Design Your PowerPoint Slide Show For Different Project Display Formats

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Title:	*Design Your PowerPoint Slide Show For Different Project Display Formats*
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Abstract:	So, you've created your PowerPoint slide show and it looks great using a standard projector. New projector technologies are now adopting widescreen output to match high-definition movie clips and display screens. How in the world do you create a slide show that can work with both formats?

Version:	1.0 (2012-04-22)	Original
	1.1 (2012-06-25)	Minor corrections, change of title

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Supplemental files:	*Slide Show Projector Ratio Calculator.xlsx*

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Introduction

Need to change your PowerPoint slide show format from normal screen to widescreen? If all you use is text, then great! You don't even need to read this article. If, like most of us, you employ graphics and text frames that conform to the slide show page layout, nothing will look right. Try to find meaningful tips in the online help or in books on PowerPoint. Nothing!

So, let's get started…

Even though I'll use PowerPoint for Mac in this article, the same instructions can be applied on the Windows version and with Apple's Keynote. You may want to use the corresponding spreadsheet that will enable you to see what the impact when trying to scale your slide show components for a specific projector's settings.

Figure 1 shows the fundamental issue:
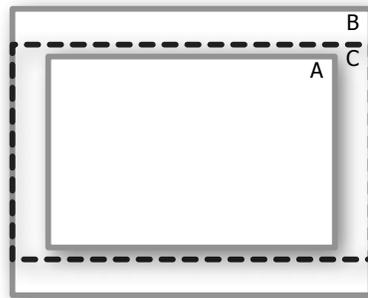
Figure 1   *A. XGA **B.** SXGA **C.** WXGA*

The width versus height ratios of these different projector dimensions is the most important thing to consider in your original slide show design. Default XGA projectors use 1024 (W) x 768 (H) pixels (a 1.333x1.000 W/H ratio) similar to that used in older CRT and LCD displays.

In fact, if you've displayed a standard slide show on your monitor, you've probably noticed that the slide show is displayed only in the middle of the screen and the sides are black and not used (Figure 2).
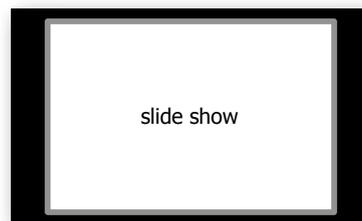
Figure 2   *Displaying a standard slide show on a LCD display monitor*

With the change towards wider displays (primarily due to the acceptance of widescreen movie formats and desktop/laptop form factors), two basic formats have evolved: XGA (1024x768) and WXGA (1280x800). XGA and SXGA are fundamentally compatible (more on that later).

Changing a standard PowerPoint (10.5 x 7.5 inches) slide show layout to a 16:10 (10 x 6.25 inches) keeps the text looking good, however in this example, both the background and slide graphics are skewed (Figure 3).
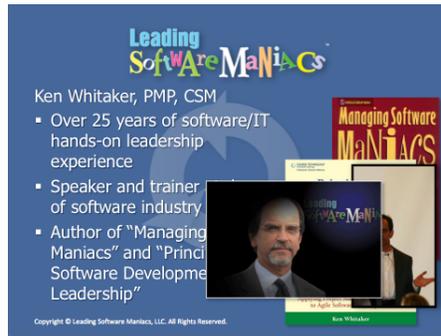
Standard (XGA/SXGA) format   Widescreen (WXGA) 16:10 format

Figure 3 *Comparing a standard PowerPoint using two different slide show formats*

How do you handle two wildly different display formats with one PowerPoint slide show layout? Converting the standard (XGA/SXGA) format to widescreen (WXGA) works fine for text, but the graphics looks squished and hard to view.

Creating the Standard Slide Show

The bottom line is that you can't create one PowerPoint master that will automatically reformat and scale correctly between both standard and widescreen layout formats. Let's examine the three main project video output formats (Table 1).

	Width (px)	Height (px)	dpi	Width (in)	Height (in)	Best PowerPoint Slide Page Setup
XGA	1024	768	96	10.5	8.0	*On-screen show 10:7.5*
SXGA	1280	1024	96	13.3	10.667	*On-screen show 10:7.5*
WXGA	1280	800	96	13.3	8.3	*On-screen show 16:10*

Table 1 *Projector video formats*

As screen and projectors are assumed to provide 96 dots per inch (dpi), the two most popular sizes (XGA and SXGA) can use the same on-screen show slide page setup. This is because the width/height ration is near the same for both—the projector will scale your slide show appropriately.

