



Instructionally Effective Use of PowerPoint Conversion for eLearning

PowerPoint "Poison"



Throughout the past two decades, millions of learners in instructor-led training courses have been literally put to sleep by overuse of PowerPoint as a medium for training. That's not to say that PowerPoint itself is the culprit. The fault lies in trainers that believe that simply sharing knowledge is training.

As the common saying goes, "Telling Ain't Training". PowerPoint is designed to present information and is suited very well for that purpose. But for knowledge and skill transfer to occur, training needs to be a two way street. Learners need to demonstrate they understand and remember key information. They need to practice skills.

One major danger in using converted PowerPoint presentations as the basis for e-learning courses is what may be termed "PowerPoint Poison". When a PowerPoint is converted carte blanche as a presentation, with maybe only a quiz at the end, it not only lacks instructional effectiveness, but it also creates a negative effect.

When learners who have not experienced a lot of e-learning courses before encounter one of these types of courses, they immediately assume this is how all e-learning is. As so often happens in instructor-led classes that have little to no interaction, the learner is quickly bored. They tell their colleagues and friends how boring it was and the next time an "e-learning" course comes out, they'll already have a negative opinion about it.



Yes, simply converting PowerPoint presentations can be harmful to your e-learning initiative's health. This white paper discusses how you can still use PowerPoint as the basis of your training and create amazingly interactive courses with less effort and time than you might expect.

The Key Lies in Activating Knowledge, Demonstrating, and Applying Through Practice

Dr. M. David Merrill's landmark instructional design paper on First Principles of Instruction (see <http://cito.byuh.edu/merrill/text/papers.htm>), outlines some principles that can help us improve the use of what may be a very poorly designed PowerPoint.

In short, Merrill proposes that the core of all effective instruction involves task-based learning that starts by activating previous knowledge, then demonstrating correct skills, having the learn apply the skills through practice, then integrating the skills into their everyday lives. You can accomplish more of this than you think by using rapid interactive development tools and techniques.

Start With What You Have

You may not have the budget or time to make your e-learning course into the instructional ideal. However, starting with what you have, you can quickly make your e-learning course incredibly more effective by using the techniques and technologies explained here.

For example, suppose your task is to take a legacy PowerPoint presentation from an instructor-led class that teaches how to deal with customer complaints, titled *Transforming Complaining Customers*.

This PowerPoint has lots of bullet points, an acronym, some clip art, and some step by step guidelines. You looking at the PowerPoint slides you start to yawn.



Use Easy and Fast Rapid Interactive Development Techniques and Tools

Once you have converted your PowerPoint and organized the content add interactive activities using rapid interactive development techniques and tools. To rapid build interactive activities, use template-based interactions that you can build by filling out simple forms rather than having to program them. Because the interactions are already designed, doing this increases the instructional effectiveness dramatically without taking lots of additional time.

Let's look at a step by step example.

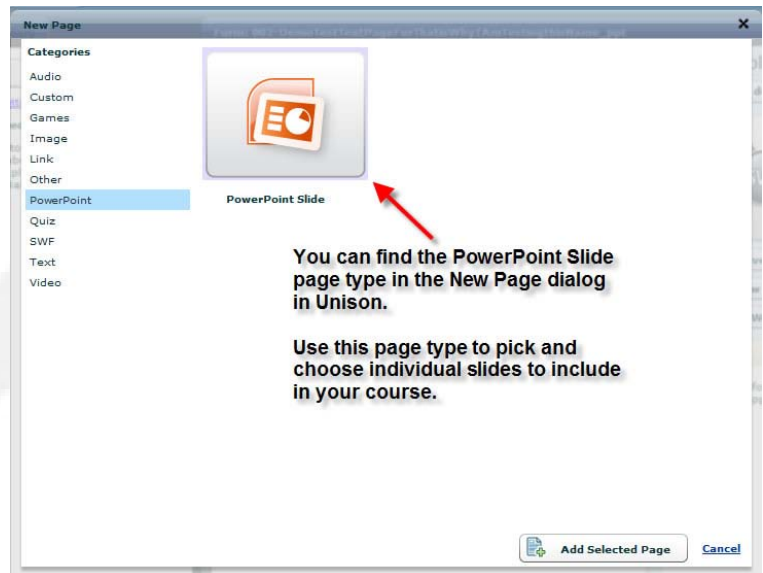
Step 1: Convert the PowerPoint

For starters, you do need to convert the PowerPoint into a medium that can be easily used on the Internet, maintains the animations and audio, and can be integrated with other interactive activities. That's why you should choose to convert it to the Flash format.

