

Presentation Frustrations

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Sometime plain text is easier

Background Bits

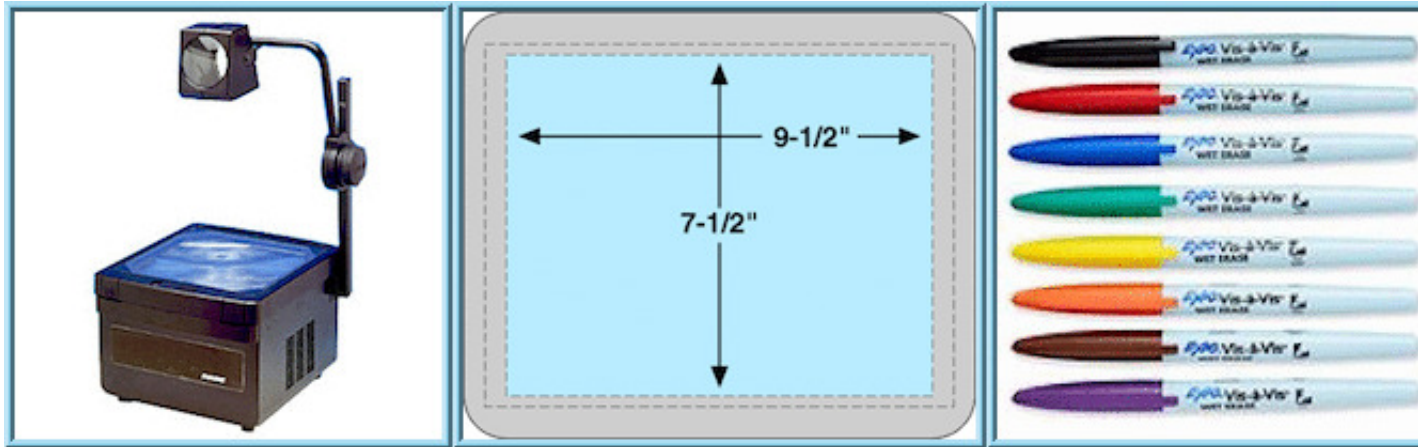
Traditional software

I'm sure by this point everyone here has used some form of office suite:

- MS Office
- Libre Office & OpenOffice
- Caligra Office (formerly KOffice)
- Google Docs
- WPS Office
- etc.

Office presentation software

These all include a presentation application of some sort. They all seem to use the metaphor of the old overhead, transparencies and markers.



I'm going to pick on MS Office.

Using MS Office

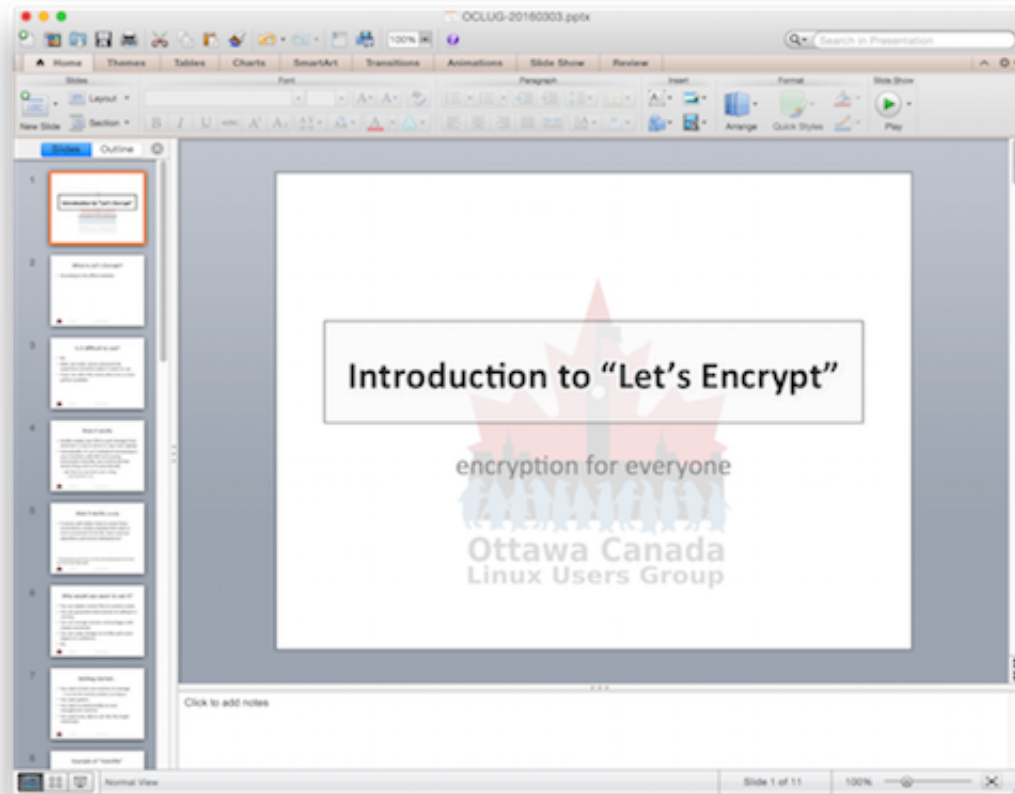
I happen to have the MS Office suite for my laptop as many of the places I contract to want me to use MS Office for compatibility reasons. As I had decided to bite the bullet and the closest tool was already in place, I keep on using it through sheer inertia.

Laziness persists and my monthly invoices are based on a spreadsheet, lots of autocalculations, references to the timesheet they provided (Excel spreadsheet), etc. It takes time and effort to switch to something else and it only comes to mind once a month.

