SECTION 1

Foundations

CHAPTER 1

Creating e-Learning with PowerPoint

There's an urban myth that humans use only 2 percent of their brains. While that's never been substantiated, the idea does seem to bear out in regard to PowerPoint: most users employ just a fraction of PowerPoint's capabilities. Those of us in training know that an awful lot of classroom PowerPoint shows are just mind-numbing screen after screen of bulleted text. Adventuresome trainers may add some decorative elements like spinning slide transitions, pretty clip art, or animated text. In its worst application, poorly designed PowerPoint shows are uploaded to the web and called "e-learning." But they aren't "e-learning" programs. They are e-presentations or e-lectures or e-reading, but there's no learning there anywhere. Likewise, those who think PowerPoint can't be used to create good e-learning programs have likely only seen PowerPoint at its worst: slide after slide of bulleted lists, dizzying irrelevant animation, and decorative rather than meaningful graphics. (For that matter, many e-learning programs, regardless of the authoring tool used, suffer from the same problems. Search Google for a common topic like "online safety training" and see what you find.)

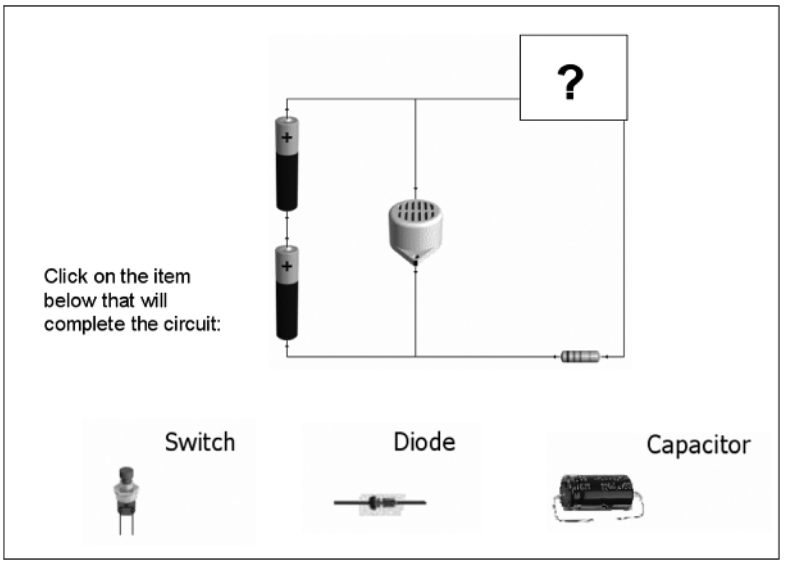
> In user testing, Microsoft found that nine out of every ten features that customer wanted to see added to Office products were already in the program.
>
> **Ina Fried, www.CNEDnews.com, September 2005**

It's a shame that PowerPoint is so often badly used or underused because it can be so much more than a presentation tool. For those interested in e-learning, it can often replicate what is otherwise done with expensive authoring tools. With PowerPoint, some imagination, and some patience, you can create interesting, engaging online courses with meaningful interactivity. Figures 1.1 through 1.7 show some examples of PowerPoint's potential.

