Chapter 3: Starting a New Presentation

Now that you're familiar with the Producer interface, you're ready to create your own presentation. The first step is to start Producer and begin your new project. You will see a dialog box like the one in Figure 3-1.

The method you use to begin your project is up to you. When you first start using Producer, you might find it helpful to use the New Presentation Wizard because it walks you through the process of starting a new presentation step-by-step. However, as you become more experienced with Producer, you might want to begin your presentation by starting with a new, blank project.
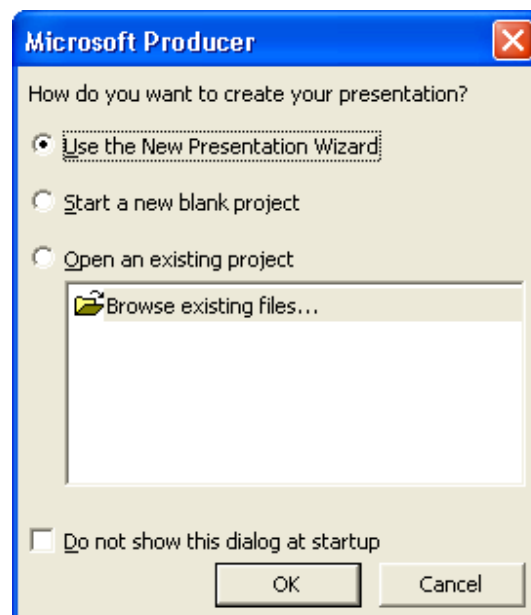

Figure 3-1   The dialog box that appears when you first start Producer.

In this chapter, you will first create a new project using the New Presentation Wizard. Then later in the chapter, you will see how to build a project from scratch by starting with a new blank project.

Using the New Presentation Wizard

The New Presentation Wizard helps you start a new presentation by walking you through the following steps. By going through the New Presentation Wizard, you can quickly create a new project, which you can later publish as a presentation.

While working in the New Presentation Wizard, you can click Cancel at any time. When you click Cancel, the wizard ends and any steps you completed to that point will be discarded.

On the other hand, you may decide that you want to complete a few steps in the wizard and then continue creating your project on your own. You can do this by clicking Finish at any time in the wizard. If you click Finish, any steps you have completed up to that point will be applied to your project. For example, let's say you completed both the Choose A Presentation Scheme page and the Presentation Information page in the New Presentation Wizard, and then clicked Finish. In this situation, the presentation template you chose would be added to the timeline, and the font and colors would be selected for your presentation. You would then need to import digital media files and add them to the timeline outside of the wizard in order to continue creating your presentation, just as you would if you were starting with a new blank project.

The New Presentation Wizard proceeds as follows. You can complete each of the following steps on the individual pages of the wizard:

1. Read the introduction page that briefly outlines the steps and pages of the New Presentation Wizard.

2. Choose a presentation template for the presentation you are creating.

3. Choose a presentation scheme for the presentation.

4. Enter information about your presentation.

5. Choose a PowerPoint presentation or individual still images that you want to include in your presentation.

6. Choose existing audio and video files that you want to include in your presentation, or capture new content using Producer.

7. Specify whether you want to synchronize your slides and still images with the selected audio and video immediately after completing the wizard.

8. Complete the wizard so the selected content is imported into the current project and added to the timeline.

Choosing a Presentation Template

The Presentation Template page of the New Presentation Wizard lets you choose which presentation template you want to apply to the current project. The presentation template you choose determines the layout and appearance of the content in your presentation, as well as which items are displayed. For example, if you plan on using slides and still images for a presentation that contains audio without video, you would choose an audio presentation template that displays slides and still images, such as one of the following presentation templates that are installed with Producer:

- Clouds Audio – Fixed Slides and HTML

- Globe Audio – Resizable Slides and HTML

- Organizational Audio – Resizable Slides and HTML

- Standard Audio – Resizable Slides

Even if you have only completed the audio portion of your presentation, you could choose any one of these presentation templates and then import and add HTML files or Web links at a later time.

Many times, your presentations will also contain video with accompanying audio. In these instances, you would choose a presentation template that displays slides and still images, as well as video (with accompanying audio), such as one of these templates:

- Clouds Video (240x180) – Fixed Slides and HTML

- Globe Video (240x180) – Fixed Slides and HTML

- Organizational Video (240x180) – Resizable Slides and HTML

- Standard Video (320x240) – Resizable Slides and HTML

The numbers in parentheses describe the size of the video display area, in pixels, in the presentation template. The particular presentation template you choose depends on the display size of the video you want to playback in the presentation template.

All of the templates just described are part of the predefined set of templates that are installed with Producer. You can add to this set by creating your own custom templates. When you copy the new templates into the default template folder, they will appear in the contents pane and you can add them to your project.

The presentation template you choose is applied for the current project and added to the timeline after you click Finish in the New Presentation Wizard. If you later decide you want to change the template or use multiple templates in your presentation, you can easily do so at any time by adding them to the timeline.

Understanding Presentation Template Styles

By using different presentation templates, you can change the look and feel of your presentation. When choosing a presentation template, it is helpful to understand the basic presentation template styles and what they contain.

The following list describes the presentation templates installed with Producer and briefly explains the appearance of each style:

- **Standard.** The Standard template style contains solid colors without background images. This lets you display solid colors in your presentation. For example, you could create a color scheme that is compatible with that of your organization, logo, or campaign.

