# Chapter 2: The Microsoft Producer Interface

The Producer user interface is designed to help you immediately start making presentations. The basic elements of the user interface include menus, a toolbar, tabs, and a timeline. This chapter will give you a quick introduction to the Producer interface. More extensive information is provided by the Producer Help.

Using the Menus

You can perform common tasks in Producer by selecting commands from the menus. For example, Figure 2-1 shows the New Presentation Wizard command being selected from the File menu.
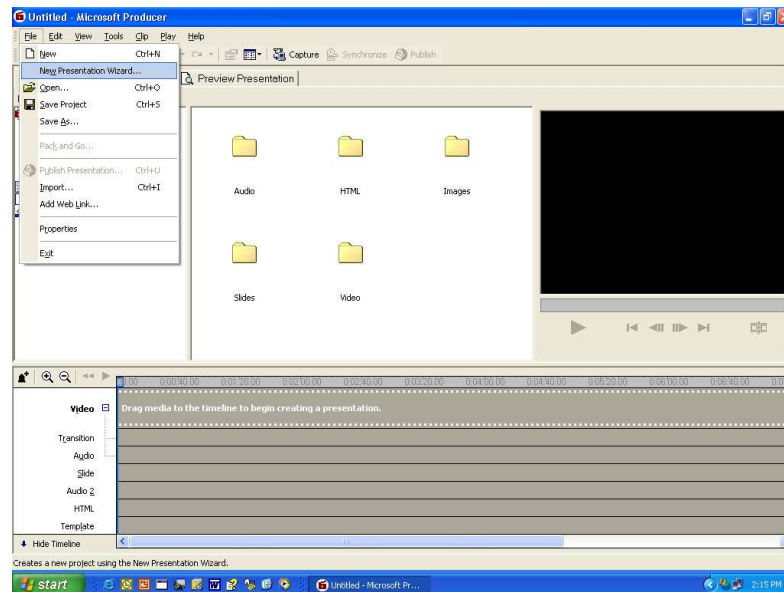
Figure 2-1 Selecting the New Presentation Wizard command.

The following sections provide brief descriptions of the menu commands. When applicable, the shortcut keys for the specific command appear in parentheses.

File Menu

The FIle menu provides commands that help you create new projects or work with existing projects you have created in Microsoft Producer.

- **New (Ctrl+N)** Use this command to start a new project. When you use this command to create a new project, the timeline is empty. You can then import existing digital media files, or capture new audio and video files, and add them to the timeline.

- **New Presentation Wizard** Use this command to start the New Presentation Wizard that walks you through the process of creating and adding digital media to a new project. The New Presentation Wizard, shown in Figure 2-2, lets you choose a template for your presentation and import existing digital media files or record new audio and video. The wizard automatically adds the imported or recorded content to the timeline for your current project, which you can then edit and rearrange.

Figure 2-2 The introduction page of the New Presentation Wizard.

- **Open (Ctrl+O)** Use this command to open an existing Producer project. Project files in Producer have a .MSProducer file name extension. After you open the project, all of the associated digital media files appear in the Media tab, and any files that have been added to the timeline are displayed there.

- **Save Project (Ctrl+S)** Use this command to save the changes you made to the current project. By saving the project, you will record any changes you have made to the project, including any files you placed on the timeline and all the imported or recorded digital media. When you open the project later, you can continue working from where you last saved the project file.

- **Save As** Use this command to save an existing project with a new name or to a different location. This lets you start working on the existing project later without having to import, capture, add, or arrange existing digital media files in the project again.

- **Pack And Go** Use Pack And Go to archive your projects for migration to another computer for additional work or for storage. The project archive contains copies of all files used in the project and all timeline settings. You can then unpack the project archive on another computer and continue editing the project.

- **Publish Presentation (Ctrl+U)** Use this command to start the Publish Wizard. The Publish Wizard lets you publish the current project to a corporate intranet site, extranet site, Web site, CD, or third-party e-service provider. After you publish your presentation, others can then watch it in their Web browsers on the site to which you have published the presentation.

