

PechaKucha Session Guide for Chairs and Technology Volunteers

“Chit-chat” in Japanese — PechaKucha is a popular session format at ILA. 20 slides, 20 seconds each, no pausing, no going back. Fast-paced, energetic, and genuinely fun to run. Each session features up to 6 presenters in 60 minutes. This guide covers both volunteer roles.

TWO ROLES, ONE SESSION

Session Chair

Welcomes, introduces, & moderates

Technology Volunteer

Runs Decks that have been pre-loaded by ILA

FORMAT AT A GLANCE

20

slides per presenter

20 sec

per slide — auto-
advances

6:40

per presentation

Up to 6

presenters per session

CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

What the Chair Does

- **Connect with your presenters before the conference.** ILA will connect you via email. After that initial connection, please introduce yourself, confirm the session plan with presenters (e.g., speaking order), and remind presenters to review the PechaKucha Presenter Guide at ilaglobalconference.org/presenter-resources/ if they haven't already. Since PechaKuchas are grouped after submission, it can be helpful for everyone to have a virtual meeting so each presenter can share a little about their work and presenters can think about connections to their own work.
- **Arrive 5–10 minutes early.** Get to the room before your presenters if you can, greet everyone as they arrive, and reconfirm everything.
- **Open the session.** Welcome the audience, briefly explain the PechaKucha format to the audience — 20 slides, 20 seconds each, 6:40 total per presenter. Note that it's Japanese for “chit-chat.” Remind the audience to hold questions until the end.

- **Introduce each presenter.** Before each talk, give a short, engaging introduction — 30 seconds or less. Include the speaker's name, institution, and presentation title.
- **Manage presentation order.** Follow the order you confirmed with the speakers in advance. If a presenter is unprepared or has technical difficulties, move them to the final slot to give them more time to get organized.
- **Keep things moving.** Allow minimal time between presentations — the fast pace is part of the energy. Transition briskly between speakers.
- **Moderate Q&A at the end.** If time allows after all presentations, facilitate a brief group Q&A. Q&A is always at the END of the full session — never between individual presentations.
- **Close the session.** Thank all the speakers and the audience. Celebrate the room — these sessions are a highlight of the conference.

TECHNOLOGY VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

What the Tech Volunteer Does

- **Arrive 10 minutes early.** The session files should already be loaded on the in-room laptop, organized in folders by day and session time. Confirm everything is in order before the session begins.
- **Locate the presentation files.** Files will be labeled by presenter last name. Familiarize yourself with the order before the first presenter is introduced.
- **Press play after each introduction.** Once the chair introduces a presenter and they indicate they are ready, open their PowerPoint and start the slideshow. The deck should advance automatically — 20 seconds per slide, running straight through all 20 slides.
- **Do not pause or stop the slideshow.** Ever. If a presenter falls behind their slides, it's on them to correct course. The deck runs from start to finish without interruption.
- **Advance to the next file promptly.** When one presentation ends, be ready to open the next presenter's file to keep the session's momentum going.

Tech volunteers: do not pause, stop, or intervene with the slideshow for any reason. The autorun is the format. If a presenter stumbles, speeds up, or falls silent — the deck keeps going. That's PechaKucha!

TIPS FOR A GREAT SESSION

Sell the format upfront [Chair]

Some attendees may be experiencing PechaKucha for the first time. A brief, enthusiastic explanation — “20 slides, 20 seconds each, the deck does not stop” — sets expectations and gets the audience leaning in rather than confused.

Be prepared to modify the PPT [Tech]

All PPTs will already be tested to ensure the slides are set to auto-advance. BUT, please familiarize yourself in advance with how to set up a 20 second auto advance in PPT in case something goes wrong.

Keep transitions crisp [Both]

The energy of a Pecha Kucha session lives in its pace. Long pauses between presentations kill the momentum. Chair: keep introductions tight. Tech: have the next file open and ready right after the current deck ends.

Have the running order visible [Both]

Print or pull up the session agenda before things start. Both volunteers should know the order. If a last-minute swap happens, you both need to adjust without confusion.

Watch the clock for Q&A [Chair]

Each presentation runs 6:40. That leaves time for Q&A — but introductions and transitions eat into it. Keep an eye on the clock so Q&A doesn't get squeezed to nothing. The session needs to end on time.

Enjoy it — the room will too [Both]

Pecha Kucha sessions are high-energy and genuinely fun. The audience loves them. If you're enjoying yourselves as volunteers, it shows — and it makes the whole room feel like an event, not just a slot on the schedule.

NOTE FOR CHAIRS

Pronunciation tip for chairs: It's Peh-cha-Koo-cha!