Using PowerPoint for screen based packages

These notes assume that you have used MS PowerPoint to make a simple 'presentation' and have some familiarity with the way the package works. If you don't have much experience with PowerPoint, then you should work through a tutorial before working through this handout. You can also take advantage of the ILT workshops that we will be running over the year.

Objectives

Having worked through this handout, you will have;
- Set up a **project folder** for your package
- Disabled the **Advance Slide** setting within PowerPoint
- Used a simple **three column layout** with text boxes to present text information on screen, with font sizes suitable for a student reading from the screen
- Used buttons with '**action settings**' to jump to other slides
- Implemented a 'glossary' slide using a '**return to previously viewed slide**' action
- Added a **sound file** to a slide
- Added a link to an **external file** to a slide
- Added a link to an **external Web** site to a slide
- **Exported** your package using the Package to CD
- Saved your PowerPoint package as a **Web page in one file** with the Web options changed to remove the navigation frame from the exported package

Setting up

You need to make a folder in My Documents or similar location to hold your Power Point file and other files. Within this folder, you need to make sub-folders called 'sound' and 'documents'. It is really important that you place any external files used in your package in these folders before linking them to the PowerPoint presentation (more on this later).

Round tripping: Last year we had a lot of problems caused by work being produced in PowerPoint 2000 on College machines and then loaded and edited on PowerPoint XP or 2003 on home machines. I hope that with the upgrade of the College systems to Office 2003 that this headache can be avoided. Please let me know if you have any problems.

Backups: You must keep copies of all your work in *at least* two locations. The USB drives that the LRC sell should be big enough to hold all your files. If you then keep your project files on a home computer or on your staff computer as well, then you will stand less chance of loosing files. Remember to copy altered files to the USB stick at the end of each session.

Filenames: When I am working on a PowerPoint with a lot of screens, I tend to save the file under a slightly different name after each session. In this way, if I do encounter a problem with 'round tripping' or if I manage to accidentally delete a large number of slides, I can go back to the previous version.

I use file names like `Package1.ppt`, `Package2.ppt` and so on. Just select **File | Save As**… and add the number to the end of the filename. Some people like to use dates in the file names instead of numbers.

Disabling Advance Slide

You don't want students to be able to page through your screens by clicking the space bar or mouse. To disable this, you just

- **Right click** over the first slide
- Select **Slide Transition** from the context menu that appears
- The **Slide Transition** panel will appear
- Look for the **Advance Slide** section of the panel
- **Untick** the mouse option
- The Automatically Advance option should be unticked already
- Click the **Apply to All Slides** button
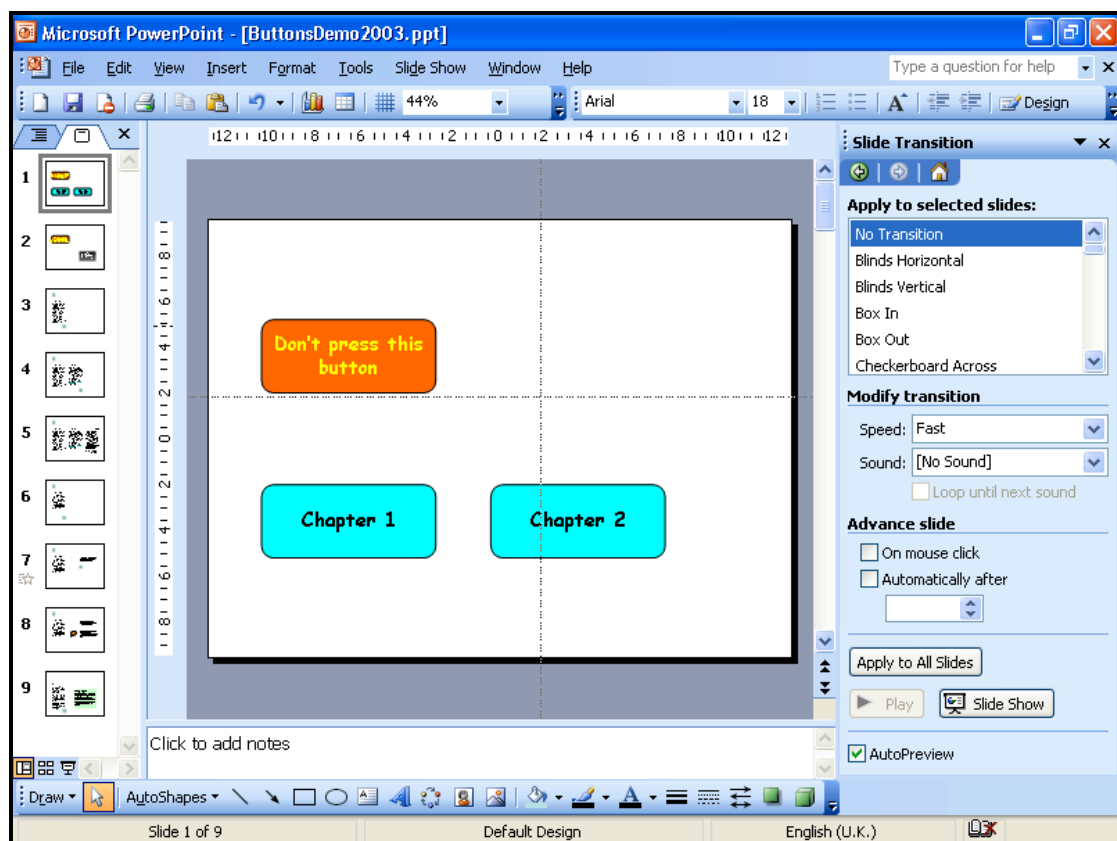
Once this setting has been changed, the only way students can navigate their way through your package is by providing them with 'navigation buttons'. Navigation buttons are simply drawing objects or images which have actions

