Using PowerPoint Successfully

The Advantages and Disadvantages of PowerPoint

PowerPoint is a quick and easy way to organize ideas and information, but can encourage the creation of presentations that lack substance.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Name the advantages and disadvantages of using PowerPoint

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key Points

- PowerPoint is regarded as the most useful, accessible way to create and present visual aids; others believe it has its own mind-set which forces presenters to spend countless hours thinking in PowerPoint and developing slides.
- Advantage—easy to create colorful, attractive designs using the standard templates and themes; easy to modify compared to other visual aids, such as charts, and easy to drag and drop slides to re-order presentation.
- Advantage—easy to present and maintain eye contact with a large audience by simply advancing the slides with a keystroke, eliminating the need for handouts to follow the message.
- Disadvantage—speakers create slides so they have something to present rather than outlining, organizing, and focusing on their message.
- Disadvantage—the linear nature of PowerPoint slides forces the presenter to reduce complex subjects to a set of bullet items which are too weak to support decision-making or show the complexity of an issue.
- Disadvantage—basic equipment required to present. You will need to have a computer and projection equipment in place to display the slides to the audience.

Key Terms

- **PowerPoint**: (noun) an electronic slide presentation created and presented using the program (verb) to communicate to (an audience) by electronic slides
- **bullet points**: Bulleted items – known as bullet points – may be short phrases, single sentences, or of paragraph length; used to introduce items in a list.

Advantages and Disadvantages of PowerPoint

PowerPoint—Advantage or Disadvantage for the Presenter?

PowerPoint is the most popular presentation software. It is regarded by many as the most useful and accessible way to create and present visual aids to the audience.

On the other hand, others believe it has created its own mind-set which forces presenters to spend countless hours thinking in PowerPoint and developing slides. A political party has even formed to ban PowerPoint in Switzerland. Depending on one's perspective, it seems that many advantages could easily be viewed as disadvantages.
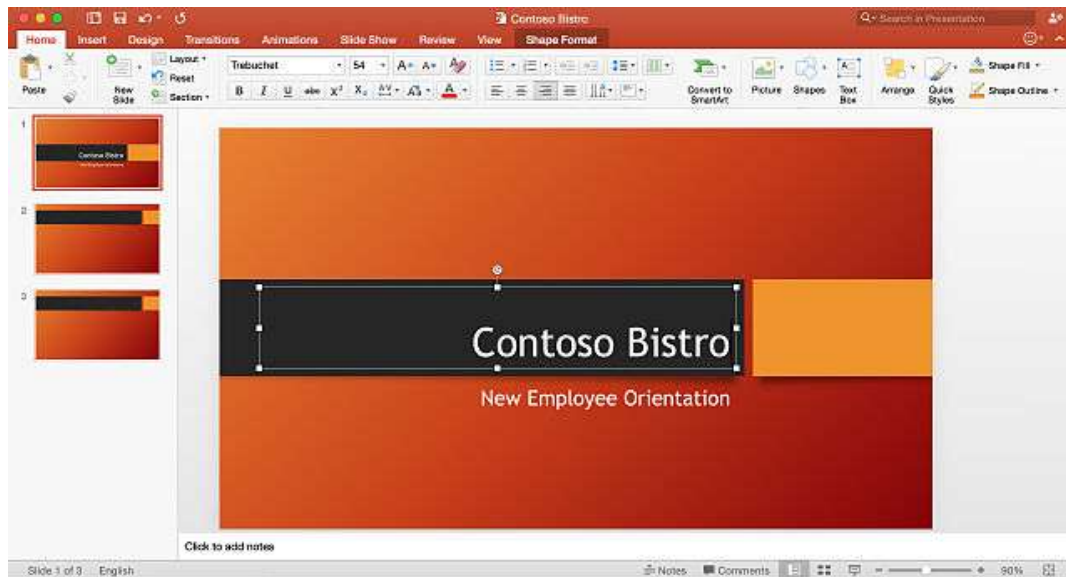
Using PowerPoint: When used correctly, PowerPoint is a helpful program for creating an engaging presentation.