The fact that widescreen (WXGA) projectors are becoming very popular (especially to show movie clips) and there's no practical way to create one slide show that will project appropriately for both, is a dilemma. This leaves us with no choice:

You have to create two PowerPoint Masters!

Yessir! One for the standard display screen and one for widescreen settings.

Initially, I'd always create the slide show for the standard display first. Make sure the following components of your slide show are set up for your liking:

- Page setup (always make sure that your default page format is either 10:7.5 or 10:8).
- Slide master.
- Handout master. (I like adding a shadow behind slide thumbnails.)
- Notes master. (I like adding a shadow behind the slide thumbnail, too.)

Create your slide show, check it twice, and save it.

Creating Your Widescreen Slide Show

Converting Your Standard Slide Show

At least for the first time, you select File > Page Setup and then On-screen Show (16:10). This is shown in Figure 4.
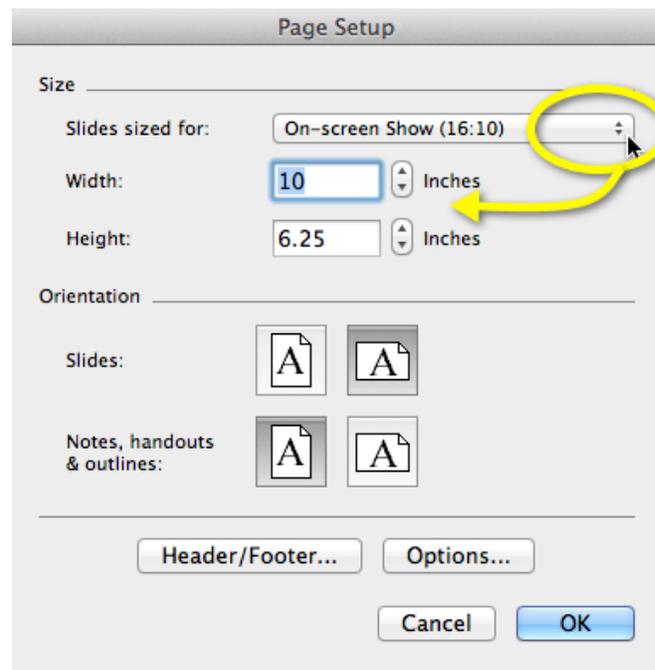
Figure 4   *Changing the slide show page size (PowerPoint for Mac shown)*

The Width and Height values are automatically changed. (I'd recommend not customizing those.) And, as you'd expect, the text converts pretty well although you may have to adjust the text frame or even the text to fit properly in the adjusted text frame. The standard text frame, in my case, was 9 x 4.95 inches. The widescreen (16:10) text frame was automatically changed to 9 x 4.13 inches. (The difference in the height is exactly the difference of the aspect ratio between standard and XGA slide formats.)
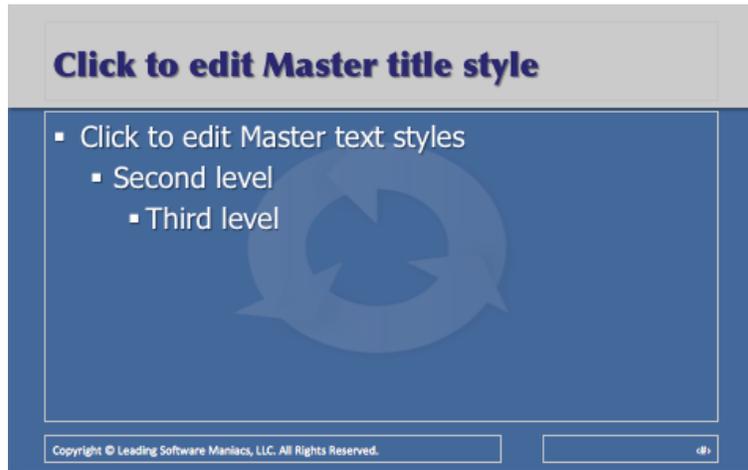
Modifying the Text Frame and Background

You have three areas to be concerned about:

- Background graphic
- Overlapping text frames

Both of these slide show elements are controlled on the master layout. On the Mac, select View > Master > Slide Master. The Master View shows a series of master slides with corresponding layouts that are derived from the resized master. In my case, I created a header rectangle behind the slide's title using PowerPoint's drawing tools. The background blue with three arrows in a circle was creating

using Adobe Illustrator and exported as a graphic. This graphic was resized by PowerPoint and, as you can see, doesn't look quite right (Figure 5).


