

Making Voice Over PowerPoint Videos

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A colleague asked me how I made my “narrated slides” video recordings, also called “voice over PowerPoint” recordings. I wrote a long email answer but wondered whether the same information might help others, so here it is. The example my colleague referred to is [Kat’s Cat Checker - The Math of True and False](#).

Tools needed

- A computer with PowerPoint, a microphone, and a “slide clicker”
- [Camtasia](#) for editing the recording. (There’s a free trial and a reduced cost [education license](#).) Camtasia also has license-free music, special effects, and some other things that might be useful or fun. A possible alternative is [HitFilm](#). It’s free but has a somewhat *{ahem}* steep learning curve. Any video editor that will let you cut out parts will do.
- Subtitle Edit (free from [Nikse.dk](#), but use the “Donate” button to send them a few bucks.) It’s Windows only, but there’s an [online version](#).
- MS Word if you want to make a transcript
- A PDF writer like Adobe Acrobat if you want your transcript to be readable without Word.

Why This Way?

I’m convinced that the ability to cut something out of your video makes presenting more natural by eliminating one thing to worry about. Also, processing with Camtasia greatly reduces the video file size.

The “slide clicker” I use is the [Kensington wireless presenter](#). There are many others, and one may already be available through your department. The value for recording is that you need not reach for the keyboard, which may also make your presentation more natural. I used mine in the classroom, too, and in fact bought it for that purpose long before I started recording.

The transitions between slides seem abrupt when recording. I use a [fade transition](#) to mitigate that. The disadvantage is that it makes cutting something out harder if the cut needs to cross a transition. You must back up to the end of the previous slide, then click forward if you’re planning to make a cut.

For the same reason, I like to use “fade in” with a quick fade rather than “appear” when building up a slide with animations.



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Here's how my recordings are made

- Record with PowerPoint. In case of mistake or confusion, with the recording still running, back up one slide, immediately go forward, and start over. For some, including me, this is easier if you have two monitors and can use “Presenter view,” or maybe print your speaker notes. Using notes, not a script, will let you sound more natural.
- When done, save the PowerPoint, which will save the recording with timings so that you don't have to re-record if a subsequent step fails. Maybe use a different name so that you have a version without sound. (The version with sound will be *big*.)
- Recording sound in PowerPoint leaves a “speaker” icon, not desired in the video. HideSounds.bas, which is on the last page, will move the icon off the visible viewing area. Save the code on the last page to a text file called “HideSounds.bas” being careful not to let any of the lines wrap. Then open your PowerPoint, Alt-F11 to open VBA, *File > import file* HideSounds.bas, Alt-Q to exit the VBA editor, then Alt-F8 to get the “run” menu and run the macro. This was written by a friend, and I don't speak Visual Basic very well. If you need more information, there's a tutorial at the [BrightCarbon blog](#).
- Save the file as video. *File > Export > Create a Video*. It's not necessary to re-save the PowerPoint; you'd have to save it as a .pptm file because of the macro, and it's easy to reload and re-run the macro if necessary.
- [Load the PowerPoint file into Camtasia](#). If there were places where you had to start over, [cut them out](#). Don't worry about “uh” and “ahhh;” those are natural and will take *way* too much time. Depending on the quality of sound, there's a noise removal filter in Camtasia that you may want to apply.
- [Export](#) the edited file. Use the Legacy Local File (Windows) option. If you might want to re-edit, also save the Camtasia “project.”
- Upload your file to Kaltura MediaSpace or another video server source, preferably one that can generate machine captions, such as YouTube.
- Order machine captions if they're not generated automatically.
- Optional, maybe: When the machine captions are complete, download them. You'll get a .srt file. Rename it if necessary to match the saved video file. Put the caption file in the same directory as the video from Camtasia. Use SubtitleEdit to check, and if necessary, correct the captions. If you made changes, delete the caption file from Mediaspace or other video server and upload your edited file.
- Also optional, maybe: Use SubtitleEdit to save your captions as a text file. You can then load that file into Word, add paragraph breaks and other editing like punctuation as needed to produce a verbatim transcript suitable for either human readers or text-to-speech assistive devices.
- Save the Word file as PDF if it must be readable by those who do not have Word, such as for posting on a web page.

HideSounds.bas

Save this to a text file called HideSounds.bas being careful not to let any of the lines wrap.

```
Sub HideSounds()  
  Dim oSl As Slide  
  Dim oSh As Shape  
  For Each oSl In ActivePresentation.Slides  
    For Each oSh In oSl.Shapes  
      With oSh  
        If .Type = msoMedia Then  
          If .MediaType = ppMediaTypeSound Then  
            ' It's a sound; move it  
            .Left = ActivePresentation.PageSetup.SlideWidth + 2  
          End If  
        End If  
      End With  
    Next ' Shape  
  Next ' Slide  
End Sub
```