

PowerPoint 2002

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Manufacturer: Microsoft

Price: Price as stand alone program \$339 new installation or \$109 for eligible upgrade. PowerPoint2002 is included in Office XP Standard which is priced at \$479 new installation or \$239 for eligible upgrade. Office XP Professional and Developer versions also include PowerPoint 2002.

I purchased Office XP Small Business as an installed option on my present desktop. The Small Business edition did not include PowerPoint.

A search using cnet.com showed PowerPoint 2002 available for \$293 at PC Mall. Cnet.com found Office XP standard edition, as a complete retail box for as low as \$299.95. At this pricing, purchasing Office XP standard appears to make more sense than purchasing the stand alone PowerPoint program.

Introductory Summary: PowerPoint is a graphics presentation system that allows a beginner to do a proficient job in preparing a presentation and at the same time gives a seasoned user very powerful tools for creating a first rate show. I find it important that *PowerPoint has a viewer version that can be distributed with a presentation*. The viewer version can be distributed with the presentation on a media such as a CD or it can be downloaded free from Microsoft's download site by the recipient of the presentation.

System Requirements: PowerPoint 2002 can be installed in a wide range of computers and Operating Systems. At the low end, it can be installed on a PC with a Pentium 133 MHz that has 24 MB of RAM for the Operating System plus 8 MB RAM for PowerPoint. It is recommended that the pc resources be above the minimum listed. At the other end of the range a system running on Windows XP requires 128 MB RAM for the operating system plus 8 MB of RAM for PowerPoint. The requirement for available hard drive space is 115MB on the drive where the operating system is installed. An additional 50 MB is required for the earlier versions of Windows.

Installation: I used the standard or default installation and the installation was both fast and smooth. The program installed itself in a very modest way and does not try to take control of the system. For the record, I installed PowerPoint on my desktop that has more than adequate power and it has Windows XP as the operating system. This probably contributes to the smooth installation.

Documentation: There is no hard copy documentation with the boxed version of PowerPoint. The help function could be considered as having some basic documentation. In looking at User Guide, Tutorial or Quick Start guide I was directed to Microsoft Press. Microsoft Press has a

series of books that can be purchased directly from Microsoft Press or thru bookstores and computer stores. The Step by Step Microsoft PowerPoint book is a good tutorial.

Creating Presentation: There are a variety of ways to create presentations using PowerPoint including;

- The basic level is creating the presentation using the AutoContent Wizard. This method leads the user thru the creation process by asking questions and providing suggested slides to be over written with the user supplied information. This is an intuitive method of creating a presentation and first time users of PowerPoint should be able to create a presentation.
- At the next level, PowerPoint provides templates that can be used to create a professional presentation by providing uniformity in the colors, formats and appearance throughout. PowerPoint provides a variety of templates and also supports the user in creating a unique template. A previous presentation can be saved and used as a template. A template can be used in creating a presentation and the one or more slides can be created that do not conform to the selected format.
- Under the Format function is a slide layout selection that will present a series of “canned formats” that provides an easy method of creating slides having mixed content such as a graphic along with descriptive or explanatory information. In addition to ease of slide creation, this feature promotes uniformity within the presentation.

Features – There are many features to assist in making a presentation attract the attention of your audience and at the same time reflect the mood you wish to convey. Features that I found especially interesting include;

- A **viewer copy of PowerPoint** is available to allow the viewing of a presentation by a viewer who does not have PowerPoint.
- **Transition** between slides adds a “professional” touch to the presentation.
- **Animation** highlight points of interest
- **Sound clips, sound tracks and film strips** can be incorporated into a presentation.
- **Internet Hyperlinks** can be created to open establish and internet connection jump to a Web Site and back to the presentation when ready.
- PowerPoint provides creative support by supplying a number of **formats, color schemes and layouts** to select from. These can be adapted to meet the needs of the presentation.
- **Spell check** is incorporated into the program much to my salvation.
- **Material can be copied** between PowerPoint and other systems such as MS Word, Excel, etc.
- **Presenter notes** can be incorporated into the presentation.
- **Handouts** can be prepared directly from the PowerPoint files.
- **PowerPoint presentations can be presented in a variety of ways.** They can be shown on a PC, distributed by E-mail, distributed by CD’s that contain a viewer copy of PowerPoint. The presentation can be set up as a self running presentation or it can be set up to run on a web site.
- A presentation can be translated to a file that can be **converted to a 35 mm slide show** by a third party. PowerPoint directs you to a recommended vendor.
- **Action Buttons** can be included on any or all slides that allow a variety of actions including next slide, previous slide, pause or jump to a different point in the presentation.

- **Many Other features exist.** The above are the ones I found to be most helpful and most interesting at this stage of my experience.

Initial Experience: This was my initial use of PowerPoint. PowerPoint is an intuitive program when preparing a basic presentation. Without the aid of any additional books or other aids, I was able to put together a reasonable presentation having both pictures and text in a reasonable amount of time. This method of using and learning PowerPoint did result in multiple starts and stops and when it was finished, I did not completely understand how I arrived at the presentation. In addition I knew there were better tools and easier methods to create presentations using PowerPoint.

PowerPoint Step by Step Self – Study Kit is one of the offerings thru Microsoft Press. I did purchase this resource. It is a tutorial learning kit that has a book plus a CD-ROM. It can be either used going from front to back as a continuous learning tool or you can skip from one topic to another as you see the need for that lesson. I found the kit to be a very good learning process that increases not only my productivity with PowerPoint but also introduced me to more advanced uses of PowerPoint. Other books that are more in the nature of reference books are available for both beginners and advanced users.

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Technical Support Microsoft points to the Internet for most technical support needs. I did go to the Web site for a couple of answers and did get answers to my questions. I did not have a need to go beyond this first line of defense.

PowerPoint is a very powerful and yet a reasonably easy program to use. I would have hoped that more documentation would be included to assist in getting started. I have not learned all of the features included and probably never will learn all of them. It is pricy for the home user but if you have the need, it is a great program. Having had the benefit of using it, I will give serious consideration to making sure that a full version of Microsoft Office is on any system that I buy in the future. Of course everybody has their own unique needs in systems and software and we all have to fit our needs to our budget.