Examples

Multiple-Choice Quizzes

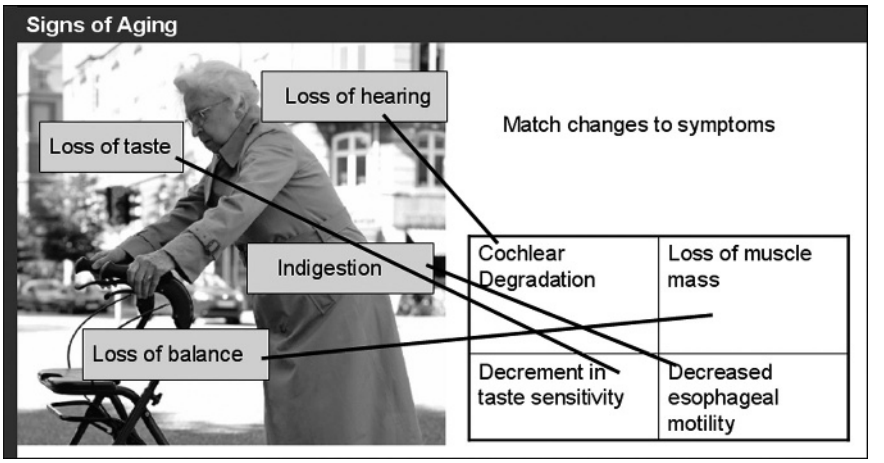
Figure 1.1. Multiple-Choice Quiz



Source: Simon Drane. Component images. www.crocodile-clips.com

Matching Exercises

Figure 1.2. Matching Exercise

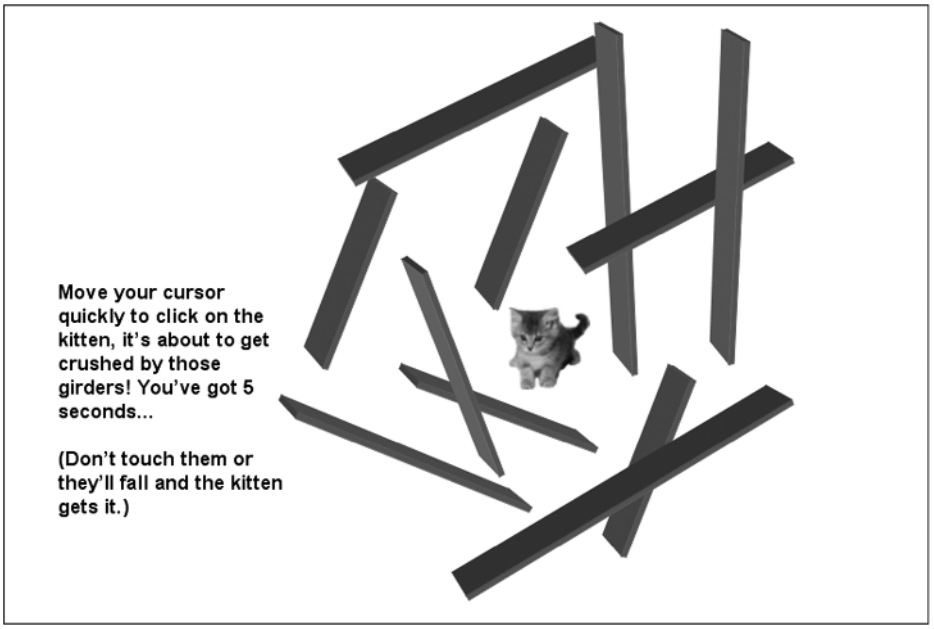