I should design a proper invoice form, possibly a database and a timesheet form. Something more suited to my way of thinking and of considerably less trouble as time goes by – maybe something python based – in my spare time. Also a potential future topic.

Using Powerpoint

As a side effect of owning MS Office, I have Powerpoint – the great granddaddy of presentation software.



Powerpoint problems

The issues are legion. Unfortunately, many of the issues kind of exist in other presentation tools as well. Most stem from the mindset behind the tool.

The other side of the coin is that it does work for the most part, so it is still used – a lot.

The main issue I have with the software is the comment I made earlier, namely that we are effectively still drawing transparencies with markers to show on the overhead. The slide tools are about as unweildy as that and you basically have to think that way. The GUI tools get in the way of creating content.

This content vs. presentation issue has been solved in many places, however this one still exists – and I'm guilty of perpetuating the problem.

The specific issue of note!

In March my slides were prepared in MS Powerpoint and the system decided to barf right around the point in time that I was nearly done. I didn't save often enough and I had enough experience with the tool to know it had a reasonable recovery if something went wrong. It did.

The auto-save didn't do its thing properly and I lost the presentation. As a matter of fact, it was so bad the recovery file showed the prior presentation I had written for another group. Not a good place to be the night before a talk.

Something needs to be done.

What did I do?

Well, you are looking at it. I looked for alternatives and found more than I wanted to try.

Creating presentations in the traditional manner can be somewhat frustrating and not all that much fun unless you are the kind of person that wants to invest the time required to craft an eye-catching work of art.

Most people just want the basics and avoid the fancy features. The alternatives have a lot of features that you can use and they generate slides very well.

We have alternatives

For years, there have been alternatives to the office suites and they work quite well. A web search for *HTML5 presentations* will get you more than you could possibly want.

A review of some of the results will show that presentation software has evolved considerably from the ancient methodology and I am happy to have finally adopted a more modern approach.

Browser based presentations

As you can see, I'm using Google Chrome for this presentation. The basics you need to have for a pretty good presentation are:

- A text editor
- A browser that supports modern web design
- Javascript enabled

What am I using?

It is called `landslide` and is python based. It can be installed with `pip` and it uses markdown for the slides. It is a few years old, but it does a decent job and has been forked a few times.

I have not invested a lot of time into this, so I don't know how to do anything truly fancy. You can do things with themes, so a little CSS knowledge will help you out.

I just wanted something that:

- Was easy to use (text editor, markdown syntax, python to generate the HTML file)
- Worked without having to invest too much into the system (right out of the box)
- Took care of the layout for me

Other software

If you search, you will find a lot of them. There is a nice one called hovercraft that uses restructured text for the slides and bases everything on a HTML5 canvas that can be warped about and played with. I can show that after the talk.

It does require python3 to work so unless you are using that version, you might want to avoid it.

A short list of software

- Landslide (rst, md)
- Hovercraft (rst)
- CDK (asciidoc)
- Hieroglyph (rst)
- Beamer (html5)
- Slidy (html5)

Considerations

If you are looking for fancy effects, great printouts, etc., prepare to use a system that has more features than markdown provides. Hieroglyph is in that list because a friend of mine posted a comment about it last week. I have not spent much time in the ReStructured Text world, so I was not looking at that as a real option. This person is responsible for a lot of documentation and uses Sphinx to manage it. Hieroglyph is a Sphinx add-on and you can create your documentation and your slides in the same document. Pretty impressive.

Of course, you need to spend time to get familiar with the Sphinx ecosystem to utilize this effectively. I looked, played and decided I'll have to revisit it later, as it looked promising for other things and maintaining slides in docs I write for something appeals to me. I'll always know where the slide source is.

Capabilities

Paragraphs

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris ultricies tempus ultricies. Ut porta scelerisque viverra. Pellentesque aliquam metus scelerisque dui ultricies, auctor dictum erat aliquet. Integer vehicula nunc elit, vel iaculis lorem facilisis non.

Vivamus ante mauris, pellentesque et rhoncus ut, condimentum sed ipsum. Nullam eu molestie sapien. Curabitur imperdiet, ligula id blandit sagittis, libero quam consectetur felis, ac pharetra metus lectus vitae leo. Mauris lacinia fermentum augue.

Blockquotes

Vivamus ante mauris, pellentesque et rhoncus ut, condimentum sed ipsum.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris ultricies tempus ultricies. Ut porta scelerisque viverra. Pellentesque aliquam metus scelerisque dui ultricies, auctor dictum erat aliquet. Integer vehicula nunc elit, vel iaculis lorem facilisis non.

Subheadings and Emphasis

Italic

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Bold

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Lists

Unordered List

- Vivamus ante mauris
- Pellentesque et rhoncus ut
- Condimentum sed ipsum.

Ordered List

1. Nullam eu molestie sapien
2. Curabitur imperdiet
3. Ligula id blandit sagittis,

Title Slides

Code inclusion

Single Word

Hello World

Python

```
1 def multiply (x, y):  
2     return x * y
```

JavaScript

```
1 multiply: function (x, y) {  
2     return x * y;  
3 }
```

HTML

```
1 <!doctype html>  
2 <html>  
3     <head></head>  
4     <body></body>  
5 </html>
```

Images



View presenter notes

This slide has presenter notes. Press **p** to view them.

Other features

View other features in the help sidebar by pressing **h**

DEMO

You have been watching it :)

However I will show the source for this presentation and the creation process.

Resources

All I'm using is landslide

- Landslide: <https://github.com/adamzap/landslide>

and a theme I grabbed from sixfootup and hacked a bit

- Theme: https://github.com/sixfootup/sixfootup_landslide

Where can I get the presentation?

