

Before you commit yourself to using PowerPoint + audio

Keep in mind:

1. What advantage does PowerPoint with audio have over other media you might choose?

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy way to convert lecture to online delivery• Mostly familiar technology• Less time-consuming than creating interactive modules• Reusable• Good for weak readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not an engaging way to present material – more boring and difficult to follow than a lecture• Absolutely no interactivity• Large file sizes – not good for modem access• Significant effort required to make lessons accessible to students with disabilities or learning differences• For lecture review (i.e., students attend lecture and access the audio afterward to study), students prefer audio only, without PPT because it's more portable

2. Does PowerPoint with a voiceover accomplish your pedagogical goals? If you are just delivering content to students, is there an existing source of content (book, web site, paper, notes page) that you could use? Is there a way of combining information delivery with some form of interaction?
3. All verbal recordings should have a written transcript for the benefit of students with hearing difficulties or whose learning styles are not primarily auditory (many students learn better from reading something than listening to it, just as many students learn better hearing material than reading it). There is no reliable tool for creating such transcriptions automatically.
4. Students must be able to control the playback of the recording. Either record separate audio tracks for each individual slide and ask students to click to start the audio, or use a tool that creates a clickable “table of contents” so students can jump to clearly labeled parts of the presentation.
5. Files need to be compressed; even so, file sizes will be too big to download over a modem. (Uncompressed audio is nearly 1Mb per minute; compressed audio is 200-300Kb/minute.)

PowerPoint Audio Options

Option	Pros	Cons	Recommended?
Camtasia - produce as Real; 640x480; 56Kb modem; sharpest image; 280Kb/minute	Records entire screen; can include PPT, web sites, Excel, etc. all with voice narration. It can also create HTML files with a clickable “table of contents” When produced as Flash.	Costs \$300. Takes a little more time to learn. Many editing options – can be a big time-sink. Indexed files are large (1Mb/minute) and don’t work with Firefox.	Yes – perhaps buy one license per division.
Record and compress audio using Real Producer Basic, then attach to PPT	Free; compresses files	Moderately labor intensive. Inconvenient if there is no lecture to record. Editing, if desired, is time-consuming.	Yes
Audio only, compressed with Real Producer Basic	On-campus students prefer audio recordings of lectures to recordings with video/ppt components. Free compression software makes smaller files.	Inconvenient if there is no lecture to record. Editing, if desired, is time-consuming.	Yes.
Real Presenter Basic	Free. Creates clickable table of contents.	Complex; many steps – must record video separately, then compress, then attach to PPT. “Talking head” <i>video</i> is not necessary; many people dislike it. Caps presentations at 15 minutes.	Maybe - Only if you’re willing to put in a <i>lot</i> of extra work to save \$300.
Record directly in PPT using its “Record Audio” feature	Very easy to use; free	Produces large files – about 800Kb per minute of audio (at even at “telephone quality”, the smallest size)	No. Files are too large for most purposes.