attached to them. We shall be using a limited range of actions -more on that later. Let's get some slides into this demo package…
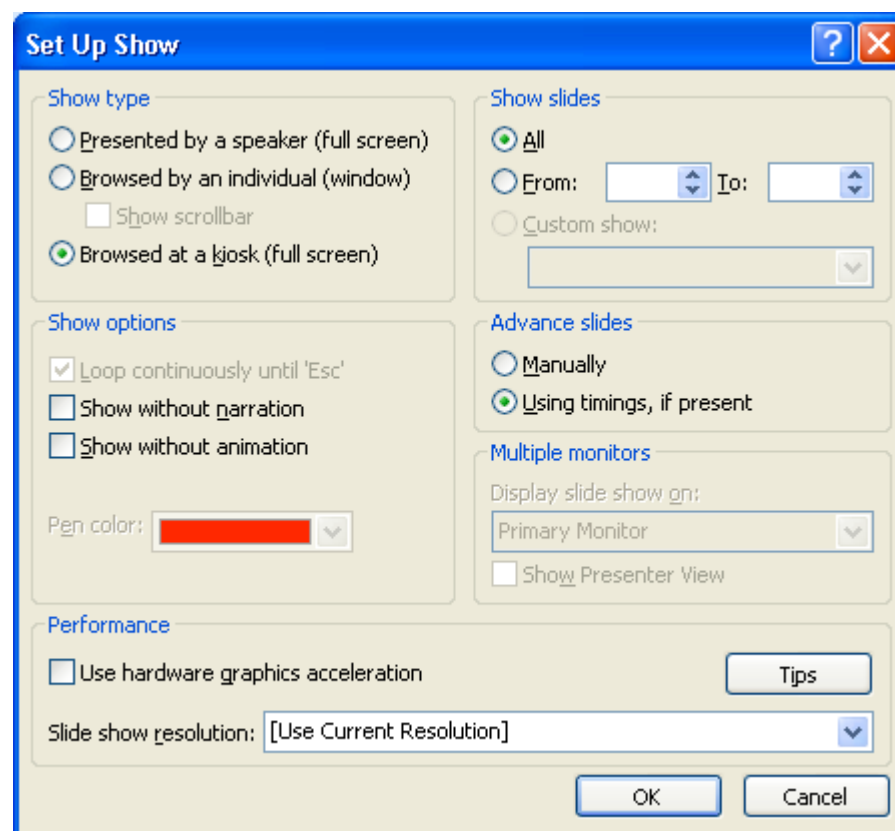
Text on slides

Because your package will be viewed by students sitting at the screen, you can use much **smaller text** than is usual in PowerPoint. For most student groups, I'd suggest that you use a text size of 14pt. If you have students who may have eyesight impairment, then 16 or 18pt size might be better. Avoid using the 24pt size.

