

Tools We Use: Keynote vs. Prezi

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Apr 20, 2016

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Prezi Overview: Nate Jones

I already know what you're probably thinking. "Is this guy really about to try and sell me on Prezi? That was cool for, like, a year." But stick with me because what I'm about to tell you may shock and disturb you: most of the Prezis you've probably seen aren't really Prezis [GASP]. [This](#), [this](#), and [this](#) do not deserve to be called Prezis. Okay, yes, *technically*, they are "Prezis" in the sense that they were made using Prezi, but they're all just more of the same, linear-style presentations we're so used to seeing and building with some Prezi flavor seasoning added — kinda like the majority of "Chinese food" here in the states.

For the few of you reading who may not have heard anything of this "Prezi" tool and might've just seen something totally foreign via those links above, here's an overview:

What is Prezi?

[Prezi](#) is a free, web-based, SAAS tool for building presentations. When it emerged back in 2009, it promised to change the way we did presentations and has experienced a decline in use after a brief "honeymoon" period of widespread popularity right after it first came out. It breaks the mold of traditional, linear presentation tools like Microsoft's PowerPoint, or Apple's very robust Keynote, mainly by way of its bread and butter "[zooming user interface \(ZUI\)](#)" feature. Essentially, this allows users to zoom in and out on a z-axis and places "slides" within a 3-dimensional "space". For those of you with the budget to justify it, Prezi also offers 3 levels of subscription membership,

which provide more advanced features such as image editing tools, increased storage space, privacy options, and the ability to work offline.

Why I love Prezi

Instead of forcing ideas and thoughts to visit our world by putting them into a linear, slide-to-slide order, we as humans can get much closer to visiting a thought's world via Prezi. Also, there are virtually no limits to where an element can't live on a well-selected canvas.

Pros

- Breaks the mundane (if done well) and has potential to stand out from the crowd or other sales pitches
- Web/cloud-based, so no need to export as a PDF, or any other file type (although, you do have that option if you wanted to store a local version)
- Invite others to edit — [Up to 10 collaborators CAN work on a Prezi at the same time](#), seeing what other editors are doing in real-time. This certainly beats having one person on your team “own” a deck so that only they can work on building it. #divideandconquer
- Super easy to integrate media (like videos, pictures, etc.)
- [Import from PowerPoint \(.ppt\)](#) (you'll already have a solid starting place to really start making something awesome.)

Cons

- More of a learning curve when first starting out and more time-intensive to “Prezi” effectively
- Has been known to cause motion sickness (no, seriously....I've witnessed it)
- Can't import from Keynote (like you can with a PowerPoint)
- They can take longer, depending on how creative you want to be when framing your messages/topics (speaking from experience, the better ones take time)
- Negative stigma/energy sometimes present in the room as soon as you go to open up your Prezi (I KNOW, right?! Before they've even SEEN it...)

Pro Tips

- **Don't use the “templates” that Prezi provides** — they are for people who don't really want to do a Prezi but want to say that they've “tried” Prezi; instead, pick your own high-resolution JPEG or PNG from a Google Image search or — even better — dig through one of those fantastic image libraries to which your company

pays expensive monthly access (I'm winking at you, marketing and design pros), and use those as your canvass or "space" to explore.

- Only use Prezi if you can **truly commit to spending time** to make it all that it can be.
- Use "Blackout" feature for crucial points during your presentation — at any point during your slideshow, simply tap "B" to black out whatever might be on screen at that moment. This way, you'll communicate that you really want your audience to pay attention to what you're saying at that moment and not allow them to be distracted by whatever was just up on screen.
- **Be sure to not let the medium best the message(s)** you're trying to convey. Your Prezi will go much further and have more impact if you give time to thinking about where and how you place pieces of information and content within the environment you've set up.
- **Utilize the movements between elements!** Don't move in and out just for the sake of it looking cool. Keep in mind that it gives some viewers motion sickness, so be strategic in how you incorporate movement. For example, if you are asked to give a presentation on a given audience, consider choosing multiple images to represent various slices of their day and use the movement between those points to illustrate how they might progress or travel from point to point, decision to decision, encounter to encounter, etc...
- That last Pro Tip is especially important because if you aren't going to do [something meaningful](#) with the movement, you might as well be building a Keynote or PowerPoint.

Bottom Line:

I've been right there where you might've been before: sitting in front of a nauseating Prezi that really seemed like a whole lotta flashiness but very little sizzle and finesse. Prezi is wonderful for adding those extra layers that allow a listener to "visit" a thought's universe rather than forcing it to put on a corporate suit so that it can show itself to us or "look the part." So, before you say "meh" or shrug your shoulders the next time "Prezi" is mentioned, try these above tips and give it another go. A real go. And no, I'm not secretly a brand ambassador for Prezi.

About Nate:

Nate is a Junior Digital Strategist at Centerline Digital. As a professional thinker, questioner, challenger, and learner, Nate likes helping others frame their messaging,

organize their information, and be as effective as possible with their content. When he's not strategizing, he can be found campaigning for goofballs everywhere, making lists, and attempting to keep up with his last name. Follow Nate on Twitter or LinkedIn.

Keynote Overview: Joe Bond

What is Keynote?

Keynote is Apple's version of PowerPoint—except better. Steve Jobs used it to craft his presentations, and Al Gore used Keynote for his presentations on climate change.

Why I love Keynote

Keynote is great at handling images, video and animation—I don't have to worry about adding interactive elements or high-res video into my presentations because Keynote just works.

It's easy to build engaging, compelling presentations when you can focus on crafting and refining your message rather than trying to understand why the text box is acting funny.

Pros

- Animation: Animating objects is really easy in Keynote (maybe you've heard of Magic Move?). Check out this recreation of Google's material design video or a quick mobile app animation I put together for a talk.
- Easy text formatting: Text formatting straightforward in Keynote—you can edit leading, tracking, and kerning from the formatting panel.
- Simple master slides: Master slides are foundational for all great presentations because they help enforce consistency in large decks. Lucky for all of us, Keynote makes it simple to create and edit master slides for custom themes that everybody can use.

Cons

- If you don't have a Mac then you can't use Keynote. Sorry Windows users, Keynote is only available on Apple devices. Although, you can export PowerPoint files from Keynote if you need to.
- I can't think of any more cons!

Pro Tips

- Always build master slides. Create a solid selection of master slides that you continually iterate on—after a few presentations you’ll have a collection of slides that you can easily reuse in the future and share with your peers. Consider using tasteful animation. Animation is a great way to bring your ideas to life. Keynote makes animation accessible through Magic Move and solid slide transitions.

About Joe:

I enjoy Seinfeld, [Biscuit](#) (my dog), and living in the City of Oaks. I love designing things for our clients and Centerline lets me design lots of things. Give me a shout on Twitter at [@byjoebond](#).

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