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PowerPoint to Flash conversion techniques for Digital Signage applications

INTRODUCTION

PowerPoint is a powerful tool that most businesses rely on for their corporate communications. Using the more recent versions of PowerPoint, novice users can quickly create sophisticated content that is suitable for broadcasting on many digital signage systems.

So what do you do when your digital signage solution doesn't support PowerPoint natively?

This document outlines some options and provides resources for anyone needing to show their PPT and PPS files on a wide range of digital signage systems.

EXPORTING TO OTHER FORMATS

Most digital signage software will support bitmap images (like JPG) or Adobe Flash (SWF). You can export your presentation as a series of JPEG images and then reconstruct your presentation in your digital signage software.

Exporting your PowerPoint content into Flash requires some type of PPT to SWF converter. A Google search will offer many potential converters. Some are online services where you upload the PPT file and receive a SWF file in return. Others are applications that are integrated into PowerPoint as an Add-On. You invoke the add-on in PowerPoint to create SWF versions of your presentations.

It's important to remember that PowerPoint takes advantage of animation capabilities built into the Windows operating system to keep the file sizes small. Flash converters essentially recreate the PowerPoint presentation by taking snapshots of every slide, including all animations and transition effects. The quality of the resulting Flash file depends on many factors, including the complexity of the animations in the PowerPoint file and the capabilities of the PC on which you performed the conversion.

Some PPT to SWF converters will do a better job than others so it is always a good idea to download a trial version first and put the software through its paces before parting with your money. Most of the converters I have tested install as a PowerPoint add-on, meaning the application can be accessed from within PowerPoint itself. Some will add a new button or tab in PowerPoint where you will be able to access the Flash conversion utility.

If you don't want to convert your presentation material to Flash you can still save your PowerPoint content to individual JPEG images or HTML (depending on your PowerPoint version).

Here are links to a few popular PPT to SWF conversion programs:

<http://www.sameshow.com/powerpoint-to-flash.html>

<http://www.powerflashpoint.com/>

http://www.ispringsolutions.com/products/ispring_pro.html

OTHER OPTIONS:

- Use online services like [SlideShare](#) to create your presentation then point to the HTML page in your digital signage software.
- Download the [Open Office suite](#) and create your presentation in Impress (similar to PowerPoint) and save your file in SWF format.
- Capture and convert your PowerPoint presentation to video using [Snagit](#), [Camtasia](#), [Jing](#) or if you're handy you can also try [CamStudio](#) which is a freeware screen capture utility.
- Mac users can also use [Keynote](#) (up to version 2008) to save their presentations in SWF format. Keynote version 2009 will let you export to QuickTime format but not SWF.

IN CONCLUSION

There are so many ways to export and convert files from one version to another so you should always be able to get your message across any signage network regardless of its limits.

Be creative! All digital signage platforms support certain basic file types (like JPEG) so at the very least you should always be able to convert your PowerPoint into a series of static images and use them for your show. The trick is to convert your presentation to Flash or video when you need to retain slide transitions and animated effects.

Always make sure your PowerPoint presentation uses timings and that no slide will stop and wait for a mouse click to continue as this will cause problems when the file is shown on your signage network.

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