- **Clouds.** The Clouds template style contains one large background image. Audio and video content is displayed on the right side in these templates. If slides or HTML are displayed in a presentation with a Cloud template, the slides and HTML do not resize, meaning that if the window is resized, the slides and HTML remain the same, fixed size.

- **Globe.** The Globe template style displays a background image and a header image at the top of the page. This presentation template style often contains small, tiled images in the presentation background.

- **Organizational.** The Organizational template style contains one large background image. If slides or HTML are displayed in a presentation with an Organizational template, the slides and HTML resize. Therefore, if the window is resized, the slides and HTML also resize.

Step-by-Step: Selecting a Presentation Template

To choose a presentation template:

1. Click the name of the template in the Templates list box.

2. Click Next to proceed to the Choose A Presentation Scheme page.

Choosing a Presentation Scheme

The Choose A Presentation Scheme page of the New Presentation Wizard lets you choose the font and colors to use in your presentation. By choosing a scheme for your presentation, you can select which font, font size, font color, and background colors you want to use in your presentation.

In Producer, you will notice that you can accomplish the same task in different ways. This is the case when choosing a presentation scheme. The information that you specify on this page of the wizard can also be selected through the Presentation Scheme dialog box. Therefore, if you create your presentation through the New Presentation Wizard and then later decide you want to change the selected colors or font, you can do so without going through the New Presentation Wizard again.

When choosing a presentation scheme, you can change the appearance and colors for the table of contents and the slides area of your final published presentation. Figure 3-2 shows which parts of your final presentation are affected by the choices you make when selecting options for the presentation scheme.
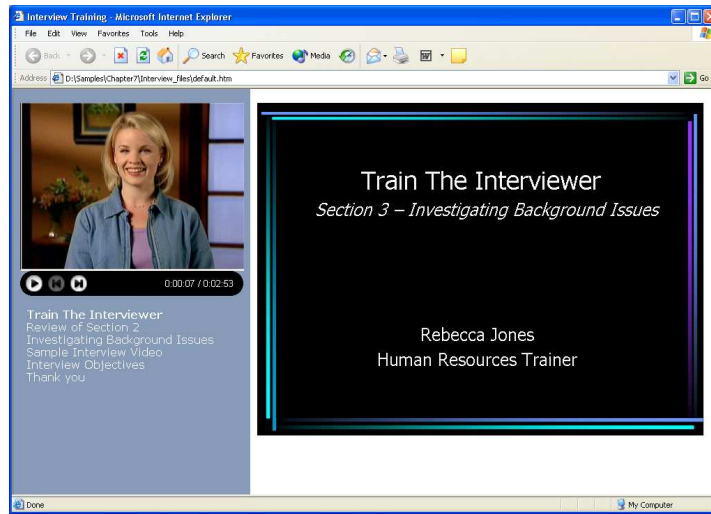
Figure 3-2 A published presentation showing the table of contents and slides area.

Selecting the Font and Colors for the Table of Contents

The table of contents provides an outline or guide to your presentation. It lets your users see a list of topics that are covered in your presentation. The topics are clickable links that the audience can use to navigate through your presentation. Therefore, if an individual watching your presentation in his or her Web browser wanted to watch a specific part of the presentation, he or she could do so by clicking the corresponding table of contents entry.

The fonts that you can select for table of contents entries consist of a list of fonts that will display properly in most Web browsers. These are fonts that are common and are likely to be installed on your audience's computers. This is important because your audience must have the selected font installed on their computers in order to see the font in their Web browsers when they watch your published presentation. In addition to specifying the font for the table of contents, you can select the font size (which determines how large or small the font will appear in the table of contents area of your presentation) and the font color.

After selecting the font, font size, and font color for entries in the table of contents, you will also want to specify a background color for the table of contents. When choosing a background color, keep in mind the importance of color and contrast. For example, if you selected a lighter font color for the table of contents, you should choose a background color that contrasts with the table of contents text color. If you choose two colors that are similar and do not provide sufficient contrast, the table of contents entries will be difficult to see in your presentation.

Selecting the Background Color

The Slides Area Background setting determines which color is displayed in the area behind your slides. When choosing this color, consider the color used in your PowerPoint slides, as well as the color you selected for the table of contents. This will help you choose a background color that is suitable for your presentation.

When choosing background colors, consider what look you want for your presentation. For example, your organization might have a standard set of colors that are used in corporate communications or on the company's Web site. You can choose colors to

give your presentations a uniform look and feel or to associate that presentation with your company's colors and logos.

For example, your organization might use a specific shade of blue. If you know the color's RGB value, which is a standard for specifying colors, you could click the Define Custom Color button, type the RGB values in the Red, Green, and Blue boxes of the Color dialog box, and then add the color to the list of custom colors. This allows you to choose the exact shade or color that is used throughout other corporate communications and use it in your presentation. This custom color would be available in the current presentation as well as in future presentations. You could select this custom color for other parts of your presentation as well, such as the font color or background color for the table of contents.

Differences Between Templates and Schemes

The presentation scheme determines the font and colors that can be used by the presentation template or templates you choose. If you apply one of the Standard templates to your presentation, the font, font size, and colors you choose will display in your presentation. However, if you apply one of the presentation templates which contain background images, such as the Clouds, Globe, or Organizational templates, the font and colors that display are determined by the presentation template itself rather than by the font and colors you select for the presentation scheme.