As we are using smaller text, it is a good idea to put that text in narrow columns. Good practice generally suggests that text should be in columns *about* one and a half alphabets wide (i.e. roughly 40 characters wide). Having narrow columns like this helps to reduce the chance that the student's eyes won't fix the wrong line as they come to the end of the previous line of text.

The first step is to use the **Slide Setup** dialog box to mark your package as being **Browsed at a Kiosk**. Just
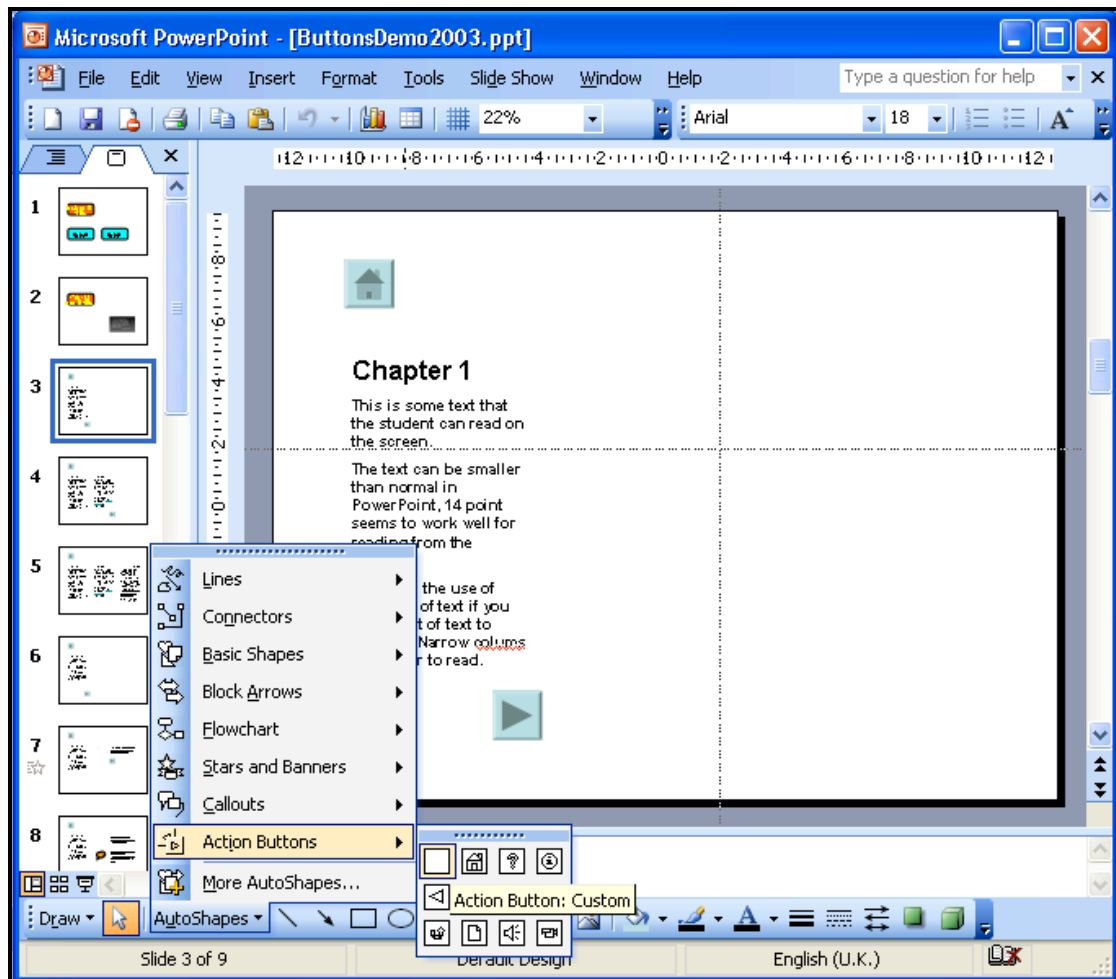
- Click **Slide Show | Set Up Show**
- **Tick** the **Browsed at a Kiosk** option in the Show Type region
- Click **OK** to make the changes permanent

Next, we pop some text boxes on a slide and add some text.

Adding textboxes and Autoshapes

PowerPoint has a series of standardised Slide Layouts available. None of these layouts are really suitable for screen based learning packages as the fonts are too large and the margins of the containers are set too wide.