Look over the list below to see where you stand—with or against PowerPoint.

Advantages

Design

- Quick and easy: the basic features are easy to master and can make you appear to be organized, even if you are not.
- Simple bullet points: it can reduce complicated messages to simple bullet points. Bullet points are a good basis for a presentation and remind the speaker of main points and the organization of the message.
- Easy to create a colorful, attractive design: using the standard templates and themes, you can create something visually appealing,even if you do not have much knowledge of basic graphic design principles.
- Easy to modify: when compared to other visual aids such as charts, posters, or objects, it is easy to modify.
- Easily re-order presentation: with a simple drag and drop or using key strokes, you can move slides to re-order the presentation.

Finally, PowerPoint is integrated with other products that allow you to include parts of documents, spread sheets, and graphics.

Delivery

- Audience Size: PowerPoint slides are generally easier to see by a large audience when projected than other visual aids.
- Easy to present: you can easily advance the slides in the presentation one after another with a simple key stroke while still maintaining eye contact with the audience.
- No need for Handouts: they look good visually and can be easily read if you have a projector and screen that is large enough for the entire room.

Disadvantages

Design

- Design power pointless: gives the illusion of content and coherence, when in fact there is really not much substance or connection between the different points on the slides.
- PowerPoint excess: some speakers create presentations so they have slides to present rather than outlining, organizing, and focusing on the message.
- Replaces planning and preparation: PowerPoint is a convenient prop for poor speakers, as it can reduce complicated messages to simple bullet points and elevates style over substance.

- Oversimplification of topic: the linear nature of PowerPoint forces the presenter to reduce complex subjects to a set of bullet items that are too weak to support decision-making or show the complexity of an issue.

- Feature abundance: while the basic features are easy to use and apply, a speaker can get carried away and try to use all the features at once rather than simply supporting a message. Too many flying letters, animations, and sound effects without seeing much original thought or analysis can be a real issue. In many cases, the medium shoves the message aside.

Delivery

- Basic equipment required: you will need to have a computer and projection equipment in place to display the slides to the audience.

- Focus on medium, not message: Too many people forget that they are making a presentation first and that PowerPoint is just a tool.

An Overview of PowerPoint

Microsoft PowerPoint is a computer software package that displays information in the form of a slide show.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

State the arguments for and against using PowerPoint as a visual aid

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key Points

- PowerPoint presentations consist of a number of individual pages or " slides," with individual slides containing text, graphics, sound, video, or other objects that can be arranged by the presenter.

- A PowerPoint presentation can be automatically controlled by pre-programming transitions from one slide to another, or manually controlled by a user.

- Supporters of PowerPoint say the presentation software is easy to use and can save a lot of time for by replacing the need for a variety of different visual aids.

- Some opponents of PowerPoint argue that the program encourages the reduction of complex ideas into simplified points, while others contend that the program encourages overstuffing presentations with too much information, both of which negatively effect the audience 's experience.

<u>**Key Terms**</u>

- **PowerPoint**: (noun) an electronic slide presentation created and presented using the program (verb) to communicate to (an audience) by electronic slides

<u>An Overview of PowerPoint</u>

PowerPoint is a presentation software program. A presentation program (also called a presentation graphics program) is a computer software package used to display information, normally in the form of a slide show. It typically includes three major functions: an editor that allows text to be inserted and formatted, a method for inserting and manipulating graphic images, and a slide-show system to display the content.

PowerPoint: PowerPoint software runs on Microsoft and Mac operating systems. It allows users to create visual presentations comprised of individual slides.

Microsoft PowerPoint 9 is easy-to-use presentation software that runs on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS operating systems. PowerPoint is commonly used by business people and students to create slide show presentations. The ease of use is demonstrated by the fact that the program can be used by junior high and high school students. PowerPoint can accommodate a range of uses, with intermediate to more technical options. Microsoft estimates that thirty million presentations are made each day using the PowerPoint program. As of 2012, various versions of PowerPoint claim approximately 95% of the presentation software market share, having been installed on at least 1 billion computers.