After completing the New Presentation Wizard, you can apply one or more additional templates to the timeline. This allows you to switch presentation templates throughout the presentation. This feature is helpful because you may want your presentation scheme colors and fonts to appear during some parts of your presentation, but not during other parts. By switching presentation templates and styles, you can dynamically change the appearance of your presentation as your audience watches it in their Web browsers.

Step-by-Step: Selecting a Presentation Scheme

To choose a presentation scheme:

1. Select the font name from the Font drop-down list. These fonts are listed because they can be viewed in a Web browser, and they are most likely already installed on your audience's computers.

2. Select the font size from the Font Size list for the table of contents entries in your presentation. The font size is specified in points.

3. Click Font Color to choose a color from the Color dialog box. You can instead click Define Custom Color, enter values in the Red, Green, and Blue boxes for the color, click Add To Custom Colors, and then click OK to choose the new custom color.

4. Click Background to choose or define a background color.

5. Click Slides Area Background to choose or define a color for the background.

6. Click Next to proceed to the Presentation Information page.

Entering Information About Your Presentation

It may be helpful to provide your audience with information prior to them viewing your presentation. To effectively communicate the purpose and other pertinent background information about your presentation, Producer creates an introduction page. Figure 3-3 shows an example.

The introduction page is useful because it can help to set your audience's expectations and to state the goal or purpose for the presentation. For example, if you are creating a presentation that discusses quarterly corporate earnings, you could provide this information on the introduction page along with information about the presenter. Furthermore, you can display an image, such as a corporate logo.

The presentation information is optional. However, by taking a few minutes to complete this page, you can convey important details to your audience that can help to increase the overall effectiveness of your presentation. This information displays on the introduction page in the viewer's Web browser while your presentation is loading. By clicking Preview in the wizard you can see what the introduction page will look like to the viewer. That way, you can make any necessary adjustments before you complete the New Presentation Wizard.
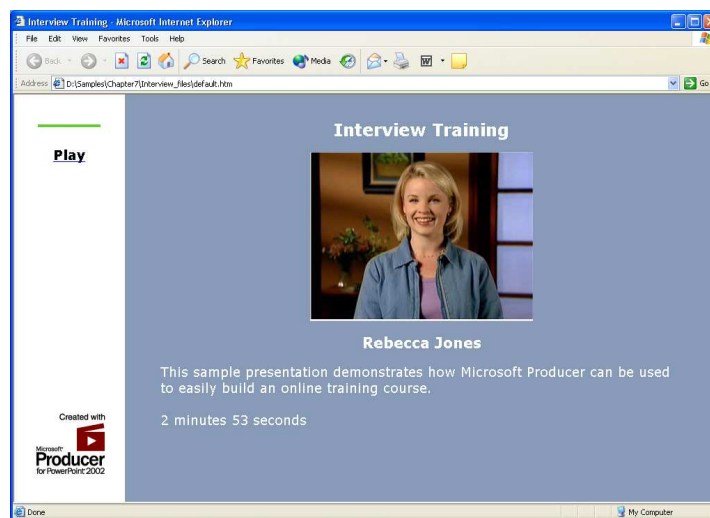

Figure 3-3 The introduction page for a published presentation.

Step-by-Step: Entering Presentation Information

To specify the information for the introduction page:

1. In the Title box, type a descriptive title for your presentation. This title should describe the main point or purpose of your presentation. Specifying a title is not required, but strongly recommended.

2. In the Presenter (Optional) box, type the presenter (or presenters) name.

3. In the Introduction Page Image (Optional) box, enter the path and file name for the image you want to appear on the introduction page. Or click

Browse to find the still image, which can be located on your computer, on a shared network location, on a CD, and so on.

4. In the Description (Optional) box, type a brief description for your presentation. This description should briefly describe the presentation or provide background information about the presentation.

5. Click Next to proceed to the Import Slides and Still Images page.

Using PowerPoint Slides or Still Images

The Import Slides and Still Images page lets you choose which PowerPoint presentations or still images you want to include in your presentation. These are the slides and still images that you synchronize with audio and video content.

You can choose the slides or still images from a variety of locations. The slides, PowerPoint presentations, or still images can be located on your local computer, on a shared network location, on a CD, or on another type of storage device, such as a CompactFlash card for a digital camera.

The following file types can be imported in this page of the wizard. These file types include PowerPoint presentations and still image files with the following file name extensions:

- **PowerPoint presentations.** .ppt and .pps

- **Still image files.** .bmp, .dib, .emf, .gif, .jfif, .jpe, .jpeg, .jpg, .png, .tif, .tiff, .wmf

Producer lets you import these file types, as well as a wider variety of other digital media file types. A complete list of all supported file types is discussed later in this chapter.

When you are selecting your PowerPoint presentations or still images, you may already know the order in which you would like these slides and still images to be added on the timeline. If so, you can quickly organize the slides or still images you select in this page of the wizard. After completing the New Presentation Wizard, the slides and still images are added to the timeline in the order that they appear in the Files box.

You can save time by arranging the slides and still images in the order that you think you want them to appear. If you already know the path and file name of the slides or still image you want to add, you can type it in the Path box, and then click Add. To change the position of a file in the Files box, simply click the file and use the Move Up and Move Down buttons. If you change your mind about including a particular file, you can use the Remove button to delete the file from the list. If you decide you want to reorder the slides or still images after completing the wizard, you can easily do so at any time by rearranging them on the timeline.