My solution is to use the **text box** object which is accessed using the drawing toolbar, along with images and AutoShapes. I do this because I like some variety in the slide layout from slide to slide.

Another possibility that I have not explored is to customise the master slide for a slide layout. The advantage of this is that you have a standard grid throughout the package.

You need to check that the **Drawing** Toolbar is displayed at the bottom of the screen. Just

- **Select Views | Toolbars | Drawing**
- You should see the **Drawing** toolbar at the bottom of the screen
- See the screen image below for the **Drawing** tools

- We will using the **AutoShapes** menu and the Text Box control in the activity below

To set up a slide with three column of text, we just size a text box, add some text, and copy and paste the text box twice. Just…

- Click on the **Text Box** control
- Drag a **long thin column** on the left side of the slide
- Add some text
- Select the text and click on the **Font Size** and set the size at 14pt or whatever suits the majority of your students
- Click on the *edge* of the text box – this is a bit tricky and you might want a demonstration from the facilitator
- **Right click** and select **Copy**
- Click *somewhere* on the slide that is outside the Text Box
- **Right click** and select paste to add another Text Box to the slide
- Click in the second text box and alter the text as you need to
- Repeat the process for the third text box

We want the columns to be added after the student has clicked on the arrow icon for each column. To do this, you need to

- Copy the slide with three columns twice so there are three copies
- Delete two columns from the first copy
- Delete the middle column from the second copy

Once you have done that, you should add the button for next column to the first slide.

- The **Action Buttons** are on a sub-menu on the AutoShapes menu
- **Click** on the appropriate button (I used a forward arrow)
- Hold the shift button down and **drag a square** in the slide (holding the shift button down guarantees that the button will be a square shape)
- Drag the button to an appropriate place on the screen

You can use the guide lines to make the position of your buttons (and other shapes) consistent from slide to slide. The guides can be activated by clicking on **View | Grid and Guides** and ticking the **display drawing guides on screen** box. Next, we can add the action to the button…
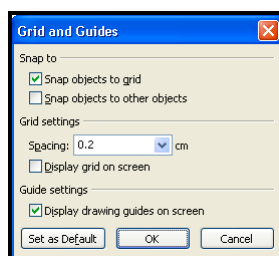
Action Settings

Action settings are the key to building our non-linear navigation system for the learning package.

To add an action to a button (or other object) on a slide, you
- **Right click** over the object while the 'handles' are active on the object
- Select **Action Settings** from the context menu. The resulting dialog box looks like this…
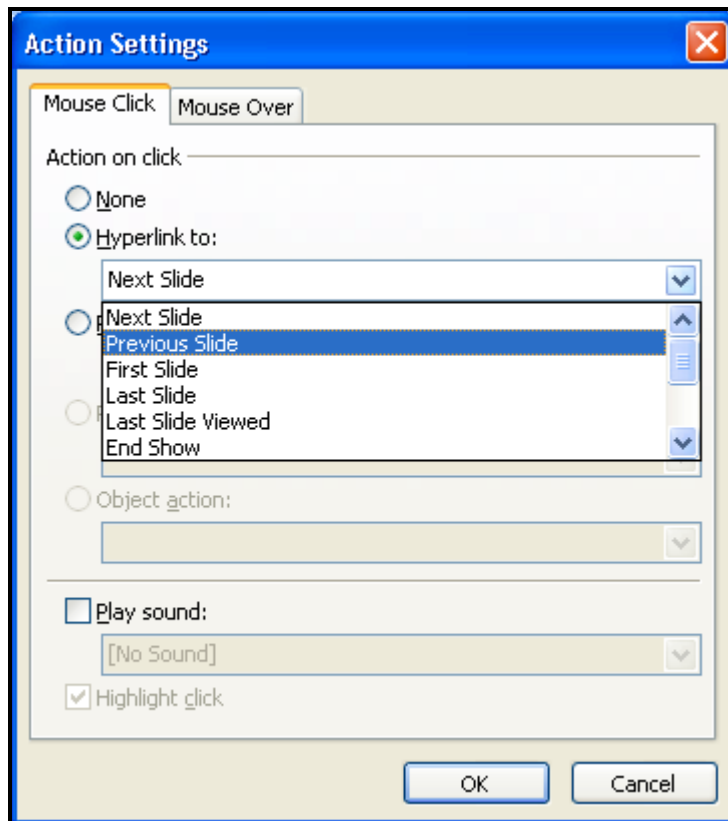
- Select **Next Slide** in this case
- Click **OK** to confirm your choice