Figure 5   *The WXGA background master*

All of the text frames and PowerPoint drawn objects look fine. So, we need to stretch it back and possibly relocate it on the master. Since layouts are usually derived from the master, resizing the graphic in the master should automatically change its layouts. Right-click the background graphic and select Format Picture. The background image's height is 83% of what it needs to be, so adjust to 100% and uncheck Lock aspect ratio then click OK (figure 6).
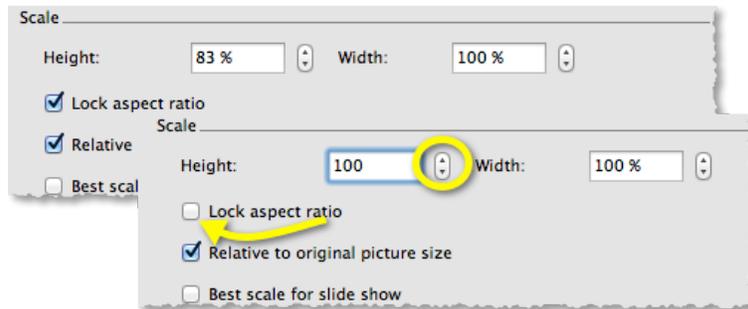
Figure 6   *Changing the height of the background graphic*

Figure 7 shows the result: an elongated background graphic that now looks good! The bottom part (shown with a highlighted box around it) is simply ignored. In my case, I didn't need to adjust the position of the graphic on the slide.
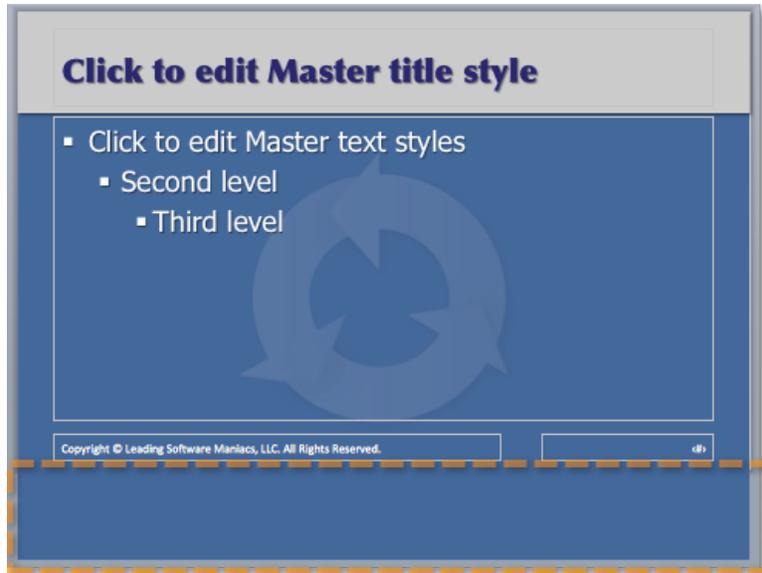
Figure 7   The background graphic is properly scaled for the WXGA slide page

Don't worry. This "overhang" at the bottom, may show up on your template, but PowerPoint will automatically crop the slide to the right page setup size for presentations and printouts.

Tip: If your slide show "somehow" has several masters (each with multiple layouts), you might find yourself resizing every master and layout for every slide show you create. Once you have defined a WXGA slide template, on your new WXGA slide show delete the unused master slides and its templates.

From your existing WXGA template, right-click on the master and select Copy (shown to the right). On your new WXGA slide show, right-click and Paste. Voilà! The template's master and all of its layouts are now in your new slide show's master. Do the same for the other unused master layouts.

This approach sure saves a lot of time, especially if you have lots of graphics on your master layouts.

If you have other background graphics on your master page or layouts, do the same for them. Save the widescreen (WXGA) template and make sure you use a different file name:

> *Intro.potx*
> *Intro (WXGA).potx*

Copying the Standard Slide Show Using the Widescreen Template

Using your standard slide show, drag the standard slide show's slides to the (WXGA) template. PowerPoint automatically adjusts the contents to the new template's layout. Although your text should be okay and require simple adjustments, that isn't the same as graphics imported (or linked).

Read on…

Modifying the Objects on Your Slide Show

In Figure 1 there were several graphics that didn't scale well on the widescreen (WXGA) main slide show and their locations on the slide may need some adjustment. You've got three choices to address the skewing issue (the height didn't scale correctly when you changed the slide show page size):

1. Leave the graphic alone, it doesn't look *that* bad. Perhaps your audience should squint?

2. Manually adjust the graphic by dragging the object's handles until it looks better. That wouldn't be consistent, now would it?