Step-by-Step: Importing Slides and Still Images

To add slides and still images to your presentation:

1. If you know the path and file name of the still image or PowerPoint slide or presentation that you want to import, type that location, and then click Add.

2. If you want to locate and select the PowerPoint slide or presentation or still images, click Browse, locate the slides and still images you want to import into your current presentation, and then click Open.

3. To select multiple PowerPoint presentations and/or still images, you can press the Ctrl key and click multiple still images and PowerPoint presentations to include in your Producer presentation.

4. After selecting multiple files, click Move Up or Move Down to specify the order that the slides and still images should be added to the timeline.

5. To remove an item from the list of files to be imported, click Remove.

6. Click Next to proceed to the Import or Capture Audio And Video page.

Choosing Audio and Video for Your Presentation

If you want to include audio or video content in your presentation, the Import or Capture Audio and Video page lets you specify these digital media files. If you included PowerPoint slides or still images on the previous page, the audio and video files you choose will usually relate to those slides and still images.

The audio and video you want to use in your presentation may be on your computer already. If the audio and video has been saved as digital media files, you can choose the files you want to use. Like slides and still images, these files may be located on your local computer, on a shared network location, or on a CD. On this page of the wizard, you can choose to import audio or video files with the following file name extensions:

- **Audio files.** .aif, .aifc, .aiff .asf, .au, .mp2, .mp3, .mpa, .snd, .wav, .wma

- **Video files.** .asf, .avi, .m1v, .mp2, .mpe, .mpeg, .mpg, .mpv2, .wm, .wmv

If the audio and video content that you want to use for your presentation is not saved to your computer, network, or a CD, you can go from this page directly to the Capture Wizard in order to capture the video, audio, or still images you want to include in your presentation. For example, you may have recorded video with a camcorder, but not yet transferred it to your computer and saved it as a video file. In this situation, you can start the Capture Wizard to save this recorded video footage to your computer. The video, audio, or still images you capture and save are then added to the list of files that can be imported on the Import Or Capture Audio And VIdeo page of the wizard.

If you plan to narrate slides with video or audio, continue working in the New Presentation Wizard. After you complete the wizard, you can start the Capture Wizard and narrate the slides.

Just as you can organize the slides and still images, you can also determine the order for the corresponding audio and video you want to synchronize with the slides. Therefore, when arranging the list of audio and video files to be imported, make sure that the order corresponds roughly to the order of the slides and still images you selected. You can then easily synchronize the different elements after completing the wizard.

Step-by-Step: Importing or Capturing Audio and Video

To add digital media files to your presentation:

1. If you have recorded audio or video that you want to capture on your computer, or if you want to capture live video, audio, or still images, click Capture to start the Capture Wizard.

    On the main page of the Capture Wizard, you can choose which type of content you want to capture. After you capture the content and save it as a file, the Capture Wizard ends, and the video, audio, or still image is added to the list of files to be imported in the Import Or Capture Audio And Video page of the New Presentation Wizard.

    Still images captured from the Import Or Capture Audio And Video page are added to the Video track of the timeline. This means that these images show in the video display area of the presentation template, not the slide display area.

2. If you know the path and file name of the audio or video file that you want to import, type that location in the Path box, and then click Add.

3. If you want to locate and select the individual audio or video files, click Browse, locate the audio or video file you want to import into your current presentation, and then click Open.

    Video and audio content you select will be added to the Video and Audio 2 tracks, respectively, on the timeline after you have completed the wizard. You can later synchronize the slides or still images with the audio and video you select on this page of the wizard.

    To select multiple audio and video files, you can press the Ctrl key and click each video or audio file that you want to include in your presentation. If the files appear contiguously, you can press the Shift key, click the first file in the list, and then click the last file in the list while still pressing the Shift key.

4. After selecting multiple files, click Move Up or Move Down to specify the order in which the audio and video will be added to the timeline.

5. To remove an audio or video file from the list of files to be imported select the file in the Files box, and then click Remove.

6. Click Next. Depending on the content you selected, you will either proceed to the Synchronize Presentation page or the Complete Presentation page.

Synchronizing Slides—Now or Later

The Synchronize Presentation page lets you determine when you want to synchronize your slides. You can choose to synchronize your slides immediately after completing the New Presentation Wizard, or you can choose to synchronize your slides at a later time.

If you have captured live or taped audio and video to synchronize with your slides, and imported your slides and digital media files in the correct order, you will probably want to synchronize your slides immediately after completing the wizard. In this case, click Yes on the Synchronize Presentation page before proceeding.

There are times when you would not want to synchronize your slides with the audio and video content immediately after completing the New Presentation Wizard. For example, you might have used the Producer PowerPoint add-in program (which comes with Producer) to track slide timings when the original, "live" presentation was recorded. Since the slides were already synchronized, you would not need to synchronize them again.

As you work with the New Presentation Wizard, you may notice that this page does not appear in the following situations:

- No slides or still images are selected.

- No audio or video is selected.

- No audio, video, slides, or still images are selected.

If any of these situations are true, you will go directly to the last page of the New Presentation Wizard, which lets you complete the wizard.

Step-by-Step: Choosing When to Perform Synchronization

To specify whether to synchronize slides immediately or not:

1. If you want to synchronize your presentation immediately after the files are imported and the wizard has completed, click Yes.

