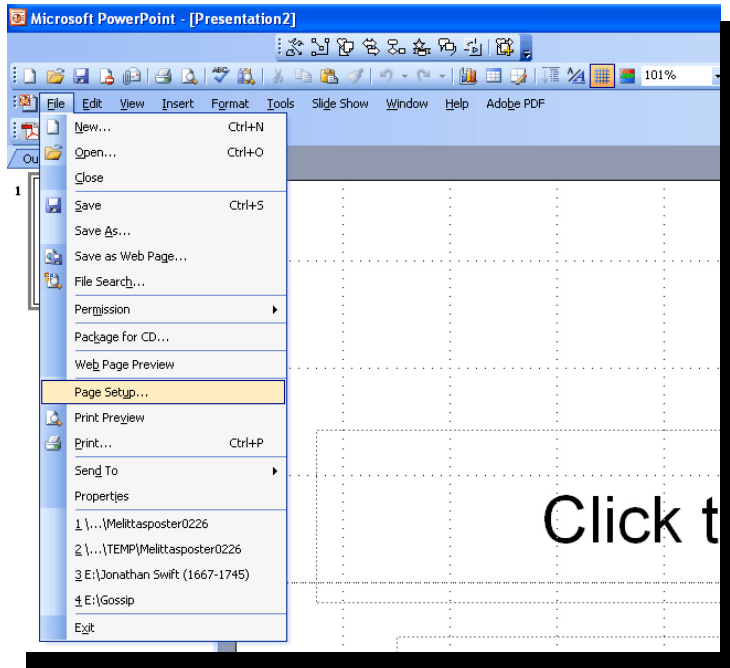


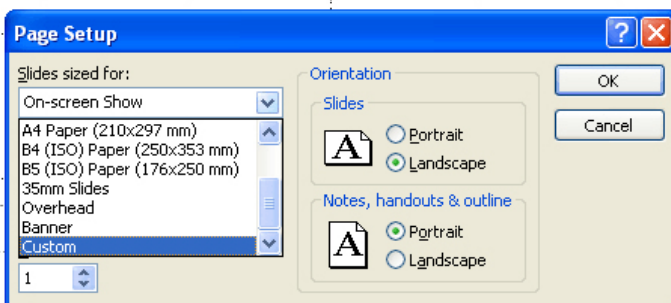
Instructions for Creating a Poster for Arts and Humanities Research Day Using PowerPoint

While it is, of course, possible to create a Research Day poster using a graphics editing programme such as Adobe *Photoshop*, a very professional-looking poster can also be produced employing Microsoft *PowerPoint*. *PowerPoint* is a surprisingly powerful programme, and provides a really large range of options for the formatting and layout of your poster. What is more, although a *PowerPoint* poster can be converted into a JPEG image (using the “Save as” option), our printer, Mercury Blueprinting, can produce a *better* quality slide from the original PowerPoint file than from one that has been converted into an image format.

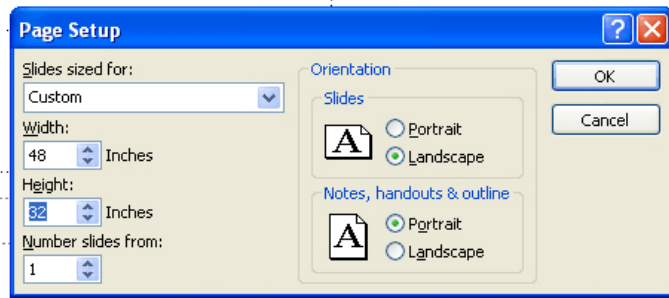
Setting Up the Poster



Your poster will actually be a single, very large *PowerPoint* slide, formatted to print out at the size of the poster you are creating. To create and format this slide, open PowerPoint and choose, **File > Page Setup**.



From the “Page Setup” dialog box that appears, choose “Custom” from the options available under “Slides sized for” drop-down menu.

