

An Overview of PowerPoint

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn more about a particular presentation software. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. An Overview of PowerPoint
2. The Use of Slides in PowerPoint Presentations
3. Supporters and Critics

1. An Overview of PowerPoint

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
- A slideshow system to display the content



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.



TERM TO KNOW

PowerPoint

An electronic slide presentation created and presented using the program (verb) to communicate to (an

2. 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.

3. 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 boredom 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.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **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 **critics 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 affect the audience's experience.

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TERMS TO KNOW

PowerPoint

An electronic slide presentation created and presented using the program (verb) to communicate to (an audience) by electronic slides.