- **Import (Ctrl+I)** Use this command to import existing digital media files, such as still images, PowerPoint slides, HTML files, audio, or video files, into your current project. Whether you created your project through the New Presentation Wizard or you opened an existing project file, you can import additional digital media to use in the current project.

- **Add Web Link** Use this command to insert a live Web page or a link to a live Web page in your presentation. A Web link lets you incorporate live Web content into your presentation.

- **Properties** Use this command to view information about the current project, including when the project was created and modified, as well as display presentation information such as the title, presenter name, and description of the presentation. In the Properties dialog box, you can also preview the estimated amount of disk space required to store your presentation based on different audience connection speeds, and see estimates of the amount of time your audience would have to wait to watch your presentation based on their connection speed.

- **Recent Projects** At the bottom of the File menu is a list of projects you have worked on recently. You can click one of these to open a specific project in Producer—as an alternative to using the Open command on the File menu.

Edit Menu

The Edit menu lets you make changes to your existing project and to digital media files in Producer. The following commands are on the Edit menu.

- **Undo (Ctrl+Z)** Use this command to undo the most recent task or action in Producer.

- **Redo (Ctrl+Y)** Use this command to redo the last undone action. For example, if you imported a file and then used the Undo command to un-import the file, and you then changed your mind that you do want to import that file, you could click Redo to re-import the file.

- **Cut (Ctrl+X)** Use this command to move a file from one part of the timeline to another. When you use the Cut command, the file will be removed from the timeline. You can then use the Paste command to insert the file on a new part of the timeline.

- **Copy (Ctrl+C)** Use this command to copy a file from the contents pane to the timeline or from one part of the timeline to another. When you use the Copy command, the file is copied to the Clipboard. You can then use the Paste command to insert a copy of the file on the timeline.

- **Paste (Ctrl+V)** Use this command to paste a file you have copied or cut in Producer to the timeline.

- **Delete (Del)** Use this command to delete the current selection. The current selection may include one file, many files, or selected text.

- **Clear Timeline (Ctrl+Del)** Use this command to remove all files from the timeline. This is useful if you decide you want to start over without having to create a new project and import or capture digital media files again.

- **Select All (Ctrl+A)** Use this command to select all the files in a specified area. For example, if you last clicked on the Video track of the timeline and used the Select All command, all of the files on the Video track would be selected.

- **Rename (F2)** Use this command to rename a selected item in the contents pane of the Media tab. For example, you can rename clips that are created from video files.

- **Edit Slide** Use this command to edit PowerPoint slides that have been imported into Producer. When you choose this command, PowerPoint starts so you can edit your PowerPoint presentation. You can edit a PowerPoint presentation with a .ppt file name extension or a presentation that was saved in PowerPoint as a Web page with an .htm file name extension.

- **Replace Web Link** Use this command to replace a live Web page or a link to a live Web page that is selected in your presentation. This command lets you change the Web address or the link that is displayed.

- **Presentation Scheme** Use this command to open the Presentation Scheme dialog box. You can then specify the font, font size, and colors that are displayed in the presentation.

View Menu

The View menu provides commands that enable you to switch between the different tabs, show or hide the toolbar, status bar, or timeline, and specify how icons are displayed in the Media tab. The following commands are on the View menu in Producer.

- **Media Tab (Ctrl+1)** Use this command to display the Media tab, which shows all the digital media files available in your current project. This includes any imported or recorded audio and video, as well as any imported still images, HTML files, and PowerPoint presentations. For all projects, standard folders that contain presentation templates, video transitions, and video effects are also displayed. The Media tab is discussed later in this chapter.

- **Table Of Contents Tab (Ctrl+2)** Use this command to display the Table Of Contents tab, which allows you to see and edit table of contents entries and information that displays on the introduction page of your presentation. The Table Of Contents tab is discussed later in this chapter.