PowerPoint has almost become a generic term similar to Xerox or Coke or Google and is often used when one is referring to any computer supported presentation, thus demonstrating how ubiquitous the program has become.

The Use of Slides in PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint presentations are comprised of a number of individual pages, or "slides." The "slide" analogy is a reference to slide projectors. Unlike slide projectors however, which only projected static images, slides in PowerPoint are more dynamic. They can include text, graphics, sound, movies, and other objects, which can be arranged by the presenter. The PowerPoint presentation can be printed, displayed live on a computer, or navigated through at the command of the presenter. For larger audiences the computer display is often projected using projection equipment. The slides can also be used as the basis for a webcast.

After designing the individual slides for your presentation, you can control the presentation by pre-programming the transitions from one slide to another with the exact timing you want. Or, you can advance the slides manually as you speak about each.

Supporters and Critics

Supporters of the software say the PowerPoint can save people time by circumventing the need for other types of visual aids, such as hand-drawn or mechanically typeset slides, blackboards, whiteboards, or overhead projections.

Because the software is easy to use, it encourages people to give presentations that contain visual aids who otherwise may not have even given a presentation.

PowerPoint does have its critics, and the benefits of the software are continually debated. Some critics of PowerPoint argue that condensing complex issues into simplified bullet points is detrimental, and compromises the quality of information provided to the audience. This view finds that audience do not receive enough detailed information to make informed decisions about presentation topics. Additionally, there are also some critics who say that rather than providing too little information, PowerPoint allows users to put too much information into presentations. This can lead to "death by PowerPoint," which is a state of bordem or fatigue as a result of sitting through a presentation that contains too much information.

As is clear from the debate about its merits, PowerPoint can present many benefits and challenges to a user who develops a slideshow to accompany a speech or presentation.

The Elements of a Slide

PowerPoint is a multi-media platform that incorporates elements of written, audio, video, and graphical communication.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Break down the elements that comprise a PowerPoint slide

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key Points

- The most basic element of a PowerPoint presentation is the slide.
- Slides are comprised of a combination of textual and visual elements.
- Text may be organized as captions, paragraphs, or bulleted points.
- Add graphics such as shapes, pictures stored on your computer, pictures retrieved online, and charts or tables from other programs such as Excel.
- To add video clips, search for them from within the PowerPoint platform using Bing, Flickr, and Youtube, and import them directly into a slide.

Key Terms

- **slide**: A single page of a presentation, developed using a presentation program such as Microsoft PowerPoint. Collectively, a group of slides may be known as a slide deck or slide show.

Elements of a Slide

The basic element of the presentation is the slide. The new default aspect ratio of the slide is 16:9 for wide screens, but the previous aspect of 4:3 is still available. Some basic example elements used to compose a slide are as follows:

Titles and sub-titles: After first opening PowerPoint to start a new presentation using the Blank Presentation Template, the user can select a title and sub-title for the presentation, using one of a variety of fonts and colors.

Text: Users can enter the content as bullets on the slide along with a title for the slide. They can also select the font style, size, and content to support their message.

Shapes: PowerPoint can merge two shapes together to create a custom shape.

Pictures: Users can search for and insert their own photographs. Remember to re-size the photo to fit the slide.

Charts/Graphs: Create custom charts or move relevant charts from Excel spreadsheets.

Audio/Video Clips: Download videos, images, and audio files directly into a slide for a presentation without first downloading to the computer. Search for audio and video from within PowerPoint to find images using Bing or Flickr and videos on You Tube. After locating the desired supporting media, incorporate it into the slide. By default, the results show images that are licensed under Creative Common, so the images can be used in presentations without violating an owner's copyright, but users can also view all results.