We will use a range of possible actions including…

Next slide	When the button is clicked, the next slide in the stack is displayed on the screen
Previous slide	When the button is clicked, the slide before the current slide in the stack is displayed on the screen
First slide	Always points to the first slide -good for the home button
Last slide viewed..	Excellent for linking back from information or glossary slides as many slides can link to the glossary item
Slide…	Jumps to a slide with a given number. This is how you jump to a glossary or information slide

Next, previous, first

Once you have broken your content down into a series of slides, you will need to provide the student with ways of moving through the slides, as in the diagram below.
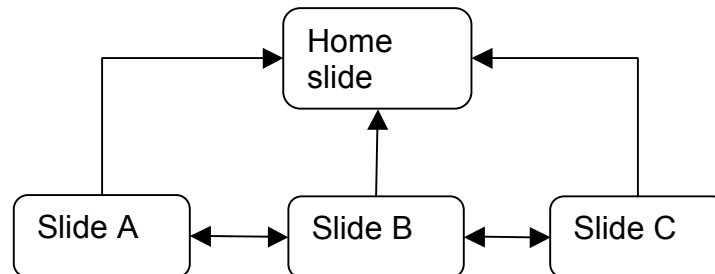
Note how the student can move forward and back between the three topic slides, and that there is a button leading back to the beginning of the package from each slide.

On the slides that make up the column slides, you won't need a 'back' button as the content of the previous slide is included on the current slide.

The action buttons should be added to slides in the same area of the slide so students learn where to look very quickly. I find that the next slide, previous slide and first slide are the actions I use most.

Glossary slides

Sometimes it is useful provide students with help slides or glossary slides that are not part of the main navigation sequence. To set up a glossary slide, just

- Add your **glossary content** to a slide at the end of the package in a convenient place
- **Note the number** of the glossary slide
- Switch back to the slide you want to jump *from*
- Add a **help button** or **highlight some text** to act as a hyperlink
- **Right click** to bring up the context menu
- Select **Action Setting**
- When the dialog box appears, select the entry shown as **Slide…**
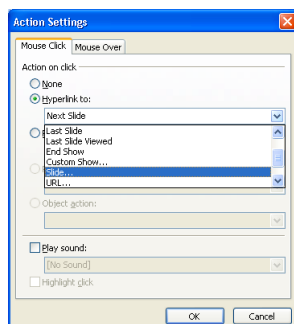
- When you click on the **Slide…** entry, you should see another dialogue box pop up. This extra dialogue box has a list of the slides in your package
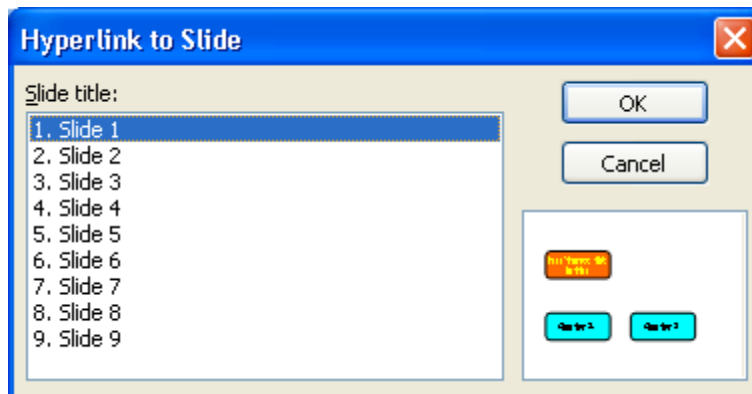
- Pick the **number of the slide** you want the student to *jump to*
- Click **OK** and **OK** again
- Your text should be hyperlinked and will act as a link to the slide

Now we get to use the stroke of genius on the part of MS PowerPoint's programmers. Once the student has read the glossary information, we want them to be able to *return* to the slide from which they came, even if the glossary item is linked from several slides.