2. If you do not want to synchronize your presentation immediately after the files are imported, click No.

3. Click Next to proceed to the Complete Presentation page.

Completing the Wizard

The Complete Presentation page lets you finish the wizard and import the content you have selected to the presentation timeline. When you click Finish, any content you have selected and any information you have entered is then applied to the current project.

The content is then added to the appropriate track on the timeline. This lets you immediately begin editing your project.

If you chose to synchronize your slides with audio and video on the Synchronize Slides page of the New Presentation Wizard, the Synchronize Slides dialog box opens after you click Finish.

If you change your mind about the presentation you are creating and decide to start over, you can easily do so by clicking Cancel on this page or any other page of the New Presentation Wizard.

Step-by-Step: Completing the Wizard

To finish creating your presentation:

- Click Finish to close the wizard and import the files you selected and create the presentation project, or click Cancel to end the wizard and discard your work.

After completing the New Presentation Wizard, one of the following will occur, depending on the choices you made in the wizard.

- If you click Finish and you chose to synchronize your presentation after completing the New Presentation Wizard, the selected files are imported into the current project and added to the timeline. In addition, the Synchronize Slides dialog box appears. You can then synchronize your slides and still images with the audio and/or video files you selected. After synchronizing your presentation, you can then preview it using the Preview Presentation tab.

- If you click Finish and you chose not to synchronize your presentation after completing the New Presentation Wizard, the files you selected are imported into the current project and added to the appropriate tracks on the timeline. The Preview Presentation tab is selected for you, and you can then preview your presentation.

Synchronizing Slides and Still Images

You may already have many PowerPoint presentations or other types of still images that you have created. You may even have video or audio that accompanies these slides. You can use the synchronize slides feature in Producer to put these elements together. With this feature, you can synchronize your slides so a specific slide, slide animation, or still image corresponds to the correct part of your video or audio content. In order to do this, each slide or other still image must appear on the Slide track of the timeline. For the remainder of this section, the term "slide" will refer to all types of still images or slides on the timeline.

You can synchronize your slides with video or with audio only, depending on the type of content you choose, and the goal of your presentation. For instance, you might have a video recording of an instructor teaching a class (which naturally includes an audio track), or you might have only an audio narration without a video image. Regardless, the process for synchronizing slides is basically the same. The main difference you will notice is that a video display appears when you are synchronizing with video.

Step-by-Step: Synchronizing Slides with Video and Audio

The following procedure describes the step-by-step process for synchronizing slides with video or with audio only. Whether you synchronize your slides after completing the New Presentation Wizard or later in the process of creating your presentation, the synchronize slides feature functions in the same way.

1. Open the Synchronize Slides dialog box. There are two ways to do this:

    - In the New Presentation Wizard, click Yes on the Synchronize Presentation page, and then click Finish to complete the wizard. The Synchronize Slides dialog box automatically opens after the files you selected are imported and added to the timeline.

    - On the Tools menu, click Synchronize to open the Synchronize Slides dialog box. The Synchronize command is only enabled when you have added content to both the Slide track and either the Audio 2 or Video track.

2. If you want to preview the current slide timings with the audio and video content, select Preview Slide Timing, and then click the Play button. This lets you see the slide timings as they currently appear on the timeline.

    It is a good idea to preview the presentation and observe the current slide timings before making any changes, especially if you are unfamiliar with the content you are synchronizing. This lets you familiarize yourself with the content and see how the slides, still images, video, and audio work together. You may discover that you need to click Cancel in the Synchronize Slides dialog box so you can rearrange the order of the audio, video, slides, or still images you are synchronizing. No changes are made to the slide timing when you preview the current slide timing.

3. To begin synchronizing, select Set Slide Timing, and then click the Play button. The video or audio begins to play as the current slide or still image is displayed in the Slide window. From this point forward, Producer will record your actions in real time, so pay close attention to the progress of the presentation. When you want the presentation to move to the next slide, click Next Slide to set the slide timing.

4. If your slide contains slide animations, they are displayed in the Slide window. You can then click Next Effect to play the next slide animation or effect and to synchronize that animation or effect with the particular part of the audio or video.

    Whether slide animations or slide transitions are displayed depends on the options that you set in Producer. If the options Disable Slide Transitions On Import or Disable Slide Animations On Import are selected when the PowerPoint pre sentation is imported into Producer, slide animations or slide transitions will not display when you are synchronizing slides, when you preview your presentation in Producer, or when the published presentation is viewed in a Web browser. Therefore, if those options are selected, the entire slide will be displayed in the Slide window rather than a particular slide animation. Furthermore, slide transitions will not be displayed in your synchronized presentation.

5. If necessary, use the controls to navigate through the video or audio file. You can use these controls to skip ahead in the presentation, which might save time if you have slides that remain static for long periods. You can also rewind the presentation, but be careful—once you rewind past slide timings you've already set, the timing information is lost and you will have to redo the synchronization from that point forward.

6. After you have synchronized your slides and still images with video or audio, do one of the following:

   • Click Finish after you have completed synchronizing your presentation. The slide timings you set are then shown on the respective tracks on the timeline.

   • Click Cancel if you want to discard the slide timings you just set.

Starting a New, Empty Project

You can accomplish the same result by creating a presentation from a new blank project as you can by using the New Presentation Wizard. After you become familiar with working in Producer, you may decide that starting a presentation from a new blank project is quicker than working through the New Presentation Wizard. Although the New Presentation Wizard takes you through the process step-by-step, you may find that you prefer to create your presentation on your own.