Transitions: Transitions move the presentation gracefully from one slide to the next or build the side dynamically. There are many standard transitions available, or users can program their own special effects to animate the movement of the sides.
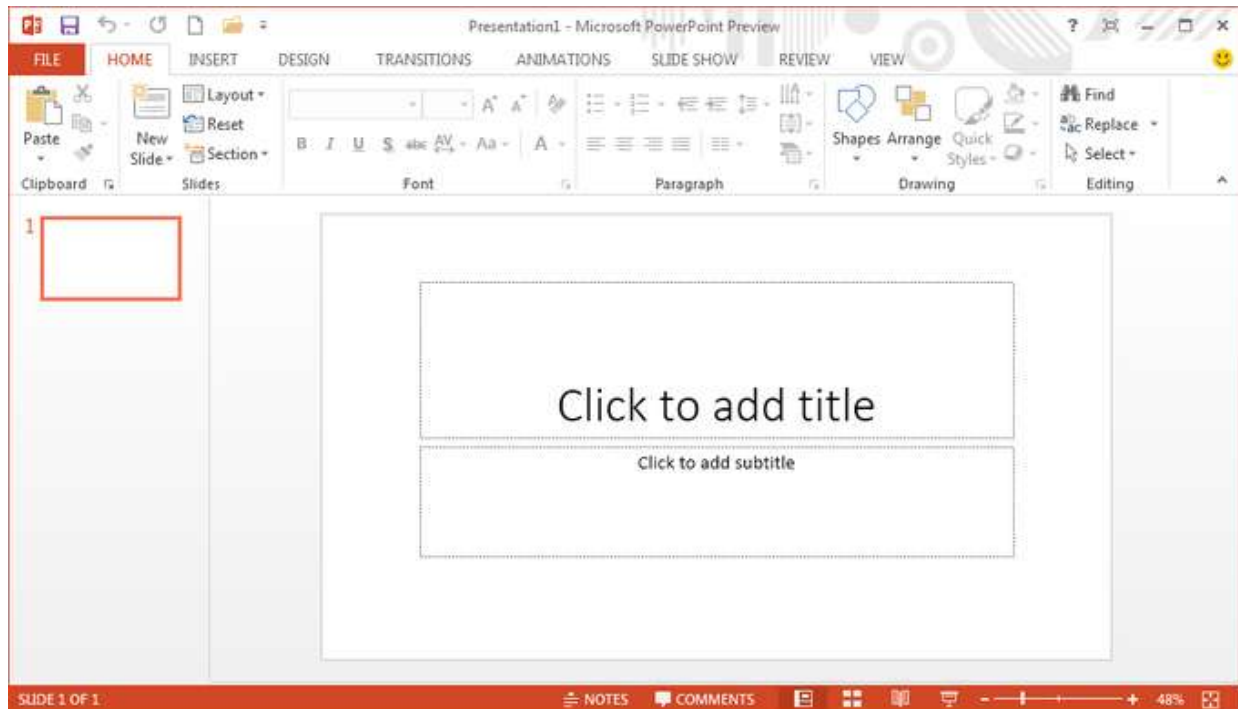
PowerPoint Slide: PowerPoint allows users to create slides and add animation, transitions, and video and audio clips.

Formatting Tips

Formatting choices, including layout, font selection, transitions and use of space and color, are important components of a presentation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Give examples of how to best format a PowerPoint presentation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key Points

- The blank template provides an initial format that allows a user to clearly distinguish main points from subpoints and supporting material.
- In the body of a slide, use keywords and phrases instead of sentences as listed bullet items to help the audience skim the slide and see relationships between main and sub-points.
- Insert and re-size visuals such as WordArt, shapes, charts, graphs, images, or pictures from your own computer or from the internet, into a slide to provide support for claims.

- Audio and video clips of a high quality not only clarify or provide support an idea, but also improve the quality of a presentation. Avoid videos with low resolution or poor quality audio clips, as they may affect audience perception.
- When using effects to transition from one slide to another, avoid slow moving or fancy effects such as crawl in, swivel and spiral. Don't overuse special effects and keep transition choices consistent.
- After the Presentation – you can format and export your slides to a Word Document for handouts or share by email, pdf, or internet.