3. Let PowerPoint assist you in adjusting the graphic.

I'm sure you'll agree that the third option is the one we want to use. When you've resized your slide show page size, PowerPoint remembers the percentage of the height (Figure 8). We've shown this same thing before with a background graphics on masters (see "Modifying the Text Frame and Background").
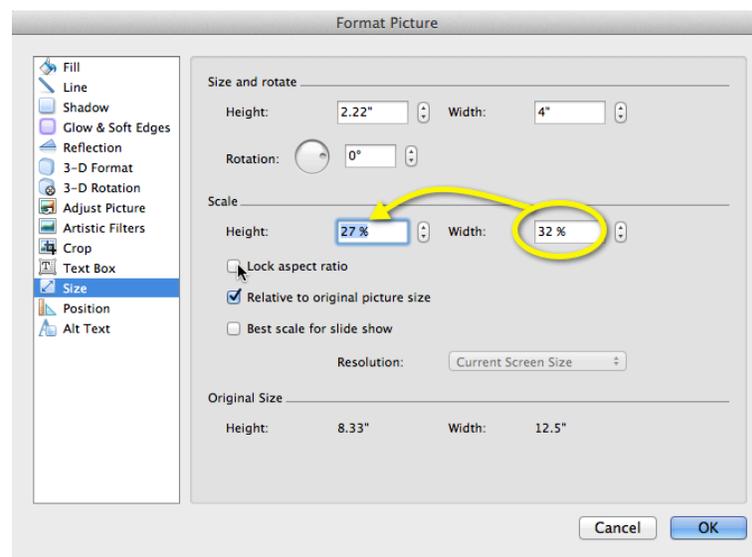
Figure 8 *Format Picture of a resized graphics*

PowerPoint shows that the height was adjusted differently than the width (32%), simply uncheck Lock aspect ratio to enter the Width value in the Height field, and then click OK. When the slide show page size was changed, PowerPoint recognized that the slide show height was smaller and adjusted the graphics automatically. As a result, all you need to do is return to the original height/width proportions.

Note: Depending on the graphic, you may see different height/width values. In my own example, some graphics had a 27%/32% height/width while others had value pairs like 83%/100%. Regardless, you'll want to adjust the Height field to the Width value.

Modifying the Handouts and Notes

Nothing much to say here, except you do need to verify that the handout and notes master pages are scaled correctly and are placed on the page as you would expect (specifically the slide thumbnails).

A Final Word

Save the widescreen (WXGA) PowerPoint slide show and make sure you use a different file name from the standard slide show. This is how I name them:

Intro.pptx
Intro (WXGA).pptx

The same is true if you're saving two versions for PowerPoint template (*.potx*) files.

The *Slide Show Projector Ratio Calculator.xlsx* spreadsheet can be used for you to experiment with different PowerPoint slide show page set ups and with different projector slide show formats. If you are wondering what widescreen projector I recommend, the choice is easy. The new Casio slim green projectors have become my favorite (http://www.casioprojector.com/products/Slim_Projectors). Not only can these low-profile units project in all three modes discussed in this article (XGA, SXGA, and WXGA), but their bulb technology (a major costly item to replace) are designed to last up to 20,000 hours of use. Shoot, that's a lifetime. Now, that's amazing!

You'll find the instructions for the Windows version of PowerPoint to be very similar.

Bio

Ken Whitaker of Leading Software Maniacs® (LSM) has more than twenty-five years of software development executive leadership and training experience in a variety of technology roles and industries. He has led commercial software teams at Software Publishing (remember Harvard Graphics?), Data General, embedded systems software companies, and enterprise software suppliers. Ken is an active PMI® member, Project Management Professional (PMP)® certified, and a Certified ScrumMaster (CSM). Sources for LSM's material come from case studies, personal leadership experience, the PMI *Project Management Book of Knowledge* (*PMBOK® Guide*), and Ken's leadership books: *Managing Software Maniacs*, *Principles of Software Development Leadership*, and *I'm Not God, I'm Just a Project Manager*. He's also the creator of PM Chalkboard, www.pmchalkboard.com, the fastest way to learn basic project management principles with entertaining tutorial videos.

Ken also has written a number of articles and books on topics that should help the creative professional including his popular *InDesign to Kindle* eBook.

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