Game-Show-Type Quiz

Figure 1.3. Jeopardy-Type Quiz

Mazes

Figure 1.4. Maze



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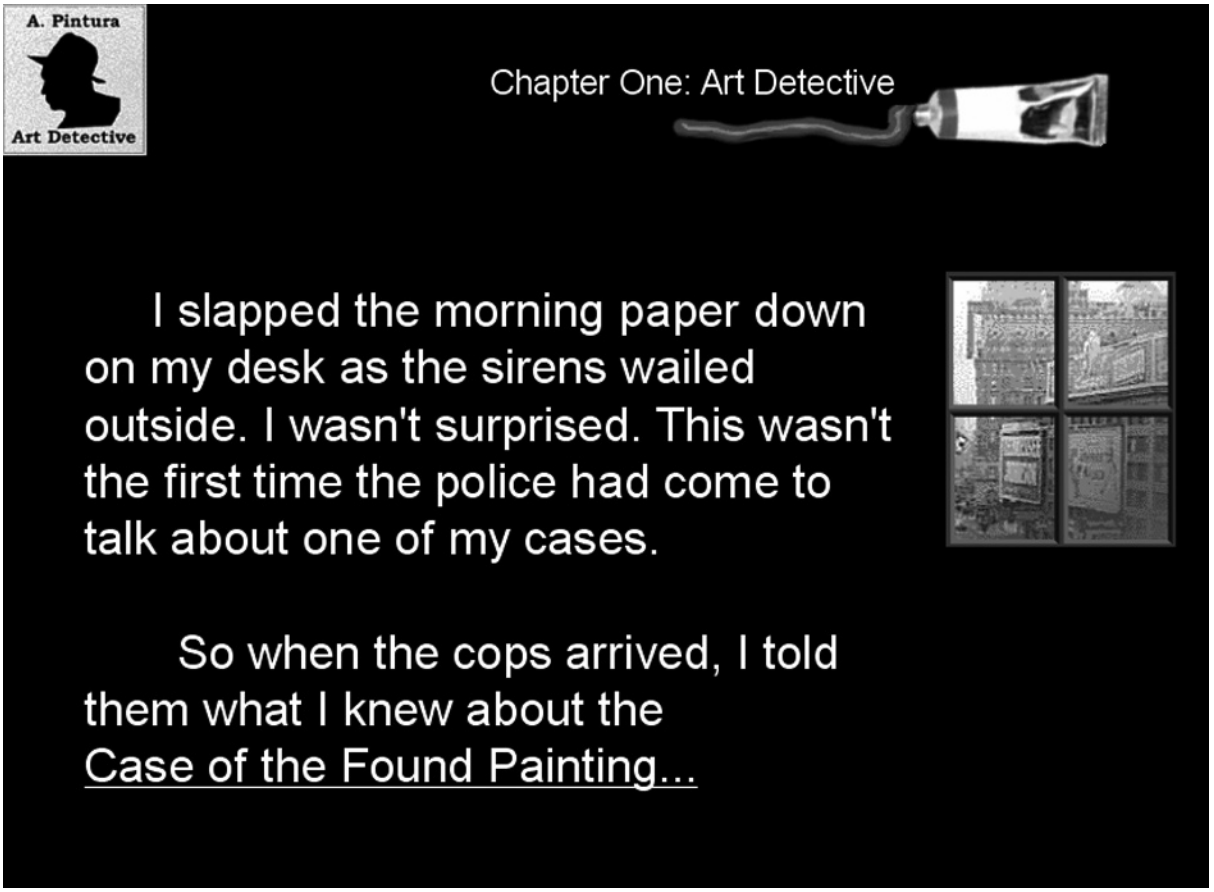
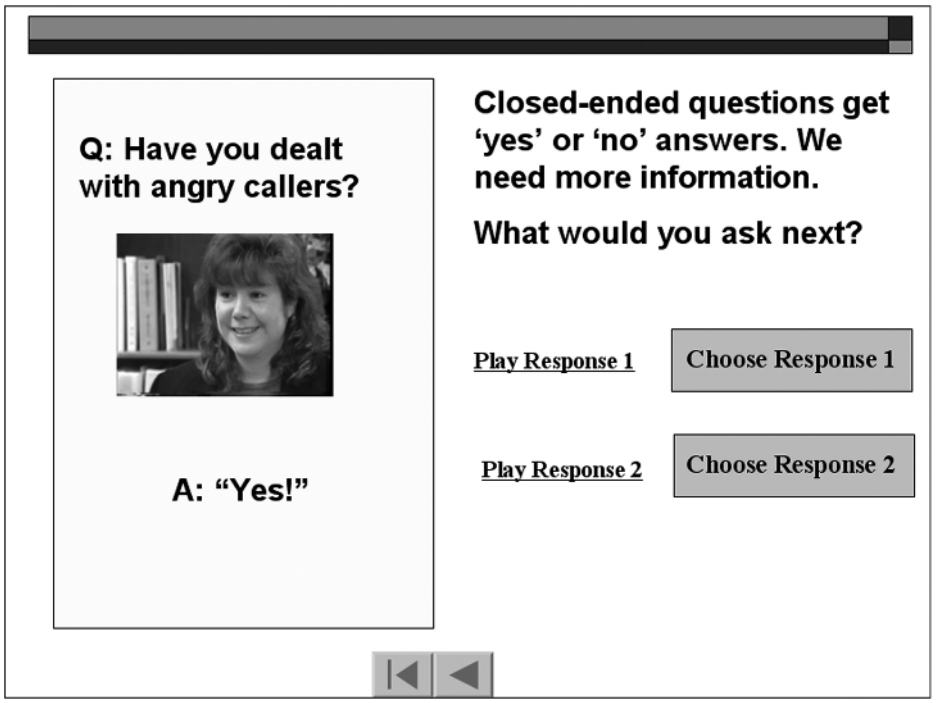
Case Studies