Key Terms

- **Placeholder**: dotted or hatch-marked borders for entering text, charts, tables, or images on a slide.

PowerPoint Features

PowerPoint incorporates elements of written, oral, and visual communication. By focusing on decisions regarding blank space or color, contrast, and font, you can design a presentation that is not only aesthetically appealing, but also enhances and underscores key content and objectives. The following tips will help you and your audience get the most from your presentation.

Formatting the Slide

Templates: You may either select an existing template or design your own. The blank template allows you to modify colors, themes, and the style of different elements to best suit your needs.

Normal view – Blank Presentation template: The blank presentation template provides placeholders for title and sub-title on the first slide, and additional placeholders for the title on each blank slide. This allows you to distinguish your main points from sub-points. Follow basic design rules:

- Use blank space to group or separate items.
- Use visual balance to please the eye.
- Create contrast to make objects stand out. Contrast occurs when any two elements are different.

Colors: Choose colors so that text is clearly legible. In addition, consider how the colors will look in the space where the slideshow will be presented. For example:
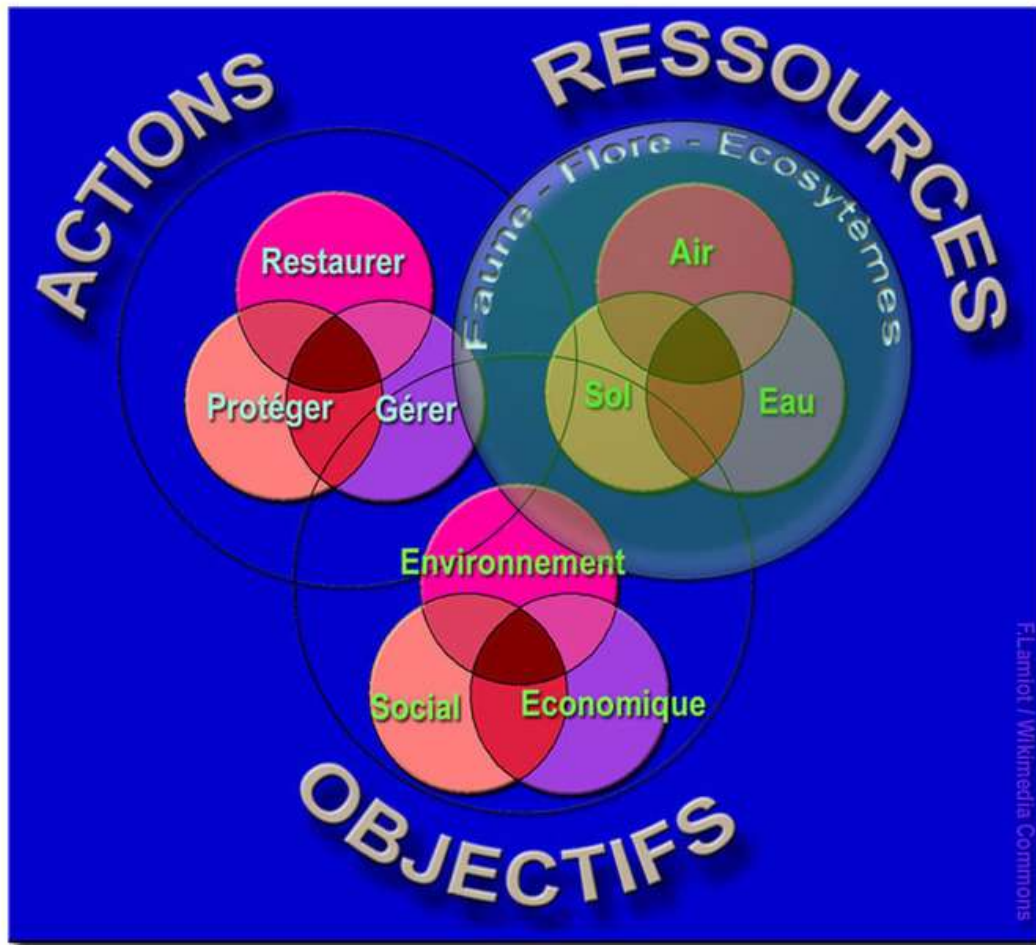
Picking Colors: In a presentation, there can be different colors and fonts, but all of the text must be easy to read for the audience.

