

## Presenting video at events

Many of the films made by NorthLight Media are intended for presentation at events, usually via a computer and digital projector.

Although we can output a film to any digital video format, the huge number of ways to show a film via computer and projector can lead to problems. We've seen several high quality HD films spoiled by underpowered laptops or badly planned Powerpoint presentations.

Our responsibility as a supplier normally only extends as far as supplying you with a film in the format you request. We can advise on the best format for your intended use but the responsibility for the actual presentation normally rests with the client.

We will liaise with any AV production company you might be working with and we can attend a presentation to help if necessary. There is normally an additional cost associated with this.

So to help you, we have produced this short guide to showing videos at events.

### DVD/Blu-ray discs

If you are showing the film on a video disc, the process is straightforward. You play the disc on a dedicated player or using the DVD/Blu-ray software on your computer. Load up the disc and press play (or navigate the menu if that's what you asked for).

We normally supply two discs for this kind of presentation and strongly advise you to test them both before the event **on the machine that you will use.**

## **YouTube hosted films**

Some presenters are brave enough to include YouTube-hosted video in their presentations. If you can absolutely rely on a fast internet connection and believe YouTube will be available at the time you need it, go for it.

We can upload your film to YouTube and you do the rest. A link to a YouTube video can be inserted into a Powerpoint presentation just like any other web page link. Later versions of Powerpoint even allow you to use YouTube's embed code to show the film on the slide.

## **Video file stored on the presenter's computer**

This is probably the most common scenario, but it's also the one with the most variables. The number of video file formats is bewildering and all the formats have widely varying specifications. Most newish computers can play most video file formats but there are no guarantees.

If your laptop has been provided by your employer and is mostly used for spreadsheets, word processing and email handling, it might not have very good graphics performance. The same applies if it's quite old.

A high-definition video file can be hundreds of megabytes, so you'll need to have the space on your computer's hard drive and don't assume it will fit on a memory stick.

The Windows vs Mac issue is much less of a problem these days but there are some files that won't play on a standard Windows machine if they were created on an Apple computer, and vice-versa. Software is available for both systems that allow files of all formats to be played. These programs are alternatives to Windows Media Player and Quicktime/iTunes and there are far too many to list, with new ones appearing every day. Sometimes Windows Media Player or QuickTime just need a 'codec' or 'plug-in' to allow them to play a file.

Most work-provided machines have restrictions on downloading software, so you should be working with your friendly IT department to address any problems. We are happy to deal with your IT people to establish the best file format for your computer. If you have a file that your computer is happy with, you just need to know where you've stored it and then double-click it when you need it. The video playing software will open and off you go.

### **Playing a video in Powerpoint**

If your presentation uses Powerpoint, you probably want to make the film part of the presentation. Many clients want to 'embed' the film into the Powerpoint and this can be done. The video is inserted into the slide just like you would an image and then the film can be configured to 'play on page load' or 'play on click'.

