

An OPCUG Product Review



Slidewise

by Chris Taylor

(with update on [page 6](#))

I use Microsoft PowerPoint. A lot. I prepare presentations for OPCUG's main meetings and Q&A, the Ottawa Public Library, the Orleans Photo Club, the National Capital Freenet, and more. I use PowerPoint most days.

I like the extensive capabilities and flexibility of PowerPoint. But that can be a double-edged sword. It is easy to end up with a mess, especially if multiple, inexperienced people are editing presentation files. You can easily end up with slide formatting deviating from the slide master, multiple conflicting slide masters, random colour and font selections, and more. All can lead to a drastically inconsistent look and feel to your slides. You can also have PowerPoint files bloated with oversized graphics and unnecessary embedded fonts.

Frequently, I have been given PowerPoint files created by others that were so inconsistent and difficult to edit that I resorted to creating a new file and manually transferring all the content from the old file.

Biggest issue by far—fonts

I find inconsistent fonts are the most egregious problems with PowerPoint. It is far too easy to copy text from multiple sources and carry the font formatting into your slides, leading to a dog's breakfast such as;

- Aggregate
- Aggregate
- Aggregate

The first line is Calibri and the second is Arial. Both are sans-serif fonts but the shape of the letter g is dramatically different and even though they are both the same point size, they are different heights and widths. The third line is Century—a serif font. All these differences lead to a very jarring effect when used together.

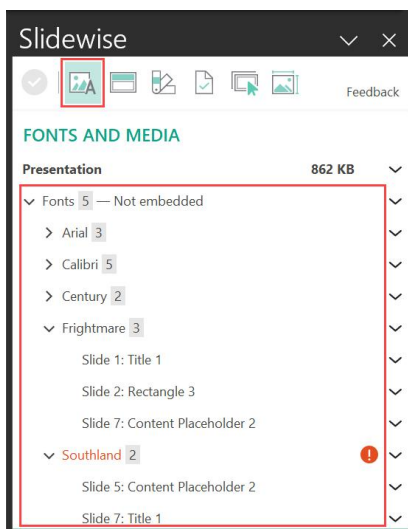
If you have slides developed on different computers, even bigger problems can occur when Windows silently substitutes fonts. Consider one person designing a poster and passing it on to someone else who will print and post the final copy throughout your neighbourhood.



The title used a font called *Frightmare*. The file was then opened on a computer that didn't have *Frightmare* installed. Windows substituted a different font, resulting in a *completely* different effect! Unfortunately, even though PowerPoint is over 30 years old, Microsoft has never seen fit to add tools to PowerPoint that would allow users to find these problems, let alone fix them or—better yet—prevent them in the first place.

Slidewise from Neuxpower Solutions can ferret out these PowerPoint problems and more. It can fix inconsistencies with fonts, consolidate and organize Masters, Layouts and Slides, find non-theme colours, check hidden content, and find images bloating the file or reducing quality.

Slidewise appears on the Home tab of the PowerPoint ribbon. Clicking it brings up the Slidewise panel.

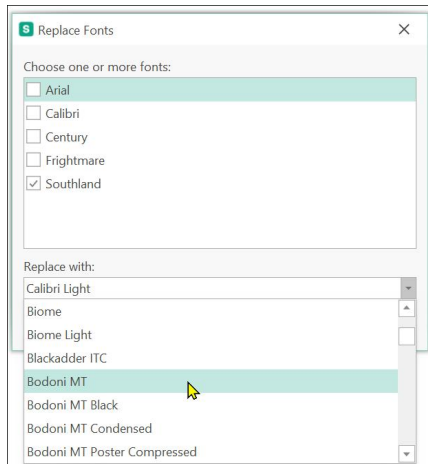


The *Fonts* section of the *Fonts and Media* tab will show you all the fonts that are part of your presentation file. Double-click any font to list the slides where the font has been used. In the example above, *Frightmare* has been used in the title on slide 1, a rectangle on slide 3 and the content placeholder on slide 7. *Southland* is listed in orange with a warning symbol, indicating the font does not exist on this computer and a different font has been substituted in the content placeholder on slide 5 and the title of slide 7.