Choose a conversion tool that will build your course interface as well as provide all of the tools necessary for adding to the converted PowerPoint effective activities, such as quizzes, tests, learning games, and simulations.

TIP: Rapid Intake's e-learning tools can help you easily convert the PowerPoint into Flash as well as provide a variety of template-based e-learning interactions you can use to quickly add more effective content. It is as simple as uploading your narrated PowerPoint file into your Rapid Intake Unison account. Each slide becomes a separate Flash movie you can include in your course.

Here's an example of the converted PowerPoint in its most basic form as narrated Flash movies with animation and audio:





Step 2: Organize the Content for Easier Consumption by the Learner

Having a straight list of slides can be confusing to the learner, especially if you have dozens of slides. Break up the organization into topics and subtopics so that the learner can more easily understand how different parts of the course related to others.

Breaking up the table of contents helps the learner get a quick grasp of how different parts of the course relate to others.

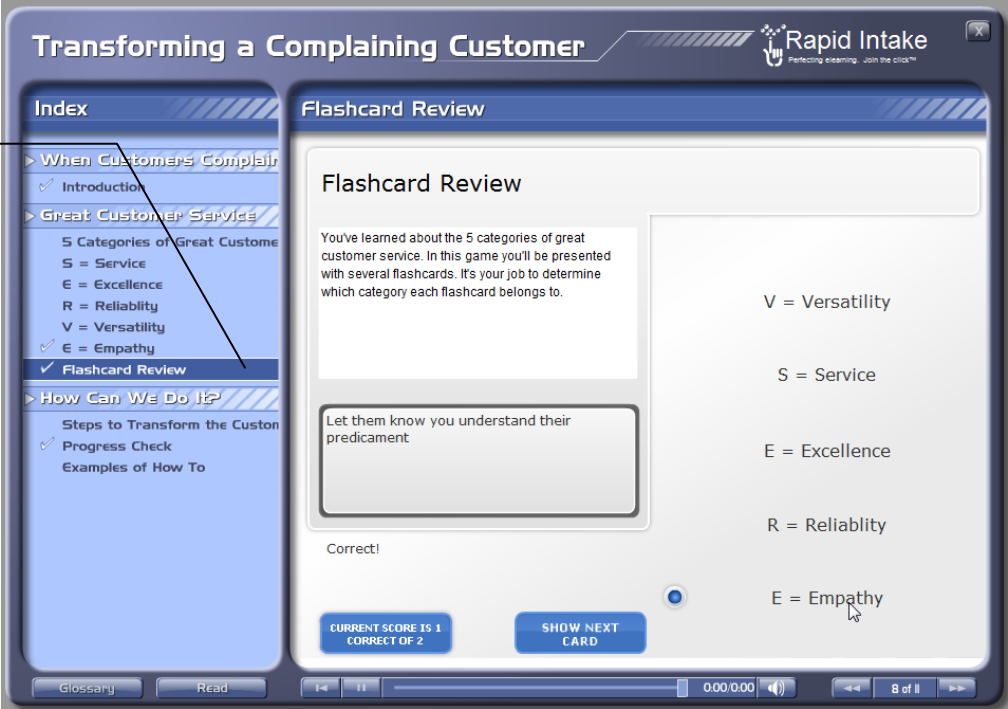


Step 3: Add “Progress Checks”

Using form-based templates (such as those in Rapid Intake’s e-learning tools), add a quiz question or learning game at the conclusion of each section or subsection that helps the learner review the content.

Adding a review game helps the learner review and understand more fully the purpose of the five parts of the acronym.

This game, called Categories, is one of several learning games included in the Rapid Intake e-learning software.



Step 4: Add Learning Games to Activate Knowledge Up Front

Listing learning objectives up front is very popular among instructional designers. While learning objectives can help the designer understand how to best teach content, an interactive activity can be more helpful to the learner than a simple list.

In this example we've added a game to introduce the section. Games can be a great way to activate knowledge and help the learner discover the gaps in their own knowledge.

Not only can you use Rapid Intake tools to build content, but you can easily integrate other content, such as this game that was made using a tool called Raptivity.

Transforming a Complaining Customer

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- When Customers Complain
 - Introduction
- Great Customer Service
 - Word Game Introduction
 - 5 Categories of Great Customer Service
 - S = Service
 - E = Excellence
 - R = Reliability
 - V = Versatility
 - E = Empathy
 - Flashcard Review
- How Can We Do It?
 - Steps to Transform the Customer
 - Progress Check
 - Examples of How To

Word Game Introduction

5 Categories Quiz

1. S = _____

* * * V i c *

Submit Hint Next

Type the appropriate letters in the asterisk cells and click Submit to verify your answer.

