Prezi and PowerPoint – An Update

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A year ago, I wrote what was a personal opinion between the merits of Microsoft's PowerPoint, and the web based presentation tool Prezi. (Barlow, 2011) In the time since then, I have composed a second presentation using Prezi, as well as undertaking significant revisions to the first one I had written as a session for junior doctors. That being said however, I still have a number of presentations remaining in PowerPoint as I felt that it would be a long and drawn out process to rewrite them in Prezi. That though is less the case, as Prezi have now developed an option that allows users to download PowerPoint slides directly into Prezi. These can then be added either individually or all at once into the Prezi itself. Prezi's functionality then allows you to manipulate each element on the slide (text or image), or even the whole slide itself writing the Prezi canvas, which will then add to the path that the presentation takes.

What's the catch?

Certainly being able to just dump your PowerPoint slides into Prezi is useful. To use a well-worn cliché, it means you don't have to "reinvent the wheel" by writing the whole thing out again. That being said however, Prezi still has limitations in its functionality when it comes to animation – if you have multiple elements on a single PowerPoint slide that have been animated to pop in and out, then these will have to be added individually to the path in Prezi. If you have anything more advanced in terms of animation, then forget it, as flashing, colour changes etc. are still not supported. In addition, audio-visual elements remain limited; you can upload an FLV or SWF video, or a video directly from YouTube, but other video formats (MP4, MPEG, AVI), and all audio only formats remain unavailable.

To Prezi or not to Prezi?

The benefit of using Prezi is clear – being web based, there is no need to worry about portable memory devices, or if someone has uploaded your PowerPoint. Being able to move your PowerPoint slides directly into a Prezi further enhances this if you have a simple presentation with little or no animation. However, if you do have animation, it may not be worth taking this option, with instead it perhaps being better to either stick with PowerPoint, or else start a Prezi from scratch.

References

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