- **Preview Presentation Tab (Ctrl+3)** Use this command to display the Preview Presentation tab, which lets you preview your project as it will appear after it has been published. The Preview Presentation tab is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

- **Timeline (Ctrl+T)** Use this command to show or hide the timeline, which is shown in Figure 2-3.
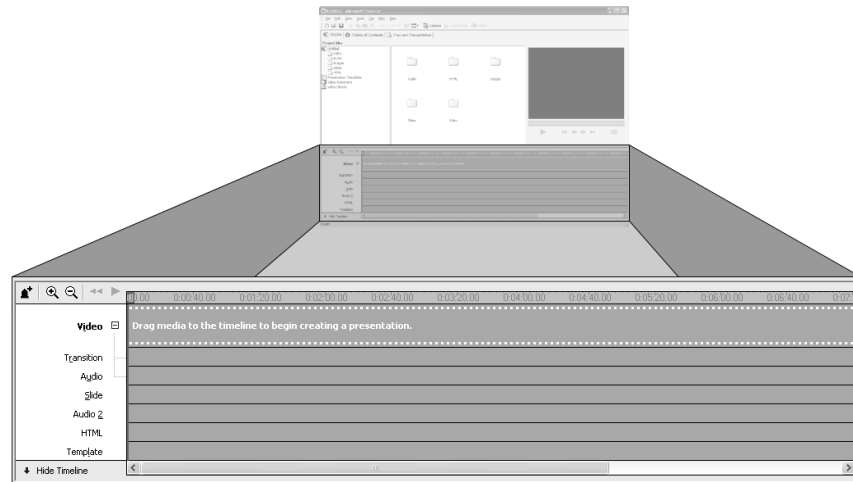
Figure 2-3 The timeline in Producer.

- **Toolbar** Use this command to show or hide the Producer toolbar. The toolbar is displayed below the menus.

- **Status Bar** Use this command to show or hide the status bar. The status bar is displayed under the timeline, and it provides a description of a menu command when you point to or select one.

- **Thumbnails** Use this command to display small bitmap images, called thumbnails, of the digital media files in the Media tab.

- **Large Icons** Use this command to display large icons that indicate the file type for files in the Media tab.

- **Details** Use this command to see detailed information about imported digital media files in the Media tab.

- **Arrange Icons By** Use this command to display files in the Media tab according to various file properties. The properties you can sort by depend on the selected folder in Producer. For example, if you select the Video folder, you can arrange files based on information such as the name, source size, duration, type, date, dimensions, frame rate, or the source location of the files.

- **Refresh (F5)** Use this command to refresh the view of the current project.

- **Zoom Timeline In (Alt++)** Use this command to decrease the time interval shown on the timeline. This lets you see more precise timing information about the arrangement of the files added to the timeline.

- **Zoom Timeline Out (Alt+-)** Use this command to increase the time interval shown on the timeline. This lets you see more general information about the arrangement of the files added to the timeline.

- **Zoom To Fit** Use this command to have Producer automatically adjust the zoom level of the timeline so all of the timeline contents display on the timeline on your computer screen. This prevents you from needing to scroll

across the screen using the horizontal scroll bar to see all the contents on the timeline.

Tools Menu

The Tools menu provides commands for you to use when creating and editing your projects in Producer. The following commands are on the Tools menu.

- **Capture (Ctrl+R)** Use this command to start the Capture Wizard, which you can use to capture new audio, video, and still images in Producer.

- **Synchronize** Use this command to synchronize slides on the timeline with video and audio on the timeline.

- **Rearrange Items On, Slide Track** Use this command to arrange the order items appear on the Slide track by moving items up or down in the resulting dialog box.

- **Rearrange Items On, HTML Track** Use this command to arrange the order items appear on the HTML track by moving items up or down in the resulting dialog box.

- **Rearrange Items On, Template Track** Use this command to arrange the order items appear on the Template track by moving items up or down in the resulting dialog box.

- **Presentation Templates** Use this command to see the available templates that you can use in your project. Templates are stored in the Presentation Templates folder in the Media tab.

- **Video Transitions** Use this command to see the available video transitions that you can add between any combination of video and still images on the Video track of the timeline. Transitions are stored in the Video Transitions folder in the Media tab.

- **Video Effects** Use this command to see the available video effects that you can add to video and still images on the Video track of the timeline. All available video effects are stored in the Video Effects folder in the Media tab.

- **Add Table Of Contents Entry (Ctrl+K)** Use this command to add a table of contents entry at the current position of the playback indicator on the timeline. You can then type a name and choose what item the entry is associated with.

