

Rapid E-Learning Tool – Breeze Presenter (Aug 06)

Last month we road tested Articulate, and it got a pretty high rating. So, this month, we are looking at a rapid e-learning tool that has been around a while, Breeze Presenter. Mark Harrison looks at how this popular development tool handles the rapid e-learning corners.

Is it a Breeze?

Breeze Presenter is a tool that Kineo have used for a while now and so we know its strengths and its quirks.

Next month we will show you examples of the type of e-learning you can produce as a beginner and the sort of content you can produce if you **turbo-charge** Breeze and combine professional learning design with a bit of technical tweaking under the Breeze Presenter bonnet.

But that's next month. This month, it's the Breeze Presenter road test from the viewpoint of a complete beginner.

Like many of the tools out there you can get a trial version to try it out yourself, but if you haven't the time, I will take you through what it can do.

Breeze Presenter installs very easily and adds an extra 'Breeze' menu item within Powerpoint. From here you can use all your skills in Powerpoint to build the core content of your programme (or more interestingly) take your fanciest custom Powerpoint animations and transfer them intact into your Breeze e-learning. Just add some simple quiz interactions at the same time and there you are. It's this easy conversion feature of all the Powerpoint functionality that makes Breeze Presenter very appealing and quite different from other tools like Captivate (which can only capture what screen components and not the embedded builds etc.)

The Rapid E-learning Scorecard:

In summary, I rate Breeze Presenter as follows:

Criteria	Score (0- 5)	Comments
Ease of use	5	You can be up and running very quickly
Instructional design flexibility	4	General good but inserting questions inside a programme is not straightforward especially if you are expecting the usual backwards and forwards functionality but with a bit of tweaking you can do it.
Ability to incorporate existing content	5	If it's in PowerPoint, audio, video or flash, it's quite easy - it even captures all your Powerpoint animations and flashy presentations.

Ability to handle variety of topics	4	Not good for system training but good for everything else.
Ability to incorporate graphics and media	5	Great with Flash, video and audio (which can be easily edited within Breeze Presenter)
Ability to publish SCORM/AICC compliant courses	5	Very straightforward - automatically generates a zip file that you can upload to your LMS
Technical support available	3	It is part of a wider Breeze environment that you may not wish to buy so it makes technical support harder. But hey, there are a lot of users out there to help if not.

OVERALL SCORE: 31

The price tag: This is where it gets a bit complicated. Breeze Presenter was designed to be part of the Breeze's online collaborative learning environment, so you needed to buy the lot. With interest in the Presenter tool growing, Adobe/Macromedia are now getting interested in selling it on its own, in line with the sort of prices that Articulate are charging i.e. around the \$1000 mark. You won't get much pricing information there but you can learn more by going to Adobe's site - <http://www.adobe.com/uk/products/breeze/purchase/>

It's certainly well worth taking advantage of the 15 day trial to check out both Presenter and the rest of the Breeze offering.

Read on for the full review of the product.

Breeze Presenter: The Full Road Test

Ease of use: 5/5

Steve decided to road test Articulate as a complete beginner and produced some content in the two hours he had before watching the World cup on telly. We are unable to reproduce this exercise as none of us in Kineo are virgin Breeze Presenter users, so this would not be a fair test. So, I can only go back to the time I first used the tool.

It is incredibly easy to develop e-learning screens using Breeze Presenter. Just develop them in Powerpoint (or get existing content), add audio (which can be synched easily with your existing Powerpoint screen builds), throw in some questions and then publish to a Flash file.

Instructional design flexibility: 4/5

Breeze Presenter will allow you to use a range of instructional design models. The trick, of course, is using them sensibly (which is where Kineo can help you).

You can't have something that's really simple to use without compromises, so it gets more complicated when you move away from simple presentations with tests at the end. It does get harder to embed questions throughout but if you make each of them a separate quiz, you can have a pretty interactive piece of learning. There are workarounds for many of the seeming limitations of a simple tool like this.

We will show you what you can create with a bit of expertise in the tool next month when

we publish an example of *turbo-charging* Breeze Presenter.

The range of questions you can use will meet most instructional designer's needs. They are easy to create and re-arrange around the screen to meet your preferred screen design. The placing of feedbacks is automated and a little crude for those of you schooled in more sophisticated e-learning but it does the job and you are able to move them around and change text wherever you want.

Ability to incorporate existing content: 5/5

It's really good at this - especially the facility to convert any screen builds or animations embedded in your Powerpoint slides automatically. You can then add audio and so you can reproduce that great presentation you just made, the one with all those snazzy animations and screen builds produced by Barry in Graphics for you to impress everyone at the monthly meeting.

Ability to handle variety of topics: 4/5

Breeze Presenter is ideal for briefings, product or technical knowledge and even simple interactive scenarios but is not the tool you want for developing systems training. Use screen capture tools like Captivate or Wink for this.

Ability to incorporate graphics/media: 5/5

This is really easy - audio, graphics, animations and video can all be incorporated really easily. You can import a whole chunk of audio and then edit it in Presenter's own audio editor and link it to individual slides in your e-learning. You can then synch the audio to specific screen builds from the original Powerpoint slides. It's very easy.

Ability to publish SCORM/AICC compliant courses: 5/5

We've had no problems publishing finished programmes as a scorm 1.2 zip package, complete with manifest etc., and uploaded it to our Moodle LMS.

Conclusion:

Breeze Presenter is a good rapid e-learning development tool, especially attractive for those with existing high quality Powerpoint presentations. It's right up there in the pecking order.

Next month we will show what you can produce both as a beginner and when you pull out all the stops, watch this space!

Bought or used Breeze Presenter? Agree or disagree with this review? Let us know.

Got an authoring tool, and need get some help in making the most of it? Kineo's Rapid E-learning Design Team can help.

Next month: Two examples of Breeze in action...

Kineo has accepted no payment or reward of any form from any tools company for this independent review.