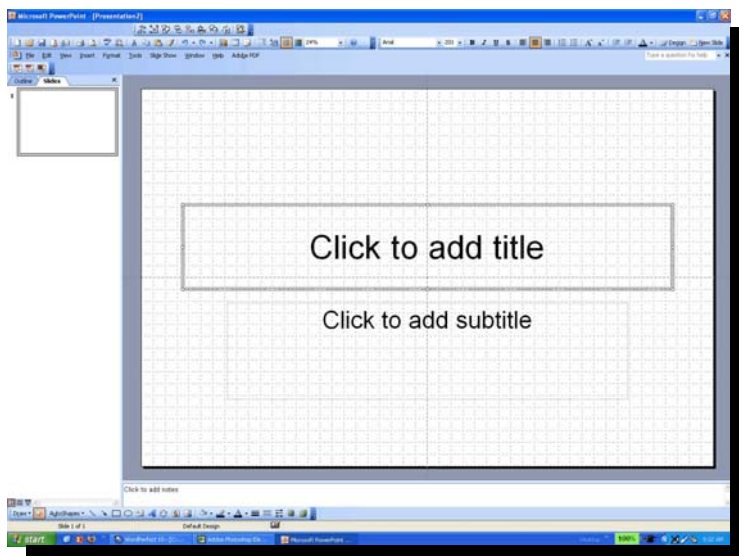


In the “Width” and “Height” fields in the same dialog box, enter the dimensions of your poster. The maximum size for printing for Research Day is 32" by 48". The poster can be oriented either to “Portrait” or “Landscape.”

Once you have entered the poster’s dimensions, click “OK.” Your poster will now appear as a standard-looking blank *PowerPoint* slide. Remember that the single slide that now appears on your screen will print out at the dimensions that you have set. To add and format text, you will likely need to zoom in on the slide, as the even a reasonably large font will otherwise appear too small on your screen to edit properly.

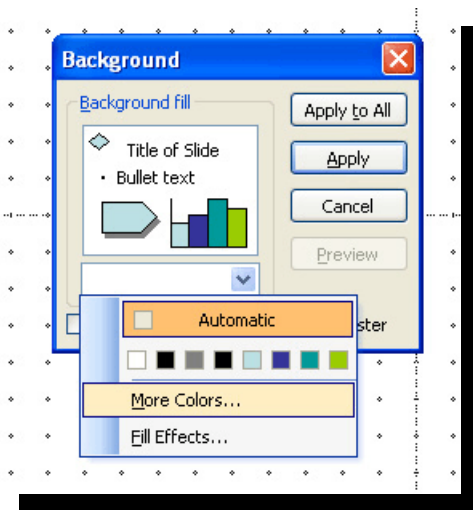


It is also recommended that you turn on the slide “grid” to help you arrange elements on the poster: go to **View > Grids and Guides**. In the dialog box that now appears, click in the “Display grid on screen” checkbox, and choose 1" for the spacing of the grid.

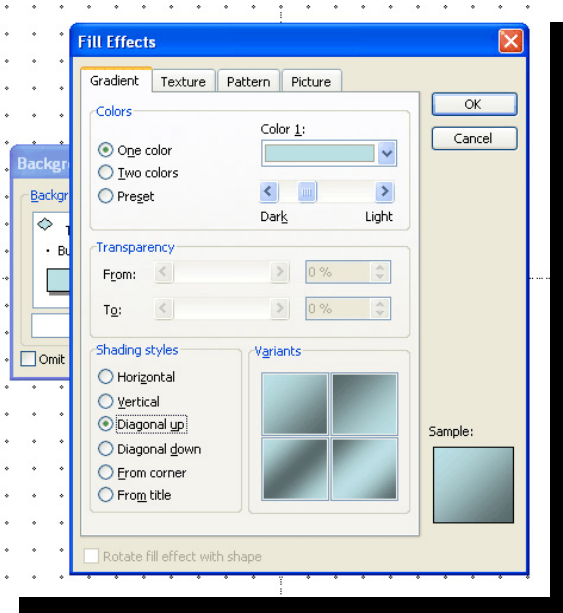


The initial slide you have created will probably include text boxes. You will want to get rid of these, as you will eventually be replacing them with your own. Click on the borders of each of the preformatted text boxes, which will highlight the box, and then hit the “Delete” key on your keyboard to delete it.

You may, of course, wish to retain a simple white background for your poster. If, however, you want a coloured background, you should now choose **Format > Background** from the menu near the top of the screen.