- **Timeline Snaps** Use this command to change the location of a marker—called a *timeline snap*—on the timeline.

- **Add Timeline Snap (Ctrl+Shift+P)** Use this menu command to add timeline snaps, which help you synchronize digital media on the timeline.

- **Create Clips** Use this command to separate a selected video file into smaller clips through clip detection.

- **Normalize Timeline Audio** Use this command to have audio on the timeline adjusted automatically so it plays back at a uniform level in your presentation.

- **Audio Levels** Use this command to display the Audio Levels dialog box, which enables you to balance sound levels between audio on the Audio 2 track and the video sound track on the Audio track.

- **Options** Use this command to display the Options dialog box, which provides controls for configuring Producer.

Clip Menu

The Clip menu provides commands that let you work with video and audio files in your project. Most of the commands on this menu are used when you are editing your project. The following commands are on the Clip menu.

- **Add To Timeline (Ctrl+D)** Use this command to add the file selected in the Media tab to the timeline. As an alternative to using this command, you can also drag files displayed in the Media tab to the timeline.

- **Audio, Mute** Use this command to specify that the selected audio file is not heard when the file or presentation is played.

- **Audio, Fade In** Use this command to specify that the selected audio file starts to play quietly, and then increases to the final playback level over a short amount of time when the audio is played in your presentation.

- **Audio, Fade Out** Use this command to specify that the selected audio starts to play at the regular playback level, and then decreases in volume as the audio ends playback until the audio cannot be heard.

- **Video, Effects** Use this command to add or remove video effects to selected video or image files on the Video track of the timeline.

- **Video, Fade In** Use this command to specify that the selected video fades in from black.

- **Video, Fade Out** Use this command to specify that the selected video plays back regularly, and then fades to black as the video ends playback.

- **Set Start Trim Point (Ctrl+Shift+I)** Use this command to set the starting point, or the *trim in* point, of a video or audio file on the timeline.

- **Set End Trim Point (Ctrl+Shift+O)** Use this command to set the end point, or *trim out* point, of a video or audio file on the timeline.

- **Clear Trim Points (Ctrl+Shift+Del)** Use this command to remove any trim points you have added to audio or video files on the timeline.

- **Duration** Use this command to change the amount of time a slide, still image, HTML file, Web link, or presentation template displays in your presentation. You can change the duration of files that are added to the Slide, HTML, or Template tracks on the timeline.

- **Split (Ctrl+L)** Use this command to split a selected audio or video file on the timeline into two smaller clips.

- **Combine (Ctrl+M)** Use this command to combine a previously split audio or video file or to combine two contiguous clips that were created through clip detection.

- **Properties** Use this command to view information about a selected item. You can view properties for items in the Media tab or on the timeline.

Play Menu

The Play menu lets you control playback of individual video or audio files or your entire project. The following commands are on the Play menu.

- **Play (Ctrl+P)** Use this command to play the current selection in the monitor on the Media tab. What plays depends on the current selection. For example, if one video file is selected in the Media tab, that video and its associated audio will play in the monitor, as shown in Figure 2-4.
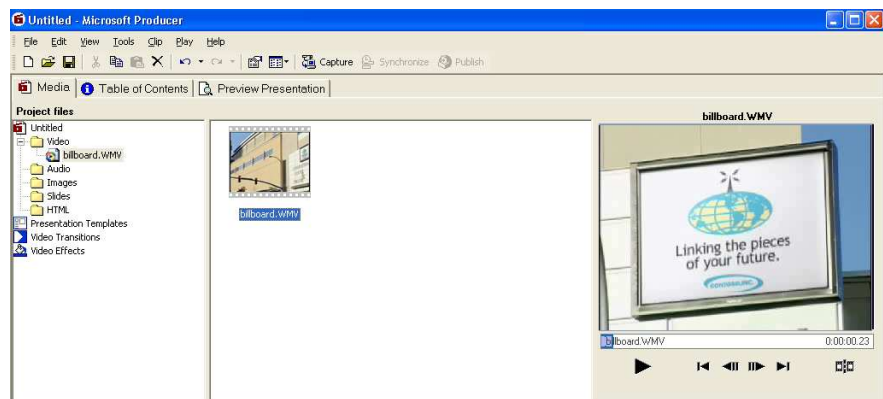
Figure 2-4 Playing a digital media file in the Media tab's monitor.