Figure 1.5. Case Study



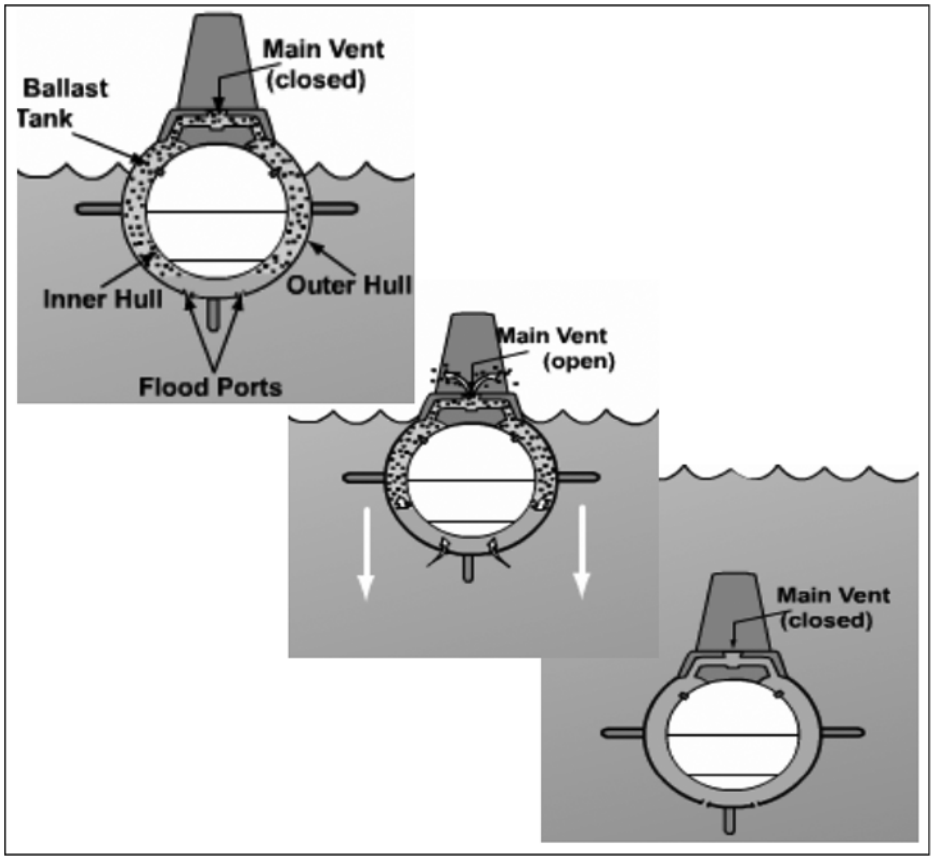
Simulations with Branching Decision Making, with Embedded Audio and Video Clips

