

Questions to Ask Organizers

TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS

- What size should my slide deck be?
 - 4:3 (Standard)
 - 16:9 (Widescreen)
- Do you have specific requirements for slide decks?
 - Title Slide
 - Software
- When should I submit my slide deck? Are there other deadlines that I should be aware of?
 - Deadline:
 - Other Info:
- Who should I submit my slide deck to?
 - Name:
 - Email:
 - Phone:
- What equipment is provided at the event?
 - Computer
 - Power Strip / Cords
 - Wireless Remote
 - Lectern
 - Confidence Monitor
- If there is a confidence monitor, how many will there be? What will they show?
 - Current Slide
 - Notes
 - Time Remaining
- When can I come in to test the technology and practice on the actual stage before the event?
 - Day and time:

AUDIO / VISUAL AND STAGE INFORMATION

- Will this talk be recorded?
- What kind of microphone will I be using?
 - Handheld (Will there be a mic stand?)
 - Lavalier (lapel)
 - Over the Ear / Wireless Headset

VENUE INFORMATION

- What is the layout of the room? (Or, describe the room arrangement you prefer)
- Do you have a photo of the stage, screen, and the audience seating?

EVENT INFORMATION

- How much time is allotted for my session?
- What type of event is this?
- Who else will be speaking / performing?

AUDIENCE INFORMATION

- Who is in the audience?
- Why are they there?
 - Required training
 - They paid to be there
 - It's free / open to the public
 - Other
- What do they care about?
- Why did you ask me to speak?
- What are your expectations of me as a speaker?

Questions to Ask Yourself

- What is my central idea for this talk?
- Why should the audience care? How can I make them curious?
- What do I need to build this idea? (Stories, research, images, drawings, graphs, case studies, etc.)
- How can I make my idea worth sharing?
- Is there a prop I could bring to help make my message more memorable?
- Do I need slides? Will slides help me clarify my idea and engage my audience?
- What software should I use? (PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, other)

Technology Prep

1. Create a Dropbox or Google Drive folder with the following digital assets:
 - Professional Speaker Photo (at least 1500 pixels wide)
 - Speaker Bio (for organizers to use for promotion)
 - Speaker Introduction (for emcee to use at the event)
 - W9 (simplifies paperwork if this is ready)
 - Polished Slide Deck
 - Videos (if you have them)
2. Save backups of your final slide deck before the event.
 - Upload your final slide deck to your Dropbox or Google Drive folder and email yourself and the coordinator the link.
 - Save your slide deck to a flash drive for quick transfer at the event.
 - Save your slide deck, fonts, videos, and audio files on a flash drive to bring with you to the event.
3. Do not count on having internet access at the event.
This means that if you're doing a software demo, take screenshots to insert into your slide deck rather than showing the live version.
4. Learn about best practices for microphones.
To maximize the opportunity of the audience accepting your idea, they need to hear you clearly. There are many YouTube videos for microphones best practices. It's worth learning more about since not all events have professional AV.
5. If you're not as confident with technology, here are some slide deck design tips to simplify tech issues:
 - Avoid using videos in your slide deck.
 - Avoid using audio or music in your slide deck.
 - Use these system fonts: Arial, Helvetica, Calibri, Times New Roman, Georgia, or Palatino
 - Use PowerPoint as your slide deck design tool.
6. If you want to push tech boundaries, here are some slide deck design tips for to help you be successful:
 - Videos:** Export videos as MP4 files (this seems to work the best on both Mac and PC computers). Be sure to give the tech team a heads-up in advance that you plan to have video in your presentation because they may need to make special accommodations for you, such as speakers. Include all video files separate from the slide deck in your Dropbox file and on your flash drive backup.
 - Audio:** If you plan to include music or audio, MP3 files seem to work best. Again, give the tech team a heads-up so they can accommodate this request. Include all audio files separate from the slide deck in your Dropbox or Google Drive file and on your flash drive backup.
 - Fonts:** If you are using fonts other than Arial, Helvetica, Calibri, Times New Roman, Georgia, or Palatino in your slide deck, it's a good idea to send your special font(s) with your slide deck. One of the most common pitfalls in playing slide decks on conference computers is font issues. PCs allow you to embed most fonts in the save options. You need to check the box "Embed fonts in the file" and choose "Embed all characters" (best for editing by other people). This option is kind of hidden depending on which PowerPoint version you have. Just Google your PowerPoint version and type "embed fonts" and you should be able to find a tutorial—OR—use the Help menu in PowerPoint and type "embed fonts" for direct information.
 - Design Software:** If you use a tool other than PowerPoint (Keynote, Prezi, Google Slides, Emaze, etc.), have PowerPoint backups for all files. Prezi and Emaze presentations should be downloaded to play in their standalone desktop versions. If you choose to use Keynote, be sure to have your Mac monitor adapter cable just in case you need to run the presentation off of your computer.

Speaker Survival Kit

It's a smart to have your own kit ready with these items:

TECH ITEMS

- Remote + Fresh Batteries: *The Kensington Wireless Presenter works well for me*
- Computer
- Computer Power Cord
- Mac AV Adapter
- Extension Cord
- Power Strip

PERSONAL ITEMS

- Extra Clothes: Shirt, Pants, Scarf, etc.
Note: Choose solid colors and comfortable shoes.
- Cough Drops or Throat Lozenges
- Bottled Water
- Granola Bars
- Chapstick
- Advil / Headache Relief Medicine
- Deodorant
- Lotion
- Bandaids
- Hairbrush
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Makeup

Key Takeaways

Asking a few important questions in advance will help you deliver your best talk and help alleviate stress on the day of the event.

Make friends with the A/V techy folks by being thoughtful when you ask for things during the event. Turning in your PowerPoint just a few minutes before you speak causes them more stress when they are already handling lights, video cameras, mics, sound, transitions between speakers and emcees, photography, battery levels, event music, and many other logistical things. It's best to submit your slide deck in advance and arrive early to the event to work with them.

Bonus Tip: If you have a special favor to ask the AV folks, most techies I've met like fresh coffee—with a lid. :-)



Contact Information

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