- **Play Timeline (Ctrl+W)** Use this command to play the contents of the timeline.

- **Rewind (Ctrl+Q)** Use this command to rewind the timeline to the beginning. The next time the timeline is played, it will start from the beginning.

- **Back (Ctrl+Shift+B)** Use this command to move back one file or clip on the timeline.

- **Previous Frame (Ctrl+B)** Use this command to move to the frame immediately before the one currently shown in the monitor.

- **Next Frame (Ctrl+F)** Use this command to move to the frame that is immediately after the frame currently shown in the monitor.

- **Forward (Ctrl+Shift+F)** Use this command to move forward one file or clip on the timeline.

Help Menu

The Help menu gives you access to the Producer Help and additional information about Producer. The following commands appear on the Help menu.

- **Help Topics (F1)**   Use this command to open the Help provided with Producer. The Help covers all the features in Producer.

- **Producer on the Web**   Use this command to see the additional information about Producer that appears on the Web.

- **About Microsoft Producer**   Use this command to display the name, copyright, version number, and product identification for Producer.

Using the Toolbar

The toolbar provides an alternate way for you to do many common tasks. Using the toolbar rather than the corresponding menu commands may help you work more quickly and efficiently. To see what each button does, you can point to a button and a ToolTip appears that describes the button's function.

Figure 2-5 shows the toolbar in Producer.
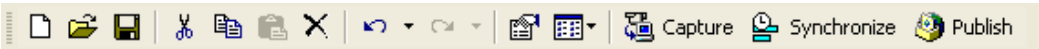
Figure 2-5   The toolbar.

Table 2-1 shows the buttons on the toolbar and their menu equivalents.

Table 2-1   Toolbar buttons.

Button	Button name	Corresponding menu command
	New	On the File menu, click New.
	Open	On the File menu, click Open.
	Save	On the File menu, click Save Project.
	Cut	On the Edit menu, click Cut.
	Copy	On the Edit menu, click Copy.
	Paste	On the Edit menu, click Paste.
	Delete	On the Edit menu, click Delete.
	Undo	On the Edit menu, click Undo.

| Button	Button name	Corresponding menu command
	Redo	On the Edit menu, click Redo.
	Properties	On the Clip menu, click Properties.
	Views	On the View menu, click one of the available options.
	Capture	On the Tools menu, click Capture.
	Synchronize	On the Tools menu, click Synchronize.
	Publish	On the File menu, click Publish Presentation.

Using the Tabs

Each of the Producer tabs—the Media tab, the Table Of Contents tab, and the Preview Presentation tab—let you see your project differently. The tabs provide you with three different ways for working with your project.

The Media Tab

The Media tab is the default view when you first start Producer. The Media tab lets you see all the imported or recorded files that you can work with for your current project. This is where you work in when beginning a new project and editing it.

The Media tab is divided into three different panes: the tree pane, contents pane, and monitor. Figure 2-6 shows the different parts of the Media tab.
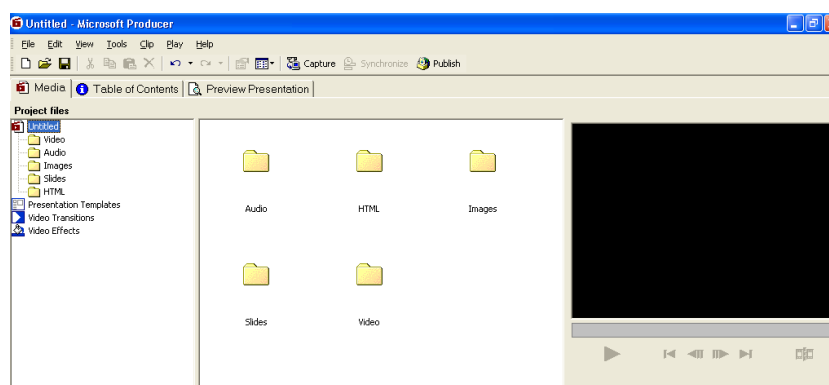
Figure 2-6 The Media tab.