- PowerPoint has an Action Setting called **Last Slide Viewed** –
- Just add a **'back' action button to the glossary slide** and set the action as **Last Slide Viewed** and the students will be able to get back to whichever slide they jumped from
- This action makes it easy to provide glossary links, perhaps even including sound samples of pronunciation of difficult words and phrases

Sound clips

You can record short sound clips (commentary, exposition, pronunciation of difficult terms) and add them to slides. Sound clips can be played in two ways

- Play when the slide is loaded: good for explanations
- Play when the student clicks on the loudspeaker icon: good if the student is likely to want to replay the clip

The sound files can be added to slides in three ways

- By recording the commentary directly onto the slide from within PowerPoint
- By dragging a clip (wav or mp3 or wma files) onto a slide
- By using the Insert | Movies and Sounds | Sound from File

Suppose you have already scripted and recorded a short clip describing the meaning of a diagram. To insert the clip, just

- Put the **clip in the Sounds folder** we created at the start of the project – this folder will be next to the PowerPoint file
- Load up the learning package in PowerPoint and select the slide you want the sound to play on
- Select **Insert | Movies and Sounds | Sound from File** from the Insert menu in PowerPoint
- A **file open dialogue box** will open and you should navigate to the Sounds folder
- **Select the file** with the sound clip and click **OK**
- You are then presented with a choice of how to play the sound
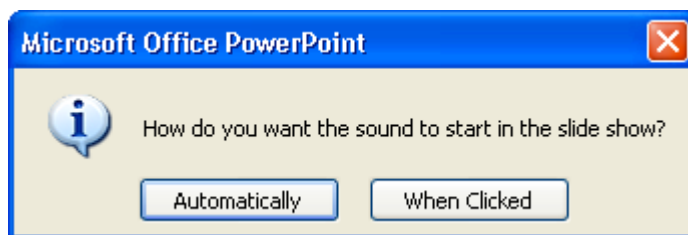
- **Click the appropriate option** and then the small loudspeaker icon should appear on the slide
- If you **change your mind** about auto-playing or clicking, just delete the loudspeaker icon and re-insert the sound file from scratch. Deleting the loudspeaker icon does not delete the actual sound file clip from the sounds folder, just the link to the file on the slide

If you back your project folder up to a USB stick each day, it is important to keep all the sound clips in the same relationship to the PPT file. I just copy the whole folder across to the stick.

Linking to Word files

Suppose you want to set a more open ended task at the end of the learning package: perhaps some writing or a research assignment. One way to do this is to describe the task in a Word file and to link from a PowerPoint to the Word file.

To do this

- **Save your Word file** with the assignment in a folder called documents or similar in the same folder as your PPT
- Chose the **PowerPoint slide** that you want the Word file to be linked to
- Place a nice large **red button** with a legend like Homework on the slide
- **Right click** over the button and select the Action Settings from the menu
- Select **Other File**… from the **Action Settings** menu
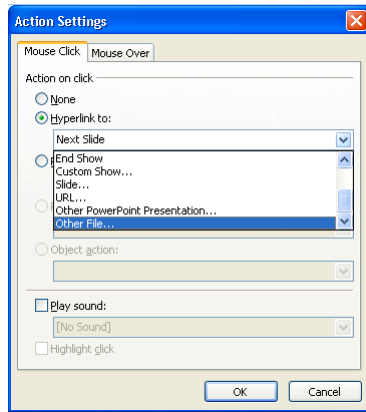
- When you select this option, a **File Open** dialogue box will open
- Navigate to the **documents folder** and select the Word file
- Click **OK** to make the link to the file

Run the PowerPoint package in presentation mode. When you click on the big red button, the Word file will load into Word and be displayed in front of your PowerPoint package.

When the student has finished reading the file and maybe printed a copy off, they will need to close the Word window to return to the package. It is a good idea to include an instruction like "close this window to return to the package" in the Word file!

Links to Web sites

Just like adding links to other files, adding links to Web sites can be done easily from within PowerPoint.

To preserve your sanity, you must instruct students on the slide to close the Web browser window when they have finished looking at the page. If they do not close the browser page, and then go on to follow another Web link from the PowerPoint, nothing will appear to happen. The reason for this is that the second page will load in the open Web browser window behind the package screen without warning. I have been caught like this many times when presenting PowerPoints with embedded Web links!
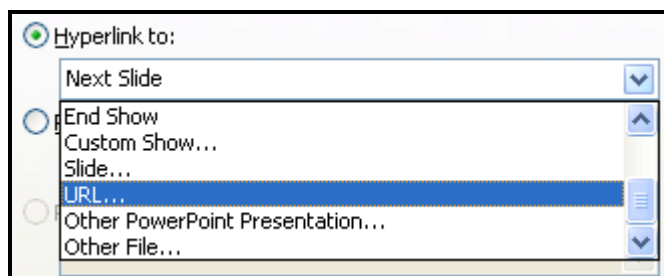
Package for CD

If you have a CD burner available on your PC you can package up your PPT file with all the sound and Word files you have used with it and burn them to a CD-ROM.

