

SAY WHAT? VOICEOVERS AND AUDIO EDITING FOR POWERPOINT

By: Morgan Germann, Affinity Consulting Group LLC

As a legal professional, you've found that PowerPoint presentations are essential for conveying complex ideas, engaging clients, and presenting compelling arguments. When you design your slides, you probably prioritize integrating pictures, graphs, and other visual aids over text. However, when your slides rely on your voice to convey the most vital information, sharing your presentation with people who can't attend in person can be tricky. It can also be challenging for people to remember what you said during your live presentation, not realizing a point was important until it was too late to write it down. Fortunately, you can easily break free from the physical confines of the meeting room while still preserving the information you want to convey by putting voiceovers with your slides. Let's explore what it takes to incorporate professional, high-quality voiceovers into your next PowerPoint.

MAKE YOUR POWERPOINT

Before diving into your recording, you must design your slides and plan what you will say. One of the advantages of recording voiceovers instead of presenting live is the flexibility recordings offer. You can choose to read directly from a script, and it won't impact your engagement with the audience. However, it may not be feasible for you to script out every word you plan to say, whether because of time constraints or because you simply think better on your feet. If that sounds like you, simply use whatever strategy works best for you when you give a presentation live.

If you need guidance on using PowerPoint, Lawyerist offers a [legal-specific PowerPoint manual](#).

RECORD YOURSELF

Most modern computers and smartphones have voice-recording capabilities. This includes iOS, Windows, and Android devices. Look for the Voice Memos app if you're using an iOS device. If you can't find it on your phone, search the App Store for the free download. Apple offers instructions for Voice Memos [on its website](#). If you're an Android user, look for the Voice Recorder app. If you can't find it on your phone, search the Play Store and download the free Samsung Voice Recorder app. Samsung offers instructions for the app [on its website](#). If you want to record on a Windows device, look for the Sound Recorder. If you can't find it, search for the Windows Sound Recorder in the Microsoft Store. Microsoft offers instructions for its Sound Recorder [on its website](#).

Create a separate recording for each slide to ensure organization and easy reference. Then, label each one with the associated presentation name and slide number. Don't fear mistakes, extended pauses, or background noise. If you misspeak or something interrupts you for a second, just repeat what you intended to say and move on. Usually, starting a new recording is unnecessary since you can iron out any wrinkles during the editing process.

DOWNLOAD AUDIO EDITING SOFTWARE

No recording ever goes perfectly. Luckily, a wide array of audio editing software exists, ready to clean up your voiceovers. With so many options available, evaluating a few fundamental factors before selecting which software you want to work with is essential. Here are some points to keep in mind:

COST

Many excellent, free options exist for people looking to edit a simple voice recording. For example, [GarageBand](#) is free in the App Store for iOS devices. However, it's important to note that free programs tend to have fewer features and require more time to learn compared to paid programs.

POPULARITY

While popularity doesn't guarantee quality, there will likely be more tutorial videos and guides to assist new users. [Audacity](#) is one of the most popular programs available—and it's free.

FEATURES

When picking out your software, ensuring it has all the capabilities you require is crucial. You probably don't need too many bells and whistles if you simply want to clean up your voiceover. However, key features, such as noise reduction, equalization, compression, and cut/copy/paste capabilities, are essential for creating a quality recording. If you want more advanced features and built-in tutorials, consider buying a subscription to professional software like [Adobe Audition](#).

USABILITY

Choosing a program with an intuitive user interface will save you valuable time, whereas an unintuitive one may lead to unnecessary frustration. A user-friendly software interface will allow you to navigate the menus smoothly and quickly master the available tools. Some software made specifically for podcasting and voice recordings, such as [Alitu](#), are made for beginners and will do some parts of the editing process for you.

Before moving on to the next step, check what type of file your voice recording is. Most commonly used voice recording applications will save recordings as either MP3 Audio files (.mp3) or Advanced Audio Coding files (.m4a). Both formats are widely compatible with popular audio editing software. However, if your recording is in a different format, you should check the software's website to ensure that it supports your software's file type. If not, consider switching to compatible software or exploring options to convert your file into a supported format.

IMPORT YOUR AUDIO FILE

If you recorded your voice on a device *different* from the one where you downloaded your audio editing software:

- 1) On the device with your recordings, select the recording you want to use for your first slide.
- 2) Share your recording with yourself. One way to do this is to send it to your email. Select the option to share or export the recording and choose the email option. Note that this only works for files less than 25 MB (that's approximately 25 minutes for an MP3 file). If your file is bigger than that, use software such as Google Drive, which allows you to store and download files in the cloud and download them onto any device.
- 3) On the device with the audio editing software installed, open the software you just shared your recording with. Download your recording onto the device.
- 4) Open your audio editing software and select the option to import a file.
- 5) Locate and select the file, importing it into the audio editing software.