The Tree Pane

The tree pane displays the different types of digital media files you can work with in Producer. When you import or record new content, the file for the recorded content is automatically stored in the appropriate folder according to its file type.

In the tree pane, the top five folders are specific to the current project. They only contain files that have been imported or recorded for the current project. Each of these folders can contain the file types described in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 Project-specific tree pane folders.

Folder	Description
Video	Contains video files with .asf, .avi, .m1v, .mp2, .mp2v, .mpe, .mpeg, .mpg, .mpv2, .wm, or .wmv file name extensions.
Audio	Contains audio files with .aif, .aifc, .aiff, .asf, .au, .mp2, .mp3, .mpa, .snd, .wav, or .wma file name extensions.
Images	Contains still image files with .bmp, .dib, .emf, .gif, .jfif, .jpe, .jpeg, .jpg, .png, .tif, .tiff, or .wmf file name extensions.
Slides	Contains PowerPoint presentations with .ppt or .pps file name extensions. This folder also contains PowerPoint slides that were saved as a Web page with an .htm file name extension in PowerPoint and then imported into Producer.
HTML	Contains HTML files with .htm or .html file name extensions.

The folders below the top five folders are default folders that always have the same contents, regardless of project. These folders, described in Table 2-3, appear by default in all Producer projects.

Table 2-3 Default tree pane folders.

Folder	Description
Presentation Templates	This folder contains templates for use in your project. The templates define the layout and view for the duration they appear in the timeline and in your presentation.
Video Transitions	This folder contains video transitions that you can add between two video clips or still images on the timeline.
Video Effects	This folder contains different video effects that you can add to a video or still image in the timeline.

The Contents Pane

The contents pane shows the contents of the folder that is currently selected in the tree pane. When a folder is selected, all the files that are stored in that tree pane folder appear in this area of the Media tab. The main purpose of the contents pane is to let you see all the available files you can use for your project. Because the folders are divided by the types of data they contain, you can quickly find the particular file, video transition, or video effect that you want to use in your project.

The Monitor

The monitor lets you play individual video files, audio files, and transitions from the contents pane, and it also displays individual still images, slides, HTML files, video effects, and presentation templates. It provides a way for you to see or hear an individual file. In the monitor, you can also preview parts of your project.

Below the monitor is a series of monitor buttons. These buttons function just like the buttons on a VCR. They let you navigate through individual files on the timeline or in the contents pane, or you can navigate through all of the files on the timeline for your current project.

To preview individual files or all of the timeline contents, you can use the monitor buttons as an alternative to the menu commands. Both accomplish the same task. However, using the monitor buttons is often quicker than using the menu commands. Table 2-4 describes the monitor buttons and their corresponding menu commands.

Table 2-4 Monitor buttons and their menu command equivalents.

Button	Button name	Corresponding menu command
▶	Play	On the Play menu, click Play.
◀	Back	On the Play menu, click Back.
◀‖	Previous Frame	On the Play menu, click Previous Frame.
‖▶	Next Frame	On the Play menu, click Next Frame.
▶‖	Forward	On the Play menu, click Forward.
▯▮	Split	On the Clip menu, click Split.

The Table Of Contents Tab

While working on your project, you might need to edit the table of contents for the final published presentation, as well as the introduction page for your presentation. Use the Table Of Contents tab to add, edit, delete, or adjust entries in your table of contents. By changing these entries, you can specify how you want your table of contents to appear in your presentation. Figure 2-7 shows the Table Of Contents tab.