At times, it may be helpful to start a new blank project, especially if you are unfamiliar with the slides, audio, video, HTML, or other digital media files you are working with. Using a new blank project allows you to import and preview slides, audio, or video before beginning to create your presentation. You can also easily edit and rearrange content on the timeline before synchronizing your presentation.

Table 3-1 shows the page of the New Presentation Wizard and the equivalent menu command you can select to accomplish the same step if you create your presentation starting with a new blank project instead.

Table 3-1 Project Creation Commands.

New Presentation Wizard page	Producer command
Welcome To The New Presentation Wizard	None
Presentation Template	Choose a presentation template and then, on the Clip menu, click Add To Timeline.
Choose A Presentation Scheme	On the Edit menu, click Presentation Scheme.

New Presentation Wizard page	Producer command

Presentation Information	On the Table Of Contents tab, enter the information in appropriate boxes in the Introduction Page area.
Import Slides And Still Images	On the File menu, click Import.
Import Or Capture Audio And Video	On the File menu, click Import. Or, on the Tools menu, click Capture.
Synchronize Presentation	On the Tools menu, click Synchronize.
Complete Presentation	None

Step-by-Step: Starting a New Project

The following steps will help you start a new presentation using a new blank project:

1. On the File menu, click New.

2. Import the individual digital media files you want to use in your presentation.

3. Add existing digital media files to the timeline or capture any new video, audio, or still images you want to include in your presentation.

4. Arrange any slides, still images, audio, video, or HTML content on the timeline.

5. Synchronize your presentation.

Importing Digital Media Files

When creating a new presentation, the first step is to import existing digital media files into Producer. These digital media files can then be added to the timeline and arranged appropriately.

Producer supports a wide variety of digital media file formats. This helps to ensure that a majority of your existing digital media files can be used in your presentation. The following is a list of digital media file types and file formats that can be imported into Producer and used in your presentations:

- Audio files. .aif, .aifc, .aiff .asf, .au, .mp2, .mp3, .mpa, .snd, .wav, .wma

- HTML files. .htm, .html

- Image files. .bmp, .dib, .emf, .gif, .jfif, .jpe, .jpeg, .jpg, .png, .tif, .tiff, .wmf

- PowerPoint files. .pps, .ppt

- Video files. .asf, .avi, .m1v, .mp2, .mpe, .mpeg, .mpg, .mpv2, .wm, .wmv

Producer keeps your digital media files organized by storing them in folders according to file type. This makes it easy to find your captured or imported video files, audio files, PowerPoint presentations, HTML files, and other digital media files when you are creating your presentation. These folders appear in the Media tab of Producer.

When you import a file into Producer, the source file remains unchanged in its original location. You can edit the original source file outside of Producer and any changes you make to the source file will be reflected in the file shown in your current project. On the other hand, any editing you perform in Producer does not change the source file. To ensure that Producer can locate all the necessary files for a project, it is strongly recommended that you do not rename, move, or delete the original source files.

Producer lets you set many options to customize Producer for your own use. These options relate to different aspects of creating a presentation in Producer. One of these customizable aspects involves importing digital media files. The following sections discuss the different options associated with importing files into Producer.

Importing PowerPoint Presentations

Your PowerPoint presentations may include slide animations and slide transitions. You can add these types of effects when creating the original PowerPoint presentation. In Producer, you can specify whether you want PowerPoint slide animations or slide transitions to be displayed.

Whether slide animations or transitions are displayed in Producer depends on whether the Disable Slide Animations On Import and Disable Slide Transitions On Import check boxes on the General tab of the Options dialog box are selected when the PowerPoint presentation is imported. This is true whether you import slides by using the Import command or the New Presentation Wizard.

For example, if the Disable Slide Animations On Import check box is selected when you import your PowerPoint presentation, slide animations in this presentation will not display in Producer or in your final Producer presentation. If you later decide that you want the slide animations to display, you need to re-import the PowerPoint presentation into Producer after clearing the Disable Slide Animations On Import check box. This is true for slide transitions as well.

You can also choose whether any audio and video that is already added to your PowerPoint presentation is separated from the slides when the PowerPoint presentation is imported. This option can be set using the Separate Audio And Video From Slides On Import check box on the General tab of the Options dialog box. For example, you might have already incorporated audio and video into your PowerPoint presentation. If so, you may want to separate audio and video when you import the PowerPoint presentation into Producer so you can use the audio and video in other parts of your presentation.

By default, when a PowerPoint presentation is imported, slide animations and transitions are displayed and audio and video in the PowerPoint presentation is separated from the slides. The default settings for importing PowerPoint slides are shown in Figure 3-4.
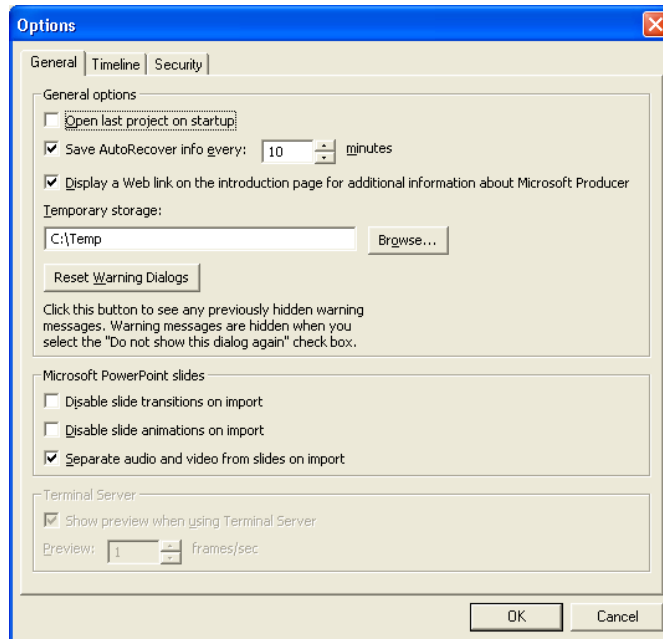
Figure 3-4   Settings for importing a PowerPoint presentation.