You can manually clean up fonts by going to each instance and changing the fonts used. Or you can use Slidewise to replace fonts on all slides by right-clicking and choosing *Replace Fonts...*



Choose one or more fonts to replace and select the font to be used.



Select a placeholder in PowerPoint and Slidewise will list all the fonts used in it. Slidewise can't show you the actual characters using each font, which would be a nifty addition to the program. But it is a pretty simple operation to select the placeholder and apply a font to all text in the placeholder.

PowerPoint presentation files can be bloated by embedded fonts. Slidewise finds them and allows you to unembed them. On the other hand, if you are passing on a PowerPoint file and are using fonts that are not standard Windows fonts, you can use Slidewise to embed the fonts so they will display properly on other computers.

Slidewise has tabs for other capabilities that can fix inconsistencies in your presentations.

Slide Masters lists all the slide masters and their included layouts. You can re-assign slides from one layout to another. If you have a real mess where multiple masters and layouts have been used, this function can help clean things up.

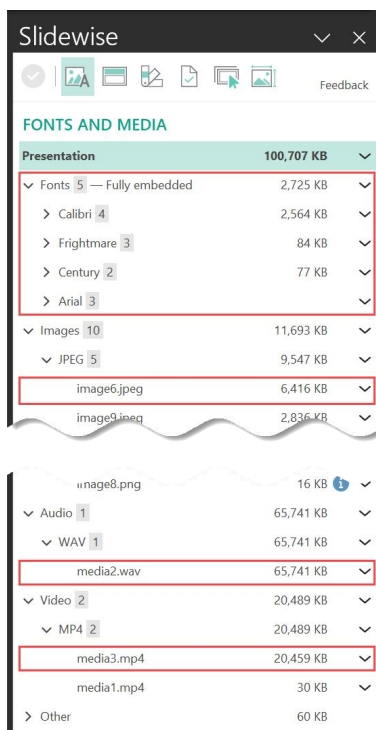
Colors shows where non-theme colours have been used in your presentation. I often use colours that are not part of the template theme but if I get a file from someone else where they used several different shades of a colour, I would probably look to standardize.

File Review lists hidden slides, comments, and notes. You can have Slidewise delete all comments or speaker notes from the slides, so you don't share information you did not intend to.

Slide Selection has two views, listing all slides by either slide master/layout, or transition. Each view allows you to see at a glance how they are used throughout the presentation. I find the transition list particularly useful. I can see when there are too many different transitions, or when a wayward *Fade Through Black* was chosen on one slide when all others were set to *Fade Smoothly*.

Image Audit lists all images in the presentation and flags those that have been significantly scaled up (resulting in poor quality) or down (candidates for compression to save space), or have been unevenly scaled (affecting the aspect ratio). *Slidewise* gives real insight into the images in your presentation, showing the sizes in KB, the actual & displayed sizes in pixels, the scale factors and the bits per pixel. Given how much bloat in PowerPoint files can be attributed to images, this is really useful.

If you have concerns about bloated presentation files, the *Fonts and Media* tab can help tease out issues. The example below is a 100MB PowerPoint file. Embedded fonts take up 3 MB. Of course, this may be required if the file is to be passed on to others since one of the fonts—*Frightmare*—is not a standard Windows font. There are 12MB of images with one alone being 6.5 MB. This might be worth investigating. There is a 66MB audio file and a 20MB video file. In some cases, it makes sense to link to external content rather than embedding it.



Slidewise has useful export capabilities. You can export a list of the size and number of all embedded fonts, images, audio, and video files. You can generate summary lists of all comments and speaker notes. You can also have Slidewise export all embedded images, video, and audio.