Step 5: Interactive Game-style Review

You may have heard the common training rule of thumb, "Tell what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Then tell them what you've told them." Reviewing content can be extremely helpful. But instead of re-listing the learning objectives in bulleted list form, or adding a numbered quiz, trying using a learning game.

New Page

Categories

- Audio
- Custom
- Games
- Image
- Link
- Other
- PowerPoint
- Quiz
- SWF
- Text
- Video

risk it all!
Game Risk It All

categories
Game Categories

scatterbrain
Game Scatterbrained

triples
Game Trouble With Triples

concentration
Game Concentration

jigsaw
Jigsaw

Add Selected Page Cancel

Transforming a Complaining Customer

Rapid Intake
Perfecting learning... Join the class!

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 - ✓ Can You Win?

Can You Win?

Can You Win? **SCORE**
0 OF 10,500

Transforming the Customer

General	5 Categories	Steps to Transforming	MISC	Bonus
10,000	10,000	X	10,000	10,000
300	300	300	300	300
500	500	X	500	500

END GAME

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Can You Win?

Can You Win?

CATEGORY: Steps to Transforming for 500

After you thank the customer for complaining, what do you do next?

A

Empathize

B

Help

C

Follow Up

To select your answer, click the letter to the left of your choice.

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In this example we've added a Jeopardy-style learning game called Scatterbrained to help the learner review. Adding these kinds of games using Rapid Intake tools is as simple as picking the page type template and filling out the forms. There is no programming required.

Building interactive games with Rapid Intake is as simple as choosing the template you want to use and filling out the forms with content.

The screenshot shows the Unison Customer Service interface. At the top, there is a blue header with 'Your Logo Here' on the left, 'Customer Service' in the center, and 'Unison Work as One' on the right. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'Storyboard' and 'Glossary' tabs. The 'Storyboard' tab is active, showing a tree view with 'Getting Started Tutorial', 'Chapter 1', and '[New Game Scatterbrained Page]'. The main area is a form titled 'Form: [New Game Scatterbrained Page]'. The form has six steps: Step 1: Title, Step 2: Game Instructions, Step 3: Categories and Point Values, Step 4: Game Questions, Step 5: Audio Settings (optional), and Step 6: Advanced Settings (optional). Step 4 is currently active, showing a 'GAME QUESTIONS' section with five categories (Category 1 to Category 5). Below the categories is a 'CATEGORY:' section with a text input field for 'Question Text: Category 1 Question Override Default Formatting?'. A tooltip points to this field with the text 'Enter the text for this question as you want it to display to the learner.' Below the text field is a rich text editor toolbar with buttons for bold, italic, underline, link, and other formatting options. To the right of the form is a 'Page Template' section with a dropdown menu set to 'Game Scatterbrained'. Below the dropdown is a preview of the 'scatterbrained' game template, which features a Jeopardy-style board with numbers 100, 200, 300, 400, and 500. Below the preview are buttons for 'Save Now', 'Preview this Page', and 'Preview Whole Course'. At the bottom of the page template section is a 'more help' link.

Step 6: Help the Learner Apply Knowledge through Simulated Practice

Where possible, add a simulation of a real situation that will help the learner apply their knowledge in a task-based environment. In this example we've added a branching scenario simulation to help the learner learn practice their skills at helping complaining customers. Based on how the learner responds to each step in the simulation, the scenario branches to a different outcome.

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Word Game Introduction

S Categories of Great Customer

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E = Empathy

Flashcard Review

▶ How Can We Do It?

Steps to Transform the Customer

Progress Check

Examples of How To

Interactive Steps

▶ Final Review

Can You Win?

▶ Soft Skills Simulation

✓ Scenario

Scenario

Customer Service

The customer responds: "What kind of an outfit is this? You call this customer service? I demand to speak to your supervisor!" How will you respond?

Poor  Great



"My supervisor will tell you the same thing I'm telling you, jerk!"



"I'm sorry I responded the way I did. It has been a long day."



Glossary

Read



0.02/0.04



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Feedback at the end of the scenario helps the learner process their choices before they start the scenario over and try again.