- Strong light reduces contrast on dark background.
- In a well-lit room, use light background with dark text and visuals.
- In a dimly-lit room, use dark background with light text and visuals.
- Avoid vibrating colors. Bright complementary colors that are close to each other in intensity "vibrate" or reduce legibility.

Adding Content

Text: Use text properly.

- Use keywords and phrases instead of sentences.
- Be consistent in your use of capitalization.
- Put similar ideas in the same formatting by using the same parts of speech, same clauses, phrases, or all complete sentences.

Organization: On a slide, information can be organized using bullet points or lists.

- Use bullet points. Bullets help the audience skim the slide and see relationships between main and sub-points. Here is how to use bullets:

1. Select the "bulleted list" or "two-column list" slide (from the pre-designed slide formats).
2. Type a phrase then hit "return."
3. Type a second phrase, hit "return" then hit "tab" to indent.
4. OR use "promote" or "demote" arrows at top to create a bulleted hierarchy, in order to distinguish main claims from subclaims.

Creating a Contrast: A speaker can create contrast in a presentation changing the font, color, or size.

Fonts: Choose easy-to-read fonts.

- Select fonts that are good for projecting, not ones that are just good for printing.
- Pay attention to the legibility of the font you choose, such as the contrast between background and text, size of the font, and any type treatment such as shadowing that may reduce legibility.

Graphics: Insert needed visuals such as WordArt, shapes, or images. Make sure to re-size the images to best fit the slide. Here is how to re-size images:

1. Click on the visual you wish to resize.
2. Go to "format" and then "object" or "autoshape."
3. Select "size."
4. Change size and scale.
5. OR, simply click and drag the corners of the image.
6. You can also combine two different shapes by selecting one and then selecting and dragging another into it for a custom image.

Video and Audio: You can search and select video in different media formats. Just click to select the video/audio and insert where you want them to play on the slide. You can also record your own audio to add to a slide. When choosing video or audio to add to your presentation, make sure that it is of a high quality. This enhances the authority of the presenter as well as improves audience receptivity.

Moving Between Slides

Effects and transitions: PowerPoint comes with a preset collection of transitions. You can choose different types of transitions to move between slides. Newer versions of PowerPoint even have some 3D transitions. In addition, there are many free transition templates available from Microsoft and open sources.

Effects between slides: Effects should have a point and support the overall concept of the presentation. Avoid slow moving or fancy effects such as crawl in, swivel, and spiral. Don't overuse special effects as they can distract your audience from your main points. To avoid this from happening, keep effects and transitions consistent.

After the Presentation

Handouts: You can export your PowerPoint presentation to a Word Document. When you do this, there are different choices available for how slides and notes are positioned. In the latest version of PowerPoint you can go to File—-> Export and

then click on the {Create Handouts} button. Your presentation will then be exported to a Word document for formatting.

Share: You can also share your PowerPoint presentation by email, through web access. or publish your slides so that others can access them electronically rather than having to distribute handouts.

Delivery Tips

PowerPoint presentation software is your assistant and should help you by supporting your presentation, not taking over the show.

Illustrate how PowerPoint features can be used to communicate to audiences

Key Points

- Rehearse the show to see what it will really look like when it is presented to an audience; try controlling the movement from one slide to next or preprogramming the amount of time for each slide to appear on the screen.
- The content of the slides serves as a guide or outline for you and the audience, so you want to make sure you talk about each slide, not read the content to the audience who can read what is projected.
- Presenter View allows you to see your notes on your monitor while the audience only sees the slide. While you move from one slide to the next you can also zoom in on a particular part of the slide or use a pen or laser pointer to call attention to specific details.
- Relational presentation practitioners structure small message units that are rather self-contained and can be pulled together as the speaker interacts with the audience.