If you recorded your voice on the *same* device as the one that you downloaded your audio editing software onto:

- 1) Find the audio file for your first slide. If you recorded your audio on an Apple product, check the files for your voice memos. If you used the voice recorder that comes automatically installed in Windows, open the recording, click on the three dots in the top right-hand corner, choose the "show in folder" option, and remember the path you'll need to click through to find your recording.
- 2) Open your audio editing software and select the option to import a file.
- 3) Select the file, thus importing it into the audio editing software.

EDIT YOUR AUDIO

First, take some time to familiarize yourself with your software's editing tools. Poke around and take in the different tools and their categorization in the drop-down menus. While you probably won't use most of the tools, understanding your software's capabilities will benefit this project and any future audio editing endeavors you undertake.

Before you start cutting out sections out of your recording, it's a good idea to address overall audio quality. Start with noise reduction. Background noise, such as your fan's whirring or fridge's hum, is an incredibly common issue in audio recordings. It distracts your audience and is nearly impossible to avoid without a professional recording studio. Use your software's noise reduction feature to eliminate background noise. Select a portion of your audio that contains only background noise. Then, select the noise reduction feature. Follow the software's instructions to capture the noise profile by applying the noise reduction filter to the selected portion containing only background noise. This will teach your computer what the background noise sounds like, and you can now apply the noise reduction filter to your entire recording.

This is also the time to fix any other reoccurring issues with your recording's quality. If your audio has a problem with mic pops (plosives), apply a high pass filter and adjust the cutoff frequency to 100-150 Hz. While you can mess around with the equalizer (EQ) to fix unwanted low-frequency rumbles or high-frequency sibilance, you may want to try a de-esser instead. If your software doesn't have a de-esser built into it, you may need to download a plug-in for your software.

Now that you've done all the big-picture work, it's time to cut, copy, and paste. Before you start, check whether your software has an "undo" button. Not all software provides this feature, so it's crucial to be aware of it in case you need to revert any unintentional changes. To start this process, watch the indicator on your screen as you listen to the audio file. Whenever you hear a problem spot, select the section and hit delete on your keyboard. When cutting part of your audio in a place where you're speaking, make sure that the visual representation of the sound waves on your screen starts and ends as close to the center line as possible. This will help keep your recording sounding smooth so that a sudden cut doesn't jar listeners.

If you are having other issues with your audio quality, there is a plethora of online resources to help you. An endless list of problems can occur when you're recording audio, especially if you want to incorporate more advanced elements. Luckily, the internet offers many resources and tutorials tailored to your software. You can simply type the name of your software and the specific problem you're facing into a search engine; you'll find many videos, articles, and guides to address your concerns.

PREPARE YOUR NEW AUDIO FOR EXPORT

When saving the final version of your edited file, your audio editing software will likely provide you with various file format options. MP3 files are the most broadly accessible way to save and integrate your file into your PowerPoint. Nearly every audio editing software allows you to save or export your project as an MP3 file. However, if that is not an option, PowerPoint accepts a [variety of other formats](#). These formats include AIFF Audio files (.aiff), AU Audio files (.au), MIDI files (.mid/.midi), Advanced Audio Coding files (.m4a/.mp4), Windows Audio files (.wav), and Windows Media Audio files (.wava). Save your project as one of these file types.

You must use a computer to integrate audio files into your PowerPoint presentation. You cannot do this on your cellphone or tablet. If you edited your audio files on a mobile device, you must download them onto your computer. You can do this easily by sending your recording to your email and downloading the file.

INSERT YOUR VOICEOVER INTO YOUR PRESENTATION

Now that your audio file is cleaned up and downloaded onto your computer, you're ready to insert it into your presentation. Here's how:

- 1) Open the slide where you want to attach your audio file.
- 2) Select the “Insert” tab at the top of the screen.
- 3) Click “media” on the right-hand side of the toolbar.
- 4) Choose audio.
- 5) Pick audio on my PC.
- 6) Select the correct audio file for your slide. Make sure to choose the edited version and not the original.
- 7) Drag the speaker icon to wherever you want it to be on the slide.
- 8) Repeat steps 1-7 for each slide to which you wish to add your voiceover.

COMPLETE AND SHARE YOUR PRESENTATION

It's time to harness your newfound abilities and share your presentation with the world. One way to share your presentation is to leave it as it is and share it as a PowerPoint (.pptx) file. This will allow your audience to click through the slides at their own pace. Another way you can share your presentation is as a video (.mp4) file. If you choose this option, PowerPoint will automatically take your presentation and integrated voice recordings and make it into a video. Each slide will show up onscreen for as long as it takes your voice recording on that slide to play. This way, you don't have to go through and synchronize the audio and visual elements yourself.