From “Background” dialogue box, choose one of the preset colours, “More Colors,” or “Fill Effects.” The “More Colors” option will permit you to choose from a range of colours. “Fill Effects” will permit a wider range of background options. It is not recommended that you choose “Textures” or “Patterns” from the tab. Another possibility is to choose “Picture,” which will allow you to use a photograph or other graphic as a background: this is not recommended unless the picture is a reasonably light and uncluttered one.



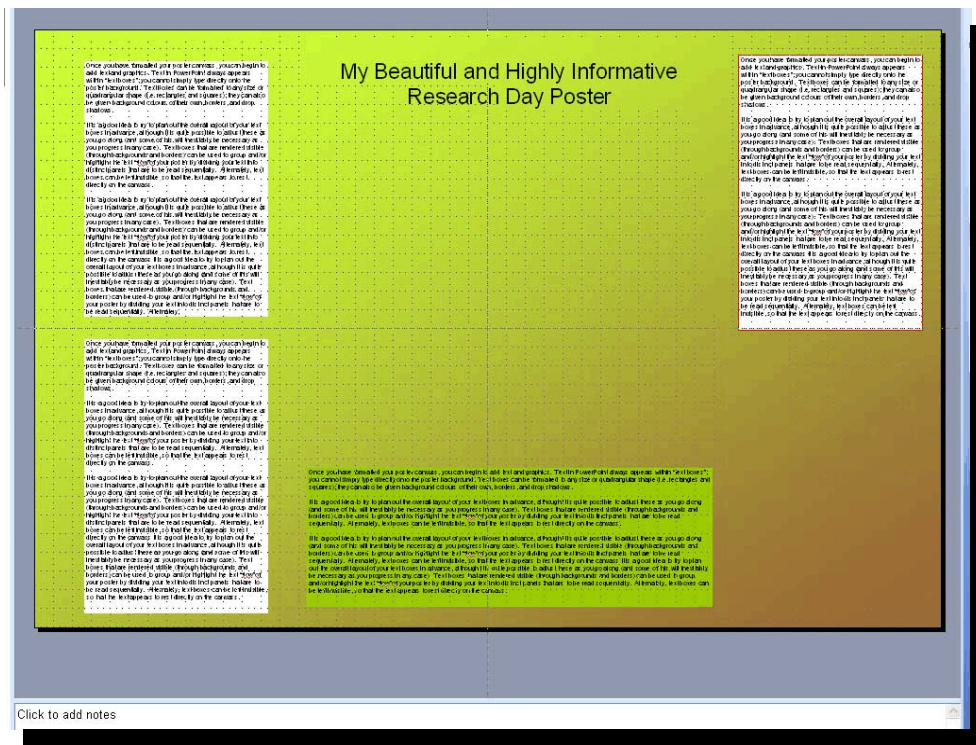
Using the “Fill Effects” option, click on the “Gradient” tab (if it is not already selected). Here, you can choose a “gradient” background with either one or two colours. Note that, using the options under “Shading styles,” you can set the pattern and direction of the gradient. Choosing the “one color” option will produce a gradient that runs from that one colour into a darker grey background; choosing “two colors” permits more flexibility in the colours that comprise your gradient background.

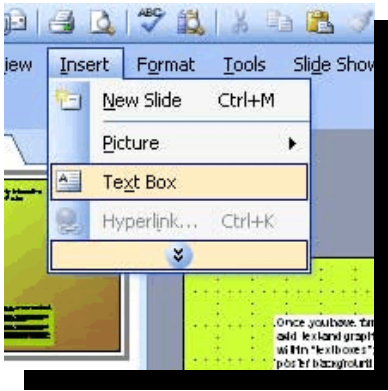
Regardless of your choice of either a solid or gradient coloured background for your poster, it is highly recommended that you choose light colours, and, in particular, avoid dark blues or purples, as these tend to print out very darkly, or with unexpected shifts in tint.

Adding Text

Once you have formatted your poster canvass, you can begin to add text and graphics. Text in PowerPoint always appears within “text boxes”; you cannot simply type directly onto the poster background. Text boxes can be formatted to any size or quadrangular shape (i.e. rectangles and squares); they can also be given background colours of their own, borders, and drop shadows.