Step-by-Step: Setting PowerPoint Import Options

The following procedure describes the step-by-step process for setting the import options for PowerPoint slides. For these settings to take effect, they must be configured before the PowerPoint presentation is imported into Producer.

1. On the Tools menu, click Options, and then select the General tab.

2. In the Microsoft PowerPoint Slides area, do one or more of the following based on the settings you want:

    *   If you do not want slide transitions to display and play back in Producer, select the Disable Slide Transitions On Import check box.

    *   If you do not want slide animations to display and play back in Producer, select the Disable Slide Animations On Import check box.

    *   For example, if you selected this check box, imported the slides, and then synchronized your slides to audio and video you imported, the entire slide will be displayed at once, rather than each individual slide animation.

    *   If you want video and audio to be separated from your slides when a PowerPoint presentation is imported into Producer, select the Separate Audio And Video From Slides On Import check box. When the slides are imported, the separated audio and video files are imported and added to the Audio and Video folders that display in the Media tab in Producer.

3. Click OK to close the Options dialog box and save the new settings.

Importing Audio and Video

Producer lets you import a variety of audio and video files for use in your presentations. When importing video files, you can choose to have the file separated into smaller, more manageable clips. For example, if you had a video file that was 30 minutes long, but you only wanted to use a three-minute portion of the file, you could select the Create Clips For Video Files check box in the Import File dialog box, and then import the selected video file. The file would then be broken down into smaller clips, so you could more easily find the particular portion of the video that you want to use in your presentation. How the video files are separated into smaller clips depends on the type of video file that you select.

Step-by-Step: Importing Digital Media Files into Producer

The following procedure describes the step-by-step process for importing existing digital media files into Producer. You can import files regardless of whether you are creating a presentation with a new blank project or you have already started a presentation using the New Presentation Wizard and need to import additional digital media files.

1. On the File menu, click Import.

2. Locate and select the digital media files you want to import. These files can include still images, video, audio, HTML files, and PowerPoint presentations.

    You can import multiple digital media files at one time. To do this, press the Ctrl key, and then click each file you want to import into your current project. If multiple files are listed contiguously in the Import File dialog box, you can press the Shift key, click the first file you want to import, and then click the last file in the list that you want to import.

3. Do one of the following:

    *   Select the Create Clips For Video Files check box if you want any video files you select to be separated in to smaller clips using clip detection. Remember, the original file is not changed in any way.

    *   Clear the Create Clips For Video Files check box if you do not want any selected video files to be separated into clips.

    If you later decide that you want the video file to be separated into clips, you can do so after the files are imported by choosing the Create Clips command from the Tools menu. Likewise, if this check box is selected and you later decide you want the clips to appear as one file, you can combine the clips.

4. Click Open to import the selected digital media files into Producer.

When the files are imported into Producer, they are automatically added to the appropriate folder in the project. For example, still images are added and stored in the Images folder, video files are stored in the Video folder, and so forth.

Saving Your Project

After you start a presentation using the New Presentation Wizard or a new blank project, you will want to save the project. A project is made up of all the files you have imported and captured in Producer. This includes any audio, video, or still images you have imported or captured in Producer, as well as any HTML files or PowerPoint presentations you have imported.

The arrangement of these items on the timeline is also saved in your project. Therefore, you can later open the project and then continue editing from where you left off when you last saved your project. A Producer project file has an .MSProducer file name extension.

After completing your project, you are then ready to publish the project as a presentation. This is the presentation that your audience will watch in their Web browsers on their computers. You can publish the presentation to a variety of locations, including an internal intranet site, a shared network location, a Web site, an e-service provider's Web site, or a recordable or rewriteable CD.

Saving Project Archives—Pack And Go

With time constraints in the working environment, things are always changing. Even after you publish the project as a presentation, you might need to make changes later on. For example, you might create and publish a presentation containing marketing information for a product line that you know you will change several times a year.

So that you do not have to create the entire presentation again, you might want to *pack* the project, meaning that all the source files and the actual Producer project file are stored in one file—a Producer project archive with an .MSProducerZ file name extension. This way, when the updated information is available, you can simply insert the new information and then publish the presentation again without starting from the beginning.

Packing a project to create a project archive is helpful because it lets you put all the necessary source files in one file. When you import source files, such as video, audio, still images, and so forth, Producer links to the source files in their original locations. Unfortunately, if the original source file is moved, renamed, or deleted, the link in the project file is broken—Producer will not be able to locate the files. As you can probably see, this could be a problem if you need to move your project from one computer to another or if you think you will need to make changes to the project later on. By packing your project, you can avoid this potential problem.

After you pack a project, you can then open the packed project archive on another computer. Copies of all of the associated source files are also unpacked to the folder or location you specify, along with the Producer project file.

