Creative presentations with Microsoft PowerPoint

Method and contents

The method (ethos) for creative powerpoint design is to treat the project as a multi media design exercise. This simply means that the assets used in the presentation are created in other applications. This is the same approach as running a Macromedia Director or Flash project.

Graphic formats supported

EMF - enhanced meta file
WMF - windows meta file
JPG
JFIF
PNG
BMP
GIF
PICT (mac)
PCX

Pros and cons

1. anti-aliasing not supported (smoothing)

2. image files can be linked or embedded

3. very basic photo image control - brightness, crop etc

4. images can be imported, scanned or selected from a clip art library

Summary
Using Photoshop, Illustrator and Freehand is always the best way of creating any design element, and these are all supported by Powerpoint.

Typography within Powerpoint

Pros and cons

1. all basic typographic control, no justify, kerning or tracking

2. reasonably good anti-aliasing

3. basic leading control (paragraph spacing)

Summary
Although some control is missing, on the whole good typographic control is possible.

Multi media support

Pros and cons

1. all media embeds into the file

2. other media can be embedded via ActiveX Control, only available on Windows

video - Quicktime, AVI, MPEG, MP2
playback can be via mouse click, or autoplay

audio - supported - Aiff, .wav, rm1
playback via click or autoplay, supports loops, play and pause control available

Macromedia Flash (windows only)
below are the steps required to embed a .swf (shockwave flash):

        1, locate the path of the .swf from windows explore, then copy

        2, in powerpoint, view/control toolbox - this opens a new control box at the top of the window/page

        3, click the "more controls" button in the control toolbox window, (it looks like a hammer and spanner)

        4, select the flash activeX control

        5, draw a box on the slide

        6, right click the box and choose properties

        7, choose custom

        8, paste the path you copied and add the file name

        9, choose embed

The file is now embedded in the powerpoint slide.

Summary
Supports most multi media elements.
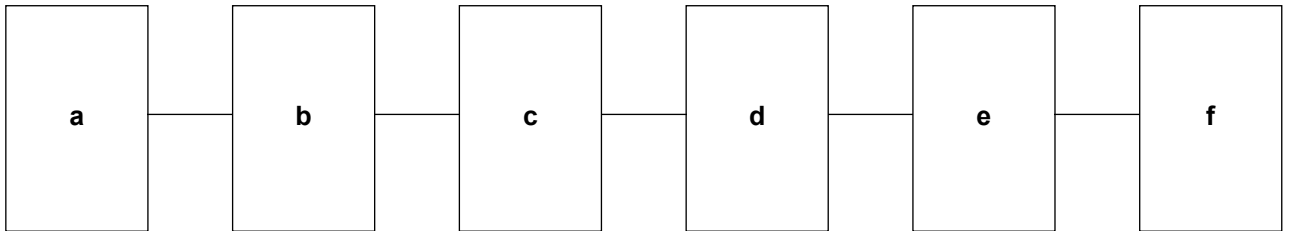
Interactivity

Pros and cons

1. navigation via hyperlinks to anywhere in the presentation

2. www links have support for "alt" tags, as found in HTML

3. it is possible to run macros and other programs from within Powerpoint

4. very basic button choice available, however imported graphics allow for greater design freedom
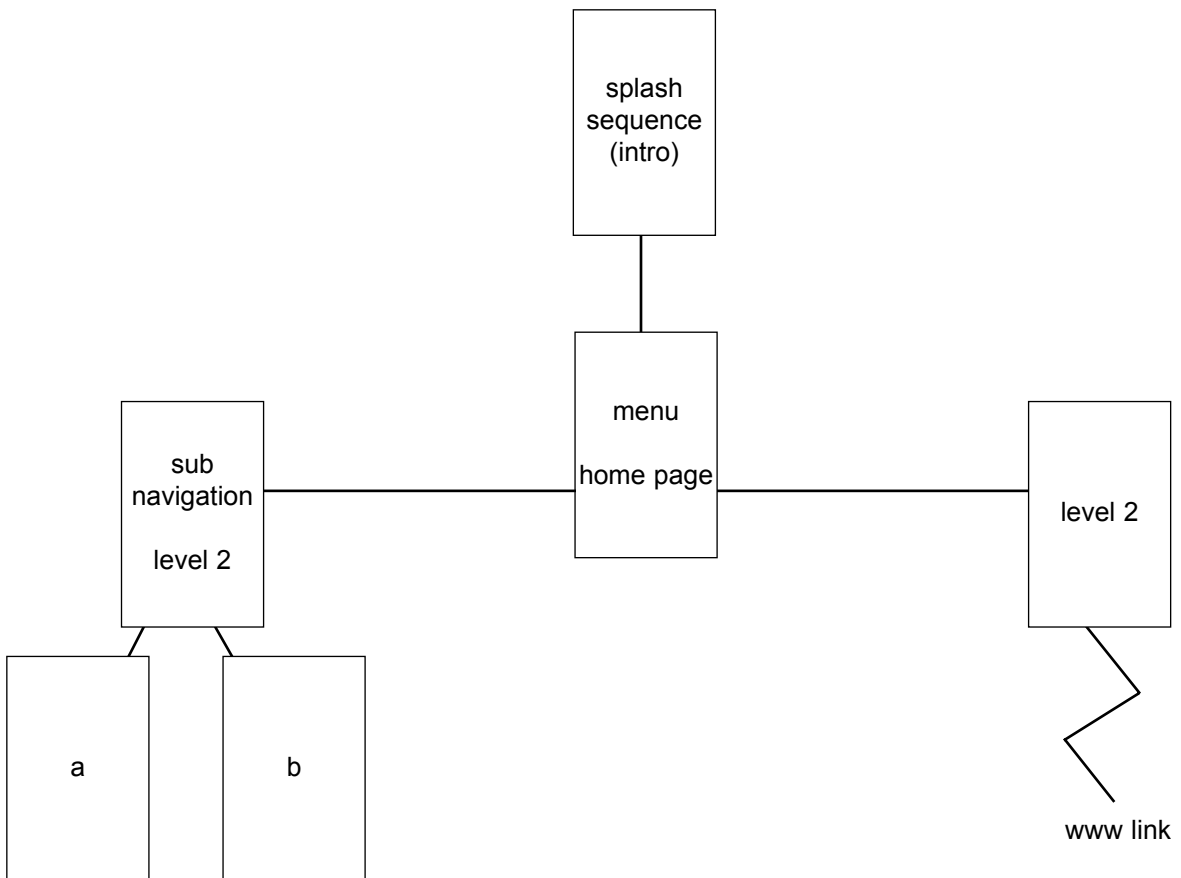
5. simple to learn

Summary
Although simple, can create interesting navigation through-out a presentation.

Navigation maps

the traditional linear presentation slide show

| a | b | c | d | e | f |

an example of a multi media non linear navigation map

splash sequence (intro)

sub navigation level 2

menu

home page

level 2

a

b

www link

Layout

Pros and cons

1. master slides, ie QuarkXPress master pages

2. grids none

3. simple guides

4. simple ruler

5. can create columns of text

6. zoom tool

7. running headers and footer, for the placement of dates etc

Summery
Ample amount of control.

Powerpoint elements

auto shape
lines, fills, shapes, 3D shapes
buttons
flow charts

Summary
Just like running any multi media project, all assets are created in other programs and then imported.

Transitions

Pros and cons

Very basic standard set, wipes, push, splits, stripes etc.

Animations - custom animations

Pros and cons

Very simple pre-set animation.

Summary
Some transitions/animations usable.