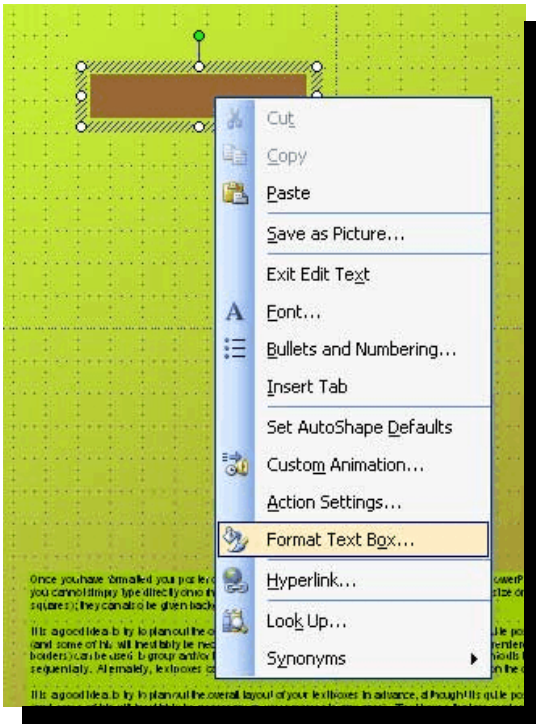
It is a good idea to try to plan out the overall layout of your text boxes in advance, although it is quite possible to adjust these as you go along (and some of this will inevitably be necessary as you progress in any case). Text boxes that are rendered visible (through backgrounds and borders) can be used to group and/or highlight the text “flow” of your poster by dividing your text into distinct panels that are to be read sequentially. Alternately, text boxes can be left invisible, so that the text appears to rest directly on the canvass. In the example below, two text boxes have been given white backgrounds, and another a green background. The text box containing the title of the poster has been rendered transparent, and to the text box to the right has been added a very light red border.





To create a text box, go to “Insert” in the main menu bar across the top, and choose “Text box” from the drop down menu. Your cursor will now change in shape to a vertical line with a horizontal bar near the bottom. Holding down the left mouse button, drag this across your slide until the box is roughly the desired width (height can be adjusted manually, or by adding hard space using the Return key).

The default format for text boxes is with no border or background colour (although the box will appear to have both for the time that you are working inside of it).



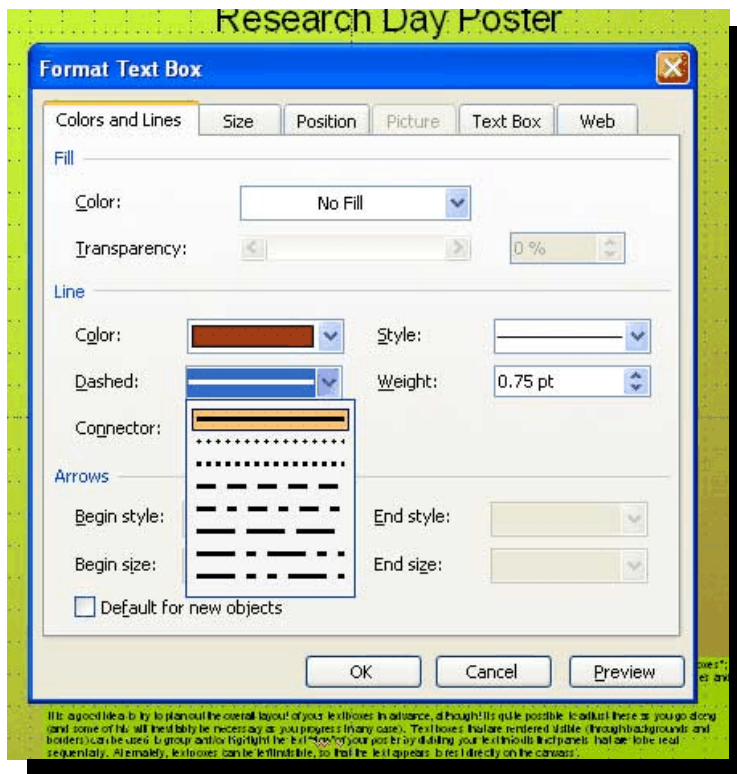
To add background or border, or to add precise values for the size of the text box, right-click within the box. From the menu that will appear, choose “Format Text Box.” (Note that this normally invisible, borderless text box displays with both background and border while I am working within it. Clicking outside of the box will remove these).