Figure 1.6. Simulation with Branching Decision Making



Animations That Teach

Figure 1.7. Animation Illustrating Concept



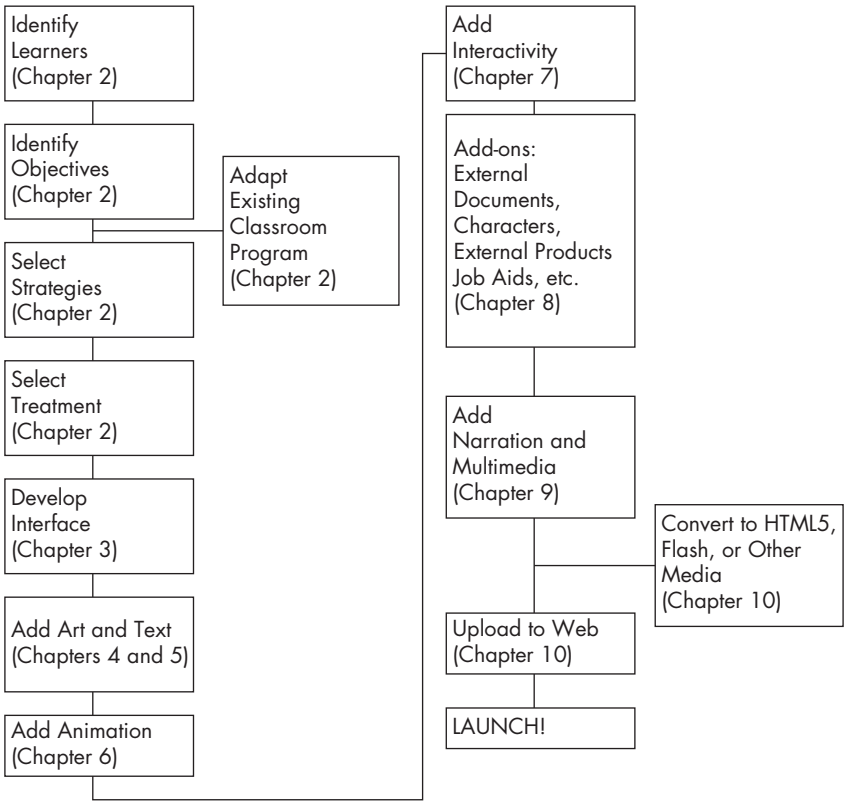
Source: www.onr.navy/mil

Let's Get Started

The rest of this book takes you on a step-by-step walk through the process of developing e-learning with PowerPoint. The chart below provides an overview of the basic process for creating an e-learning program with PowerPoint, while Table 1.1 offers a checklist (there's a printable version on the website for this book) of the process in more detail.

ON THE WEB

Chart 1.1. Process Overview



ON THE WEB

Table 1.1. Development Checklist

- ❑ Identify your learners.
- ❑ Determine objectives.
- ❑ Adapt existing classroom program (if applicable).
- ❑ Choose strategies.
- ❑ Choose treatment.
- ❑ Create main file folder and subfolders for images, media, etc.
- ❑ Develop the storyboard.
- ❑ Create graphic user interface (GUI) and slide and title masters.
- ❑ Include "how to use this program" information for new learners.
- ❑ Add art and text.
- ❑ Add animation.
- ❑ Add interactivity.
- ❑ Add narration and multimedia.
- ❑ Save everything!
- ❑ Add other elements: documents, characters, external quizzes and sites, pre- and post-work, "blended" components, job aids
- ❑ Add a site map
- ❑ Save everything!
- ❑ Convert to Flash, HTML5, MP4, or other medium (optional).
- ❑ Upload to web or LMS.
- ❑ Test.
- ❑ Launch.

ON THE WEB

The website offers narrated explanations, "you try" tutorials, examples of items like working animations and interactions, and templates for game design.