This feature can be especially useful for those who spend a lot of time traveling. For example, you might start a presentation on a computer in your office, where you import files located on your office computer or a network location into your project, but you do not have the time to complete the project and publish it in while you are in your office. You could take the CD that contains the packed project archive and then unpack it on another computer, such as on a laptop computer. This allows you to work on your project while you are on the road without having to worry about broken links from source files that were originally located on a network or on your office computer.

Step-by-Step: Packing and Unpacking a Project Archive

The following procedure describes the step-by-step process for packing a Producer project archive. These first steps describe how to create a project archive.

1. On the File menu, click Save Project. If you have not saved the project yet, type a project name in the File Name box, and then click Save.

2. On the File menu, click Pack And Go.

   The About Pack And Go page appears and provides information about using Pack And Go to create a project archive.

3. On the About Pack And Go page, click Continue.

4. In the Pack Project As dialog box, click the location where you want your project archive to be saved.

   When choosing the location for your project archive, choose a location that has enough available disk space. Depending on the source files and contents of your project, the project archive file can become quite large.

5. In the File Name box, type a new name for the archive or accept the default project archive name (which is the same name as the Producer project file). Click Save to create the project archive.

The time it takes for the project archive to be created depends on the size of the project and the source files used in the project. For example, if you have longer video or audio files in your project, the time it takes to create the project archive will be greater than if you had shorter video and audio files. Furthermore, your connection speed to a corporate network can also play a role if some of your source files are located on the network. A project archive cannot exceed 2 gigabytes (GB) in file size.

This second set of steps describes how to unpack the project archive.

1. On the File menu, click Open, and locate the project archive file. Click Open.

   The project archive can be saved on a shared network location, on your local computer, on a recordable or rewriteable CD, or on a compressed media disk.

2. In the Browse For Folder dialog box, locate the folder to which you want your project file and the associated project files to be unpacked, or click Make New Folder to create a new folder. Figure 3-5 shows an example of selecting a location to unpack a project.
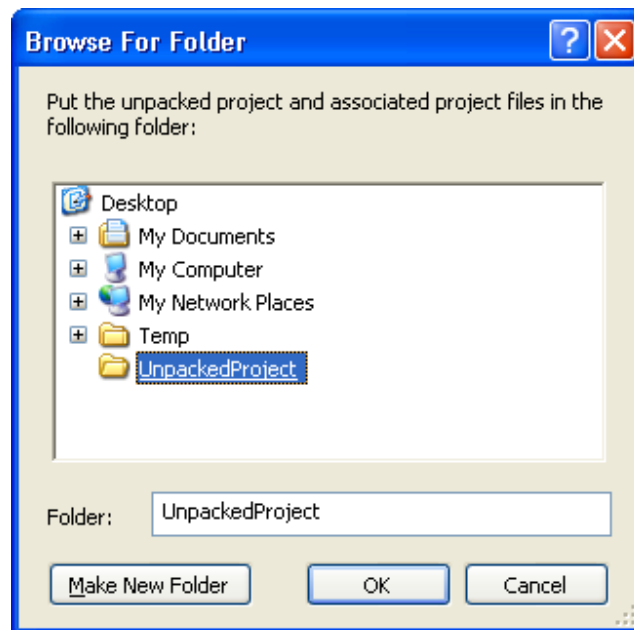

Figure 3-5   Selecting the folder where the project files will be stored.

3. Click OK to begin unpacking the project archive.

   The time it takes for the project to be unpacked depends, as before, on the size of the files in the project.

   The files are unpacked to separate subfolders based on the file types in the project. For example, Figure 3-6 shows the resulting project and folders created for a sample interview training presentation.
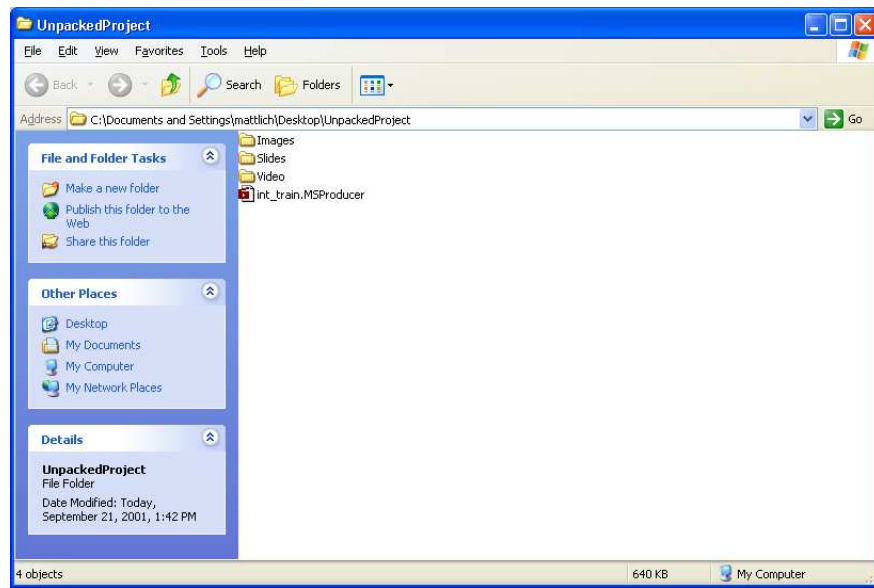
Figure 3-6   The folders created for unpacked project files.