The “Format Text Box” dialog will now appear, which will enable you to customize the appearance of the text box.



The default for background is, as mentioned, “No Fill,” but under the “Colors and Lines” tab, you can add color. You can also add gradients, textures, patterns, and pictures to the background.

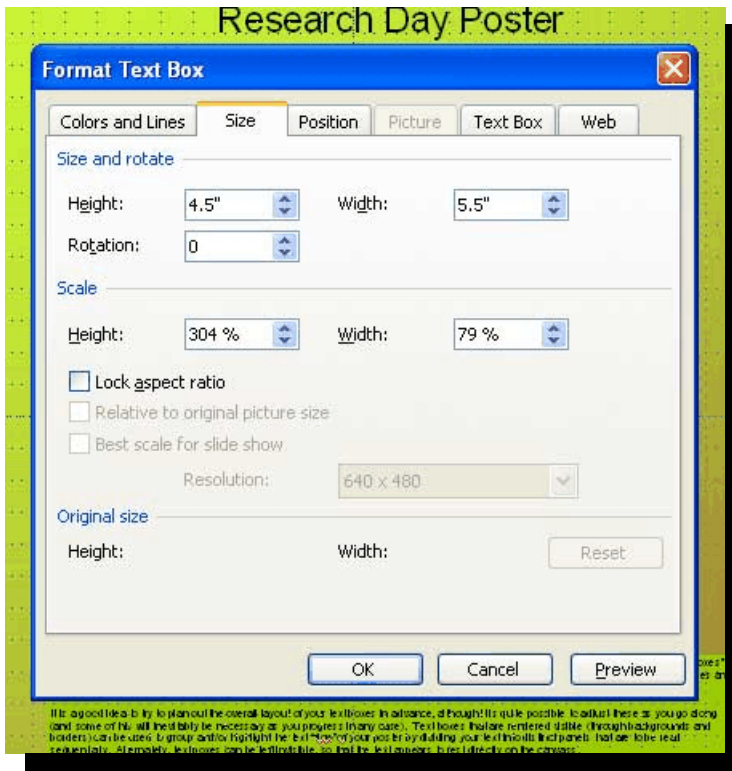
Note that “Transparency” appears as an option under “Color”: in theory, this will render the background of the box somewhat transparent. Do **not** use this option, as it does not render well in printing.



Within the same tab of the dialog box, you can add a border by choosing options under the “Line” section.

Borders can be given colors, and “styles,” as well as different looks (for example, dotted or dashed lines) and “weights”(or thickness).

The “Size” tab in the same dialog box will allow you to fix the dimensions of your box, although most often this is best accomplished by allowing the content to determine size automatically.

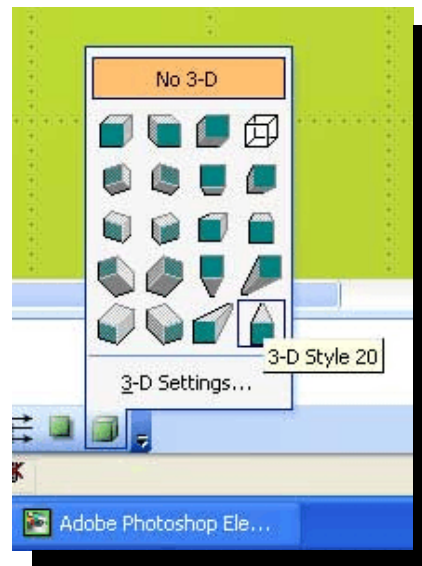
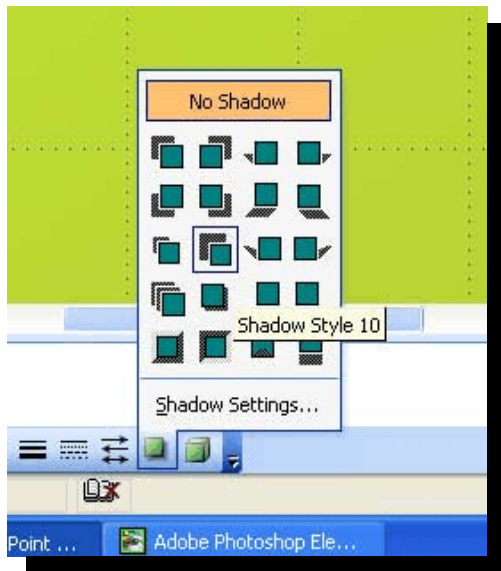