Key Terms

- **Relational**: A type of interactive presentation using presentation software that is structured to allow dynamic customization of the message while presenting.
- **linear**: Pertaining to or resembling a line; step-by-step in order.

PowerPoint Software Is Your Assistant

PowerPoint presentation software is your assistant and should help you, not take over the show. Nothing can substitute for a carefully prepared message, whether that message is a standard linear message or a relational interactive message. The delivery of the message is guided by the best practices that you have been using throughout your speeches; however, there are some special considerations when working with PowerPoint.

Practice and Rehearsal

After putting together a PowerPoint slide show, you will want to get a "reality check" by actually running the show to see what it will look like when you present it. You may control the movement from one slide to the next as you speak, or you may preprogram the amount of time that each slide appears on the screen and speak only for that amount of time.

If at all possible, rehearse with the same display equipment in a similar space. If you are speaking to a colocated audience, make sure that your projected slides are large enough for all members of the audience to see (usually about 1 inch high for each 10 feet that separates the audience from the projected slide). Additionally, if you are speaking to a remote audience, check your display so that you can see the presentation in the same way that the audience will see it on their screens.

Basic Delivery

One critical aspect of delivery is avoiding the temptation to read the content to the audience; the audience can read what is projected themselves. The content of the slides serves as a guide or outline for you and the audience. Stand to the left of the screen. For the English speaker who reads from left to right, the audience will see you as their eyes move across the screen in one continuous left to right eye movement. And remember to speak WITH the audience, not AT them.

Delivering a Speech: The speaker delivers the speech with assistance from PowerPoint slides in the background.

Using Views

Using PowerPoint Views allows you to follow a linear path or relational interactive paths for delivery.

Slide Show View

You can use the Slide Show view to deliver your presentation. The slide occupies the full screen and displays the way your presentation will look when you project it. You can use the Slide Show view to see the slide show on your computer screen one slide at a time. You can move to the next slide by clicking the mouse or using the up and down arrow keys.

Presenter View

You can see your notes on your monitor while the audience only sees the slide. You can also zoom in on a particular part of the slide or use a pen or laser pointer to call attention to details. In Presenter view, you can display the current slide on the left side, the next slide on the right, and the notes at the bottom right of the screen.

Interactive Relational Delivery

Relational presentation (also known as visually interactive presentation) uses standard presentation software such as PowerPoint in a way that allows for dynamic customization of messages while presenting.

Relational presentation practitioners structure their material using a combination of strategies to develop and access small message units. Each small message unit is rather self-contained and can be pulled together as the speaker interacts with the audience. While presenting, you interact with the audience rather than "talk at" them. You can use the Presenter view to quickly select and navigate to each message unit spontaneously within and between collections of interconnected shows. Some of these navigation devices use text links and others incorporate picture thumbnails or miniature screenshots as link sources.

Navigation in a Presentation

Whether you are delivering a traditional, linear message or an interactive, relational presentation, it is helpful to gain control of the basic movements for the slide show.

Interact with the Audience: It's important that the speaker maintains eye contact with the audience while projecting the slides.

Move to the last slide: Drag the scroll box to the bottom of the scroll bar or press [Ctrl] and [End]

Move to the first slide: Drag the scroll box to the top of the scroll bar or press [Ctrl] and [Home]

Move to the next slide: Click in the scroll bar below the scroll box or press [Page Down]

Move to the previous slide: Click in the scroll bar above the scroll box or press [Page Up]

Move to a specific slide: Drag the scroll box up or down until you displays the slide you want

Delivery Wrap-Up

So to wrap it up, you should prepare your lecture before firing up your software. Remember that the technology is your assistant and should help you, not take over the show. You may creatively deliver a linear presentation, but you can also use PowerPoint to craft a highly interactive relationship experience with the audience.