Transforming a Complaining Customer Rapid Intake
Perfecting eLearning. Join the click™

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 - ✓ Scenario

Scenario

Scenario Feedback Poor Great

Step	Scenario	Response	Feedback	Pts
2	The customer responds: "What kind of an outfit is this? You call this customer service? I demand to speak to your supervisor!" How will you respond?	"My supervisor will tell you the same thing I'm telling you, jerk!"	This makes us look bureaucratic and uncaring about the customer's situation.	-2
3	The customer responds: "We'll just see about this! I'll go over your head and talk to the governor!" He storms out of the office as other customers look on appalled.		Oh, oh! We've got a problem now. The customer is upset AND we may have a call from the governor's office requesting an explanation, requiring lots more work. Maybe you should try again.	0

YOUR SCORE: -4
POSSIBLE SCORE: 4

Start Over & Try Again

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Using Rapid Interactive Tools Increases Instructional Effectiveness

Through this progressive example, we've taken what was a terribly boring PowerPoint and increased its instructional effectiveness by organizing the content, adding learning games to help activate knowledge, interactive progress checks and content reviews, and a final simulation to help the learner apply the knowledge in a real-world situation.

You can accomplish all of this without any programming experience by using simple form-based templates in Rapid Intake's award-winning e-learning development software ProForm and Unison.

For more details, please contact a Rapid Intake representative by emailing sales@rapidintake.com or calling (866) 231-5254. You can also visit our website at www.rapidintake.com to learn more or start a free trial.

Unison™

Built on the Rapid Intake collaborative e-learning development platform, Unison™ is an award-winning web-based solution that lets designers and subject matter experts (SMEs) collaboratively capture, storyboard, develop, review, test, and publish Flash-based courses —without having to know Flash. Novice users and content owners simply fill out form-based templates to create interactive Flash-based courses, while advanced users and communities create reusable custom templates by accessing the Flash source code (.fla). Project-based subscriptions start at \$948 per year, enabling entire teams to work together at less cost. All output is SCORM compliant, rich-media compatible, and works on most PC and Mac browsers.



Visit www.rapidintake.com for a free trial and more information.

Who Uses Rapid Intake Unison

Rapid Intake Unison is used by organizations large and small, from individual consultants to Fortune 500 companies and educational institutions. A few notable customers include T-Mobile, Merck, Safeway, Costco, Sun Microsystems, Petsmart, General Physics, Dennys, Adventist Healthcare, Federated Insurance, and Baker Hughes.

The Rapid Intake Rapid Interactive Development Platform

The Rapid Intake Collaborative eLearning Development Platform enables designers and subject matter experts (SMEs) to collaboratively create Flash-based interactive courses that include quizzes, tests, games, and simulations at a fraction of the cost of traditional rapid eLearning authoring tools. Novice users and content owners simply fill out form-based templates to create interactive Flash-based course content, while advanced users and communities create reusable custom templates by accessing the Flash source code (.fla). The platform can also integrate content from any other authoring tool that outputs to Flash.

About Rapid Intake

Rapid Intake is the leader in collaborative e-learning development and review. The Rapid Intake Platform helps organizations learn faster by opening the rapid e-learning development and review process to everyone.

Unlike traditional rapid e-learning authoring tools, Rapid Intake's powerful, flexible platform helps instructional designers and content owners collaboratively create Flash-based interactive courses built on proven learning patterns, regardless of their skill levels. eLearning Guild members recently ranked Rapid Intake the most powerful, flexible solution and one of the most serviceable companies.

Hundreds of companies rely on Rapid Intake's top-ranked technology to create more interactive and effective courses in less time.

Visit www.rapidintake.com today to set up a FREE account and start experiencing the Rapid Intake advantage today. If you have questions about Rapid Intake technology solutions, please:

- Send us an email at sales@rapidintake.com
- Visit our website and start an instant chat session (www.rapidintake.com)
- Call us Toll Free at (866) 231-5254 (international callers please call +1 801 766 8454).

About the Author

Garin Hess is the CEO of Rapid Intake, the leader in collaborative e-learning development and review. The Rapid Intake Platform helps organizations learn faster by opening the rapid e-learning development and review process to everyone. Hundreds of companies create, test, and deploy more interactive courses in less time with Rapid Intake technology. Garin founded Rapid Intake in 2000. He has been managing, designing and developing interactive e-learning solutions for over nine years. Before starting Rapid Intake he worked as an instructional designer and Training Manager for two software companies. He has worked as instructional designer, developer, technical lead, and project manager on projects that have produced solutions for a variety of organizations, including large-scale implementations. He is the co-author of four e-learning development titles that teach others how to create e-learning courses. He has also been an Adjunct Professor in the Instructional Technology program at Brigham Young University (Hawaii).

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