Simply enter the desired dimensions into the appropriate box. Notice that it is also possible to “tilt” the box by changing the value under “Rotation,” or to “scale” the boxes dimensions up or down by using the “Scale” options.



In this example, the box (which has a transparent background, but a reddish brown border) has been “tilted” -45%.

Two final formatting features available for text boxes are “drop shadows” and “3-D” effects. These are available through a menu that is generally found near the bottom of the screen.

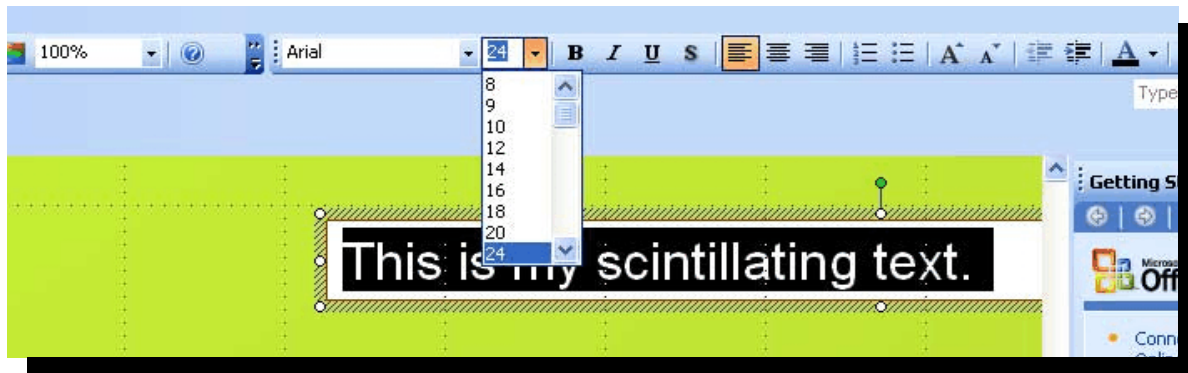


Finally, note that text boxes can be resized and moved around the canvass by dragging and dropping the “handles” in the corners or sides.

Formatting Text

Formatting text in *PowerPoint* is easily accomplished through menu options and buttons that are standard and will be immediately familiar especially to anyone use to working in *MS Word*. Simply highlight the affected text, and change the font, colour, style, and size as one normally would in a word processing programme.

One can also indent, align, and apply list formatting to text. Most of the text formatting options are available in the menu bar along the top right of the screen.



A few cautionary notes on text:

- 1) In general, try to use commonly available fonts, such as Arial, Times New Roman, etc., as there is no guarantee that the more elaborate fonts found on your computer will also be available on the printer's computer. If they are not, your text will be rendered in unpredictable ways.
- 2) The body of your text should generally be at least 24 point in size; anything much smaller than this will be hard to read.
- 3) To add text to your poster, you will probably need to “zoom” in on the screen (i.e., increase magnification), as 24 point font will too small to read on your computer if you have the entire poster fitting on to your screen.
- 4) It is generally better to use light backgrounds and dark text, rather than the opposite: light font colours against dark backgrounds quickly tire the eyes. And, of course, make sure that your font stands out sufficiently against coloured backgrounds or gradients.

Adding Graphics

Graphics are easily added to *PowerPoint*, and can be applied directly on to the canvass (unlike text), rather than nested with boxes.

A few general notes about graphics:

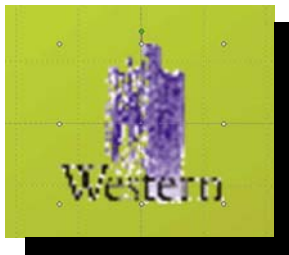
- 1) The quality of electronic images is generally measured in dpi, or “dots per inch.” A higher dpi value means higher quality image. Ideally, images intended for printing should be at approximately 150 dpi, although you can often get away with smaller.