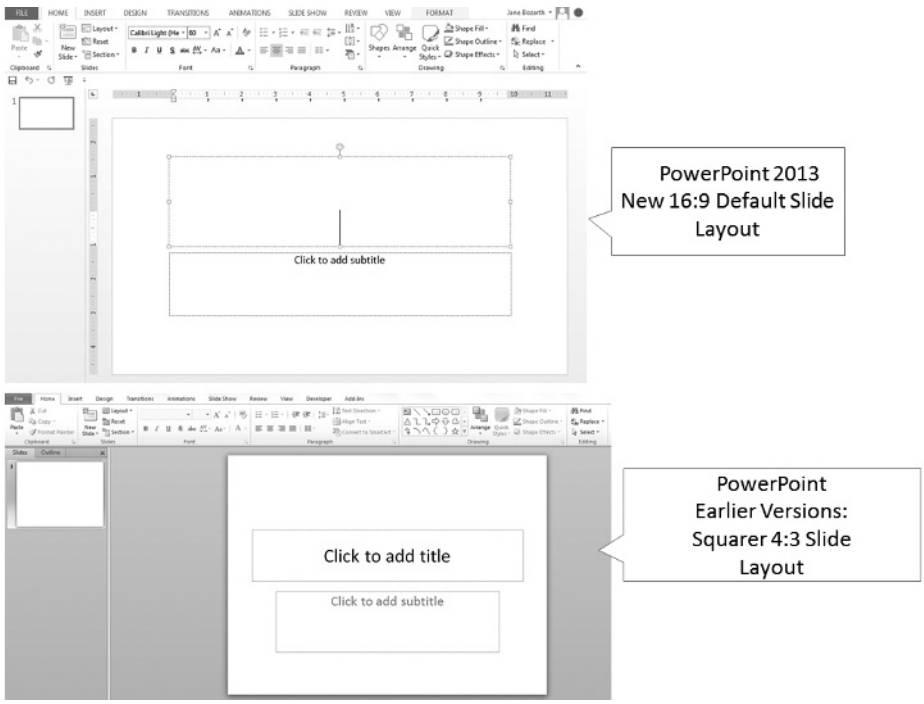
Versions

Many basics of PowerPoint have remained the same over time. Perhaps the biggest change came with the release of PowerPoint 2007, which

introduced the new "ribbon" interface. Even this meant finding the new locations for familiar tools, rather than learning all the commands from scratch. PowerPoint 2010 brought some changes to authoring and version control, ability to export as a WMV video file, easy means of inserting a video with player controls, a change in how audio was edited, and a few enhancements to art capabilities.

The biggest visible change to PowerPoint 2013 is the new default widescreen 16:9 ratio, shown in Figure 1.8. It's more appropriate for newer laptops and many devices, thus creating slides now more rectangular than square (At this time, though, the old 4:3 format still ideally fits the iPad.).

Figure 1.8. New 16:9 Default Screen Ratio in PowerPoint 2013



While this change makes sense, it's going to bring challenges to PowerPoint users. For one thing, old slides won't just "work" as they usually do across other versions of PowerPoint. Importing old presentations will result in a stretched look as images, text, and background are pulled to fit the rectangular frame. You can reset the slide to the old format by clicking the "Design" tab and choosing "Slide Size," but even then the transfer won't be perfect. As PowerPoint 2013 is brand-new, help on this is evolving, so search the Internet for updates and pointers. While this is going to prove challenging, it does bring increased slide space and the opportunity to do new, creative things with our projects (NOT just add more filler, though!), so try to see it as an opportunity to improve your work.

PowerPoint 2013 has added more "social" functionality, with commenting, simultaneous reviewing, and the sharing made available through SkyDrive cloud storage and sending files to SharePoint. PowerPoint 2013 is also more device-friendly, making it easier to work with on tablets and handheld devices, and the widescreen display is better suited to most newer laptops and monitors. There's also the new eyedropper color-picker tool, functionality for inserting images and videos from the web and taking screenshots, improvements in charting, and some changes in the interface.

PowerPoint 2013 allows for more sophisticated animations and makes the motion path animations more precise, and new Smart Guides help with aligning objects. There's also new capability for exporting files as MP4s, which will play on tablets and other devices.