In addition to editing your table of contents, you can also make changes to the introduction page of your final published presentation. This is the page that is displayed before your audience begins to play your presentation.
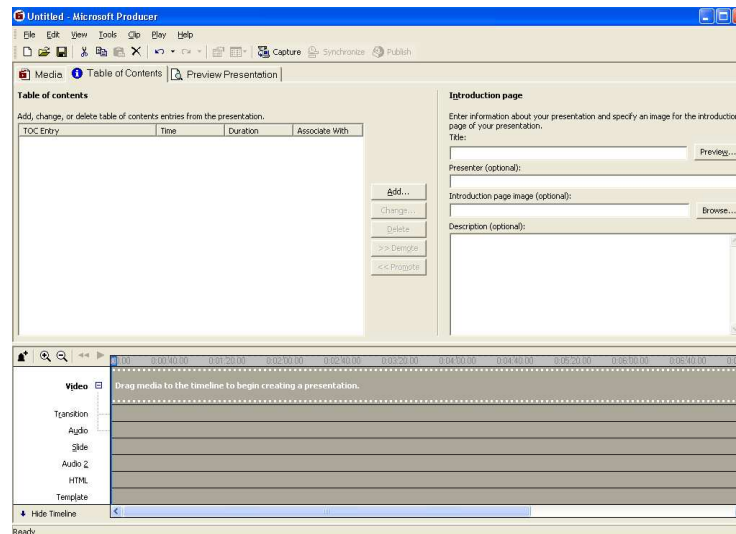
Figure 2-7 The Table Of Contents tab.

The Preview Presentation Tab

While working with your project, it is easy to get a sneak preview of what your final presentation will look like by using the Preview Presentation tab. This tab lets you see your final presentation as it would appear if you published it. Figure 2-8 shows the Preview Presentation tab.
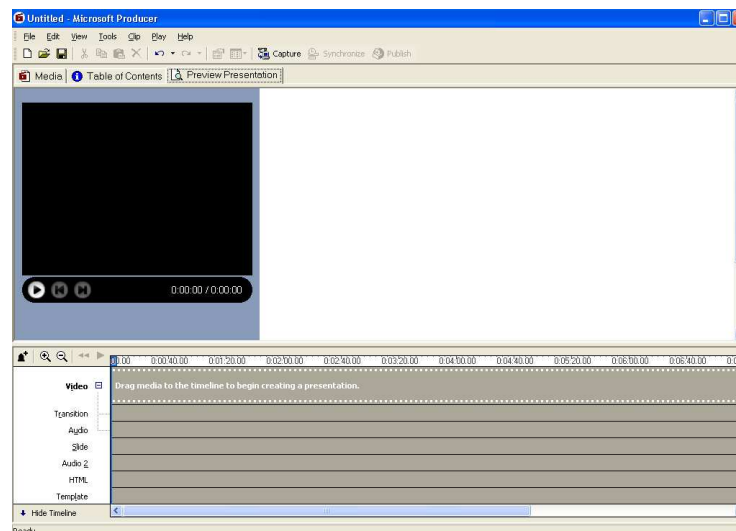
Figure 2-8 The Preview Presentation tab.

Unlike previewing your project in the Media tab, previewing your presentation in the Preview Presentation tab lets you see all of the elements in your presentation. Because you can see all of the digital media files you have added to the timeline, you get a complete idea of how all the different files within your project would play in the final, published presentation.
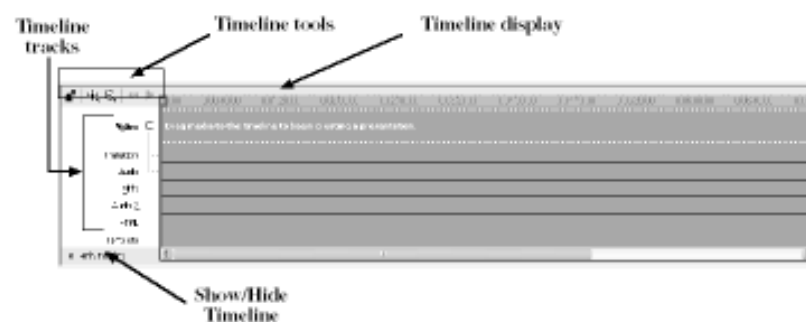
Using the Timeline

The timeline provides the main space for you to work on your projects. It's the canvas for creating your presentation. You can see a chronological listing of all the digital media files that have been added to the timeline and how they all work together to form the complete presentation.

The timeline is divided into multiple parts: the timeline toolbar, the timeline display, and the timeline tracks. Each part plays a valuable role when working on your project in Producer.

Figure 2-9 shows the different elements of the timeline.