2) Most images found on the web are about 72 dpi. Although this does not guarantee great quality images for your poster, it is *sometimes* sufficient.

3) If a graphic of a given dpi is scaled down, its dpi (and detail or quality) will increase. If it is scaled up, its dpi (and hence quality and detail) will degrade. In other words, an image of 72 dpi that is blown up to twice its size will effectively display with a dpi of 36. Similarly, a larger image that is reduced in size will have a denser and better dpi. Bear this in mind when pulling images from the web: an image that looks fine in your browser may not do so when it is pasted onto your poster, and expanded in size.



Image of the Western Tower logo, as it appears in a browser window.



The same image, copied and then inserted into a *PowerPoint* slide. The slightly increased size makes the pixels very evident to the viewer.

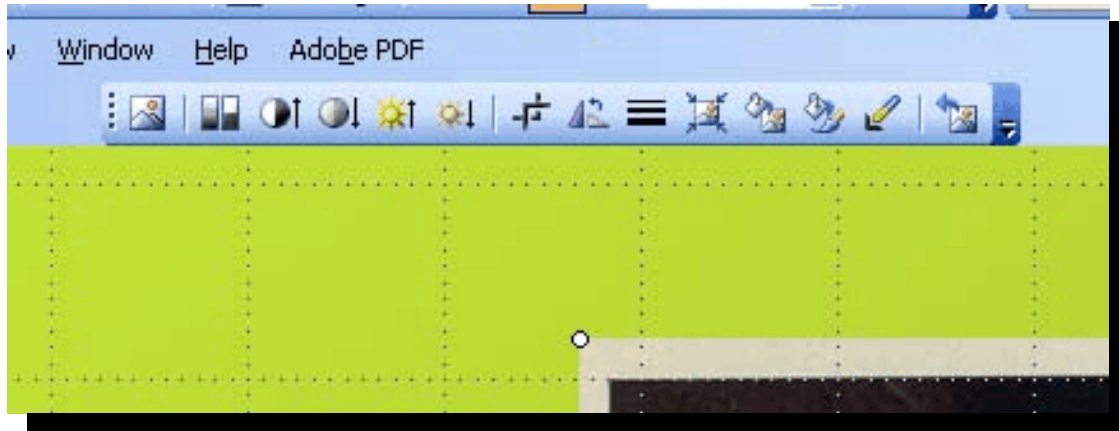
4) Images can be added in JPEG, GIF, or PNG format. In general, JPEG provides a combination of the best quality with the smallest file size, but GIF and PNG files can employ transparency. (Partially transparent graphics will usually need to be prepared in a proper image editor, such as Photoshop. In the Western logo example shown above, the tower image employs a transparent background.)

While it is generally best to edit one's images in a programme designed for this purpose, such as *Photoshop*, MS *PowerPoint* does provide some reasonably powerful tools for editing and manipulating images once they have been imported into a file running in that programme.

To insert an image into your slide, go to **Insert > Picture > From File**. Once the image has been inserted, it can be resized and moved in the same fashion as a text box, but dragging and dropping sides or corners of the image.

In addition, a Picture editing toolbar will appear when you click on the picture. This provides

some useful image editing options, including (from left to right in the picture above):



- 1) **Insert Image**
- 2) **Colour:** Allows one to transform the image from colour to grayscale, or produce a “washout” effect.
- 3) **Increase contrast**
- 4) **Decrease contrast**
- 5) **Increase brightness**
- 6) **Decrease brightness**
- 7) **Crop**
- 8) **Rotate Image 90%**
- 9) **Change line thickness**
- 10) **Compress Picture:** This reduces the quality and file size of the image. **DO NOT CHOOSE** this option.
- 11) **Change Colour:** This will not generally work with JPEG or GIF images.
- 12) **Format:** This allows one to manually set size and other parameters for the picture.
- 13) **Set Transparency:** Clicking with this tool on a colour within the picture will turn all instances of the selected colour in the picture transparent.
- 14) **Reset Picture:** Reestablishes the original picture settings.