Common PowerPoint Pitfalls and Some Practical Solutions

**Pitfall:** Too much text
- **Solution:** Include only main points/separate information into several slides
- **Solution:** Use the “appear” animation to hide slide material until you want to talk about it.
- **Solution:** Provide a hand-out, instead, with “need-to-know” facts/dates/statistics etc.

**Pitfall:** Using the display slides as lecture notes
- **Solution:** Have separate lecture notes printout / use the PPT “notes function/create a separate PPT and printout

**Pitfall:** Leaving text-heavy slides on-screen while talking about other topics
- **Solution:** Use “W” (white screen) or “B” (black screen) or include a blank slide

**Pitfall:** Too many slides
- **Solution:** Reduce the number of slides

**Pitfall:** Not spending enough time on individual slides/moving from one slide to the next too quickly
- **Solution:** Pause for 20 seconds at the end of every slide

**Pitfall:** Moving from the final point of a slide immediately to the next slide
- **Solution:** Provide a summary overview (or question) about the overall slide before moving on.

**Pitfall:** Asking a yes/no, black/white type question for which the answer is already included in the PowerPoint

**Pitfall:** Overly complicated charts/graphics
- **Solution:** Simple graphics are generally more helpful.

**Pitfall:** Failure to explain individual elements of charts/graphics
- **Solution:** Identify each of the vectors/axes/variables before drawing overall conclusions

**Pitfall:** Failure to connect images explicitly to lecture topics
- **Solution:** Point to an image or reference it in speech at the moment when the image is relevant

**Pitfall:** Overuse of animation
- **Solution:** Stick to “appear,” “disappear,” and “fade”

**Pitfall:** Lack of images
- **Solution:** Include relevant images to maximize retention

**Pitfall:** Use of irrelevant/purely decorative images

**Pitfall:** Poor quality images
- **Solution:** Make a point to include highest quality images possible.

**Pitfall:** Talking at the screen, instead of the class.
- **Solution:** Refer to your laptop/in-class monitor instead.