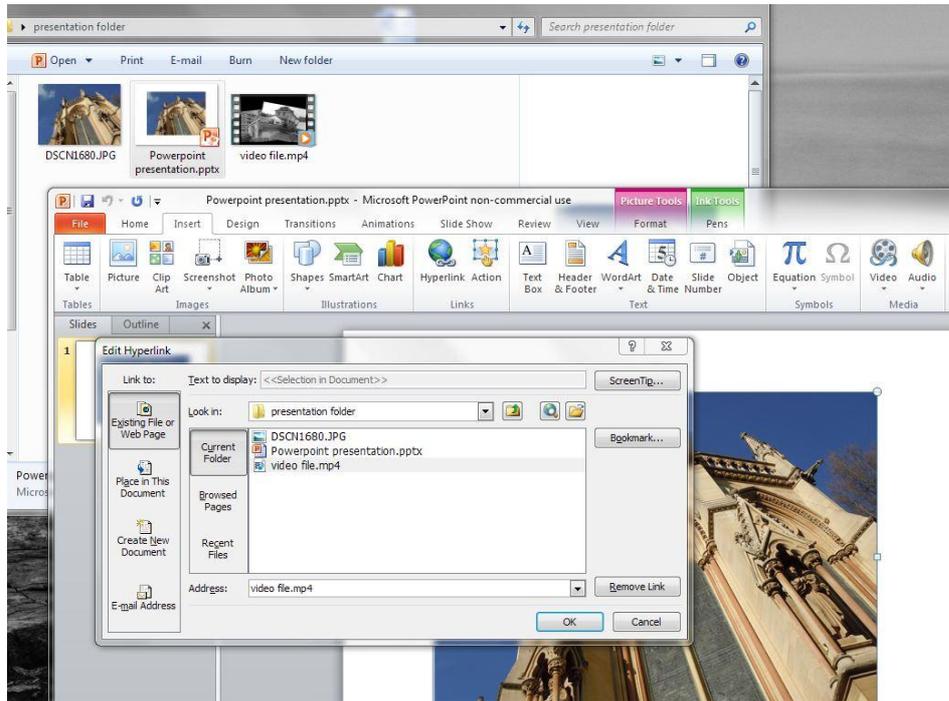
One of the downsides to embedding a video is that Powerpoint's in-built video player is not as good as many of the standalone video programs, especially if your version of Powerpoint is an older one. It might only play Windows format files, such as WMV, and the video can become pixelated or stutter. [Here's Microsoft's guide to Office-friendly video formats](#) (click to view).

Another problem is that a presentation with video embedded gets rather big and unwieldy in terms of file size. Later versions of Powerpoint will allow you to optimise compatibility of video files and even compress them. It doesn't work with all formats and will usually result in loss of quality.

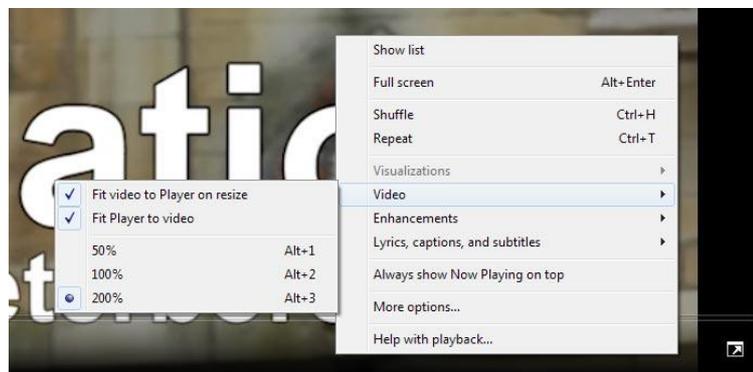
A better approach might be to link to a video file on the same computer and allow the computer's preferred video player to show the film.

The best way to do this is to create a new folder on your computer where you will store the video file and save the Powerpoint presentation to. Now create your slide where you want the film to be shown and insert an image to represent the film or some text (maybe the title of the film). Highlight the image or text and click

'Hyperlink' under the 'Insert' tab. Choose 'Existing File or Web Page' and navigate to the video file that is in the same folder as your presentation.



When you reach the part of your presentation where you want to play the film, click on the image or text. On a Windows computer, Windows Media Player will open and your video will play. You may have to click on the 'play full screen' icon or you can instruct Windows Media Player to play the video at 200%, if the quality will allow.



You will also have to close the video player window at the end of the film, so this method isn't as slick as inserting the actual video file into the presentation but it can help you to solve those horrible compatibility problems. And it almost always looks better film quality.

If you want to distribute your presentation online or via email after the event, you can upload a version of the film to YouTube and then change the hyperlink in the presentation to link to the online version of the film. Powerpoint 2010 even allows you to insert the YouTube embed code into your presentation so viewers can watch the YouTube video right there on the slide as long as they are online.

This guide can't cover all the problems you may experience when showing a video at an event but it gives you plenty to think about and a few things to try. The absolute golden rule for every event presentation is to check all your digital files and equipment and make sure it all works smoothly long before the event itself. That way you will have a very small audience if it goes wrong, rather than a big one. You should then have time to fix it.

Good luck with the presentation!