The advantages of doing this include…
- **Automatic loading** of the package when the student loads the CD-ROM into their computer
- Students who do not have PowerPoint on their computer can still view the package: a copy of the **MS PowerPoint Viewer** is included on the CD-ROM
- All the **supporting files are packaged** on the CD-ROM in the correct relationship with the PPT file

To export your package, you just

- Fully test every aspect of your PowerPoint!
- Go to **File | Package for CD** menu option in the PowerPoint file menu
- You should see a dialog box like the following
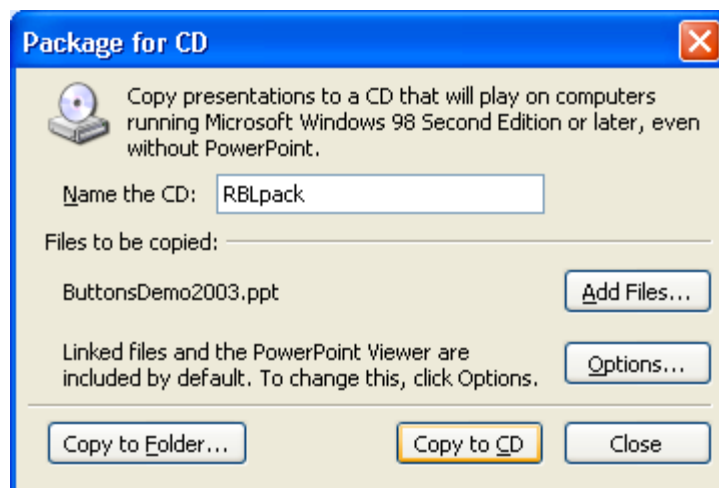
- Add a suitable name in the Name the CD box
- Click **Copy to CD**
- Add a blank CD-R to the CD burner (it should have opened automatically) and close the drawer
- Click **Retry** and wait for the CD to spin up and burn. Depending on the size of your files, this may take a few seconds or a minute or so
- When the process is completed, the drawer will pop open and your freshly minted CD-ROM can be removed and labelled

Always test the CD-ROM in another computer before handing it to a student. As part of the assignment for the RBL unit, you should include some instructions for the student on how to use your package.

Save as a Web site

For the Cert/Ed RBL module, you will need to have your package running in PowerPoint from a CD-ROM. However, I hope the packages you produce will have a life beyond the module, and you can export the package as a special kind of Web site. Your package can be uploaded to Moodle, the college Virtual Learning Environment and then used as part of an online course.

To export the package, you should…

- Select **File | Save As** from the PowerPoint file menu
- Set the **Save as Type**: to Single File Web Page
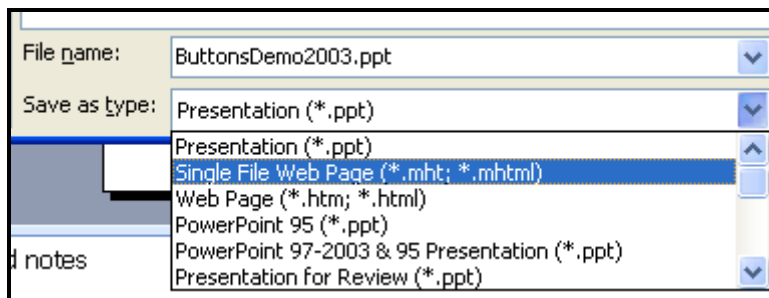
- Click **Save** and wait for the package to export
- Switch to the folder containing the MHT file
- **Double click** on the MHT file to load the package into MS Internet Explorer
- You might get pop-up warnings and an error message about MS Internet Explorer not having active-x controls present
- **Test that your package** works the way you think it will
- One major change is that sound files won't play automatically when the slide loads, students will have to click on the loudspeaker icon

In conclusion

The simple linking techniques in this handout will allow you to assemble an effective learning package using PowerPoint.

The key to success is planning your slides: both layout and navigation flow. You will find that even the most complex package breaks down into series of slides linked together.