Read" to better understand the expectations for the chair).

- **Interacting via Zoom:** Most sessions will use common Zoom features, such as the Chat, aural/visual discussion, and polling. You are invited to participate as much or as little as you'd like.
 - **Voice participation:**
 - Please test your microphone before logging in (using your device's sound settings), and then again as you use each of the synchronous meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom).
 - Please mute your microphone when you aren't trying to speak.
 - Please announce yourself as you make each new comment orally (e.g., "This is Jane Smith [again], . ."). Such identification helps presenters and others know how to address replies.
 - **Chat participation:**
 - Feel free to contribute text messages to the chat stream, but please be aware that the presenter may not readily notice the messages appearing there.
 - Please be respectful of the presenter's focal point by avoiding distracting chat messages. Direct chat messages may be sent to individual participants to avoid crowding the chat stream.
 - **Video participation:**
 - Feel free to deactivate your video—or to provide some other image in place of the live feed.
 - Consider deactivating your video and/or turning off your virtual background to free up bandwidth.

For Session Chairs to Read...

Session chairs serve as the gathering point for their panel and, as such, chairs have an important job to warmly welcome attendees, set virtual norms of participation, and help foster respectful and inclusive interaction. In these important ways, session chairs are highly active members of a panel.

- **Set a Welcoming Tone:** Please open each session by inviting participation via myriad means.
 - You might highlight part of GSOLE's Accessibility & Inclusion Statement (detailed above in full), and say something like, "As a representative of GSOLE, I'm here to help protect and foster the 'conditions [necessary] for all people to connect, create, and lead if they so choose.'" With that goal in mind, I will be participating in several ways, including....."
- **Remind Attendees and Presenters Presentations are Recorded:** For individuals who are not comfortable appearing on the recording, they can alter their Zoom username/handle, mute their video, and type into the chat to appear anonymously.
- **Establish Zoom Norms for Participants:** Ask participants to mute their mic when not speaking

- **Introduce Panelists:** Before each panelist delivers their presentation, introduce them to the audience. Ask panelists for pronunciation and pronouns in advance so you introduce them correctly.
- **Summarize Chat Conversations:** Please summarize conversations happening in the chat. Individuals calling in cannot see the chat, and individuals using different devices may struggle to toggle between the chat and shared presentation.
- **During Panelist Presentations, Help Improve Access for All:**
 - Describe images/slides briefly in the chat.
 - Type out links for resources and copy them into the chat, even if they are displayed visually on a slide.
 - Read questions out loud. And, post any questions asked verbally to the chat.
 - Keep track of time.

For additional resources related to accessibility, please see [this resource from the Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) on web presentation accessibility](#).

Sources

Hubrig, Adam and Ruth Osorio. Enacting a Culture of Access in Our Conference Spaces. *College Composition and Communication* 72(1), 2020, p. 87-117.

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Piepzna-Samarasinha and Leah Lakshmi. *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*. Arsenal Pulp P, 2018.

Titchkosky, Tanya. *The Question of Access: Disability, Space, Meaning*. U of Toronto P, 2011.