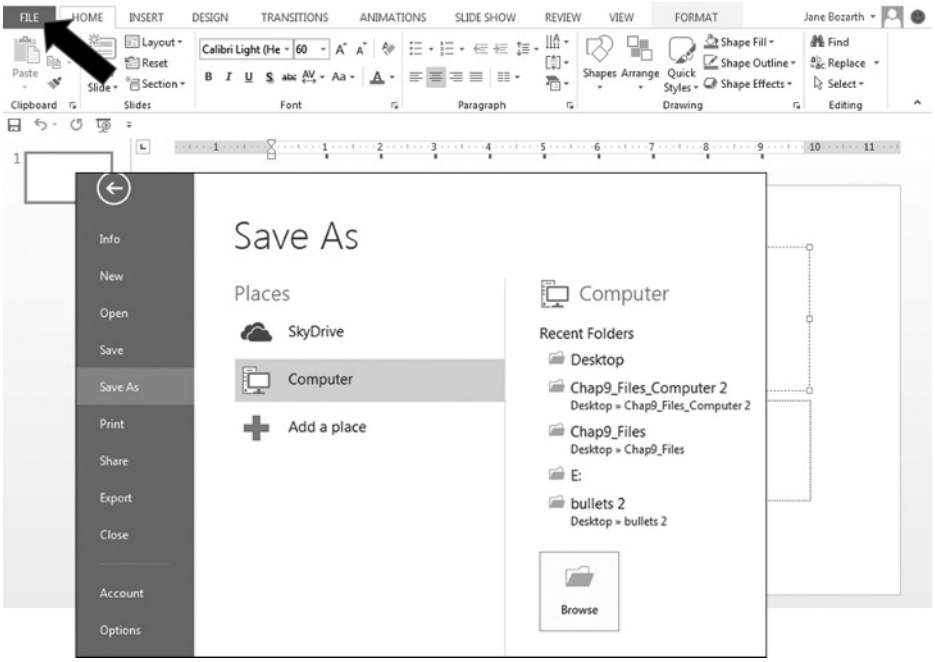
Other things have been taken away. Windows no longer comes with the Sound Editor tool, and narration can only be recorded directly to PowerPoint in a low-quality format with some editing functionality. Better audio quality therefore now requires an add-on. It's not impossible to manage, but it's hard to understand why the tool was removed. The easy tool for swapping colors in clipart is also gone. The color swap can still be done, but it now requires ungrouping the picture and

recoloring (often tiny) pieces one at a time. The updated animation pane offers something akin to a scrub bar that makes it easier to work with/preview long animations.

There's a new Start screen that offers more options for where to begin, and there's more effort to add collaboration/sharing tools and allow for cloud-based SkyDrive storage and sharing. The "File" menu, now called the "backstage" has its own screen, which expands earlier capability (see Figure 1.9).

Apart from software versions? Really, the field has changed. In the time since I worked on the first edition of this book in 2007, YouTube has exploded with hundreds of PowerPoint tutorials, on everything from animating a chart to working with slide masters. People like Tom Kuhlmann and his work with Articulate and, especially, his Rapid

Figure 1.9. New File Menu in PowerPoint 2013



e-Learning blog have helped to further understanding of PowerPoint for e-learning design, not just presentation, and supported credibility of using PowerPoint as an authoring tool, even if it received further processing with another product.

One More Thing

Based on past readership I am assuming that readers of this edition are primarily wearing multiple hats: training practitioner, instructional designer, e-learning creator, perhaps even HR generalist or subject-matter expert. I'm also guessing that you aren't working in a huge organization with an army of programmers and designers at your disposal. For that reason I've made some choices about the examples and screenshots I provide. My goal is for you to be able to do everything described in this book and to feel confident, as you read, that you can. So sometimes, for instance, I may have chosen an example with exemplary ideas and interactions but less-than-dazzling graphics. "A. Pintura: Art Detective," an example that appears throughout the book, is not a very pretty program. But it is more effective at helping a learner learn than 95 percent of the e-learning courses I've seen. And, given a little patience, anyone with even rudimentary PowerPoint skills could re-create it. So some things here may not be as pretty or sophisticated as they could be, but they still work and they're within your reach. I hope you find everything here doable, and if you have an artistic bent—or an artist at your disposal—then by all means I hope you can improve on the basics I offer.

Next Stop: It's About Design, Not Software

This book will help you move "beyond the bullets" to new ways of thinking about PowerPoint-based e-learning. Success in applying this material isn't a matter of technical wizardry. It takes patience and creativity and a willingness to experiment and learn, as we often do, through some trial and error. I hope you enjoy this journey.