A caution and a bug

While reassigning slides from one slide master to another (admittedly not something you are likely to do frequently), Slidewise made the change and automatically saved the file without notice. If you make such a change and want to reverse it, hit Ctrl-Z or the Undo icon on PowerPoint's Quick Access Toolbar.

When consolidating masters, I got an error: *Sorry, an error occurred while Slidewise was trying to perform the action you requested.* I got around the problem by having Slidewise reassign all slides using the second

master to the main master and then deleting the second master. Neuxpower tells me this is a PowerPoint API issue affecting some users, rather than a Slidewise bug. The next version of Slidewise will work around the issue.

Getting to know Slidewise

Neuxpower has created a series of 17 short videos on using Slidewise that is well worth the time for anyone new to the program: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQaZjfiWUG5QqjMjRfZaaQ3cCizwMWT9a>

Is Slidewise worth the price?

Slidewise is not inexpensive—the price is CA\$106 per year. A 30-day free trial version is available.

At the start of this review, I mentioned that I sometimes have to deal with PowerPoint files so messed up that I find it easier to begin a new file and manually transfer content to it. Slidewise would have made it far easier to just correct the original file. In some cases, it would have saved me hours of laborious, manual, error-prone efforts. Slidewise also helps ensure my own PowerPoint presentation files are consistent in their look and feel. Having used Slidewise for a few weeks, I definitely do not want to work in PowerPoint without it.

Members of the OPCUG have been offered a 25% discount. Contact me at Chris.Taylor@opcug.ca for details.

Bottom line:

Slidewise PowerPoint add-in

<https://neuxpower.com/slidewise-powerpoint-add-in>

Price: CA\$106 per year

System requirements:

Windows 8.1 or greater

32-bit or 64-bit Office 2016 or greater or installed (not web) Office/Microsoft 365

XML versions of PowerPoint data files (e.g. pptx and potx)

*(editor's note: see **Slidewise: a review update** below)*

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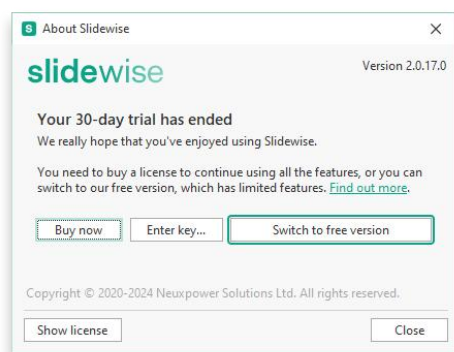
Slidewise: a review update

by Chris Taylor

I wrote a review of Neuxpower's Slidewise in January (above). As a heavy PowerPoint user, I find this software invaluable in fixing issues, especially those around fonts and font substitutions.

As mentioned, I think Slidewise is pretty pricy for casual PowerPoint users. In my discussions with Neuxpower, I suggested they consider releasing a [freemium](#) version of Slidewise. The freemium model benefits both the user—who gets basic features for free, and the vendor—if a user decides to upgrade to the full version of the program.

Neuxpower has released version 2.1 of Slidewise with lots of nice additions. As well they have embraced the freemium model. When you install Slidewise, you get the full version for 30 days, after which you get the option to pay for the full version or switch to the free version.



The free version helps with the biggest issues I have working in PowerPoint: fonts. It will let you find what fonts are used in the presentation and where they are used. It also details whether fonts are embedded or substituted. There are some additional features in the free version of Slidewise. For a complete list, see <https://support.neuxpower.com/hc/en-us/articles/21741589503377-What-can-I-do-with-Slidewise-Free>. I encourage all PowerPoint users to install Slidewise. I think most PowerPoint users can find great benefits to using the free version, even if they never upgrade to the full version.

Bottom line:

Slidewise PowerPoint add-in

<https://neuxpower.com/slidewise-powerpoint-add-in>

Price: freemium, full version CA\$106 per year

System requirements:

Windows 8.1 or greater

32-bit or 64-bit Office 2016 or greater or installed (not web) Office/Microsoft 365

XML versions of PowerPoint data files (e.g. pptx and potx)