Figure 2-9   The different elements of the timeline.

The Timeline Tools

Much like the toolbar in Producer, the timeline tools provide an alternative to using the menu commands. Using the tools lets you add timeline snaps, zoom in on the timeline, zoom out on the timeline, or rewind and play the timeline. Figure 2-10 shows the timeline tools in Producer.
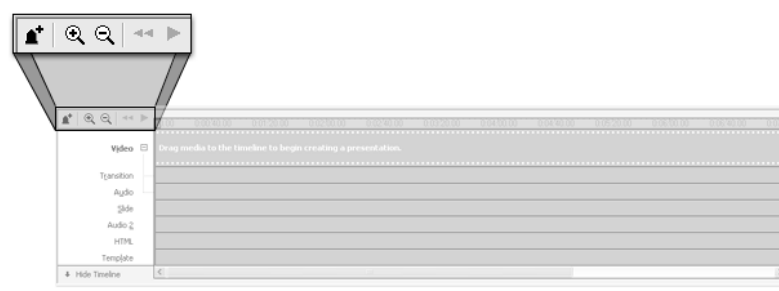
Figure 2-10   The timeline tools.

Table 2-5 describes the menu equivalent of each tool on the timeline.

Table 2-5   Timeline tools and corresponding menu commands.

	Tool	Corresponding menu command
	Add Timeline Snaps	On the Tools menu, click Add Timeline Snap.
	Zoom Timeline In	On the View menu, click Zoom Timeline In.
	Zoom Timeline Out	On the View menu, click Zoom Timeline Out.
	Rewind The Timeline	On the Play menu, click Rewind.
	Play The Timeline	On the Play menu, click Play Timeline.

The Timeline Display

The timeline display is the key to timing the digital media files that appear on the timeline. On the timeline, time is displayed in the form hours:minutes:seconds (H:MM:SS) by default. By using the timeline display, you can determine how long a file on the timeline will play, or how long your entire presentation will play when published.

If you want to increase the time intervals displayed on the timeline, you can click Zoom Timeline Out to see a more general overview of your project. However, if you want to see the timeline in more precise time, you can click Zoom Timeline In.

The Timeline Tracks

While working on a project in Producer, you will most likely be working with a variety of different digital media files. To help keep the files separate from one another, the different types of digital media files, video transitions, video effects, and presentation templates are displayed on different tracks in the timeline.

By keeping these elements on the different tracks, you can quickly see what has been added to the timeline to see how it fits into the timing and appearance of your overall project. The names of the added files appear on the timeline in the individual tracks to help you manage what files appear in your project.

In Producer, the following tracks appear in the timeline.

- **Video Track** Any video files or still images that you add to the timeline are displayed on the Video track of the timeline. If you decide to add video effects to one or many different files on this track, a small icon of a paint bucket appears on the track to indicate that a video effect has been added to that file in the timeline.

    In Producer, you can expand the Video track by double-clicking the small plus sign or by pressing Ctrl+Shift+V. When you expand the Video track, you can then see the Transition and Audio tracks.

- **Transition Track** If you expand the Video track, you can see the Transition track (and the Audio track, discussed next). The Transition track lets you see any video transitions that have been added between two video or image files on the timeline. When you add a video transition, you can see how long the transition will play in your final presentation by looking at the shaded region of the Transition track.

- **Audio Track** Like the Transition track, the Audio track can only be seen after the Video track has been expanded. This track displays the corresponding audio for any video that appears on the Video track.

- **Slide Track** If you have imported any PowerPoint slides into your presentation and added them to the timeline, they will appear on the Slide track.

- **Audio 2 Track** Within your presentations, chances are you will be working with different audio files that can contain music or dialog, such as a narration of your presentation. Any added audio files are displayed on the Audio 2 track of the timeline.

- **HTML Track** Another way of effectively conveying your message in your presentation is by adding HTML files that contain pertinent information about the topic to your presentation. When you add any HTML files to the timeline, the files are displayed on the HTML track.

- **Template Track** The Template track displays any presentation templates that you have added to the timeline. The templates determine the layout of your presentation—how different elements of the presentation display in a viewer's Web browser.