Sway Versus PowerPoint

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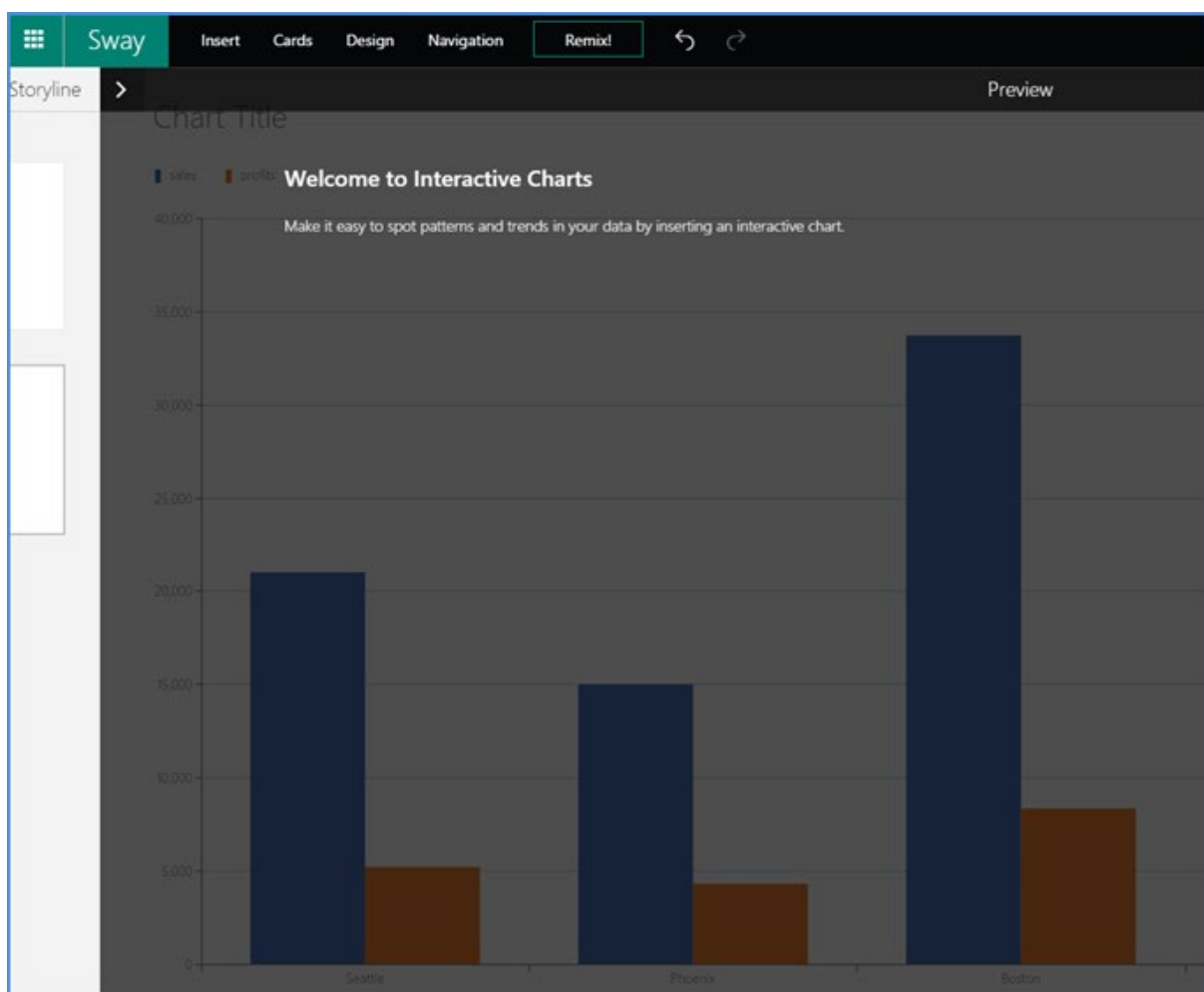
Sway, an introduction and comparison with PowerPoint

If you're a fan of PowerPoint, you may have heard about Microsoft's latest presentation tool, Microsoft Sway.

With Sway, you can create and share presentations like never before! In this handout I will give you a basic overview as to what Sway can do as well as some of my personal favorite features.
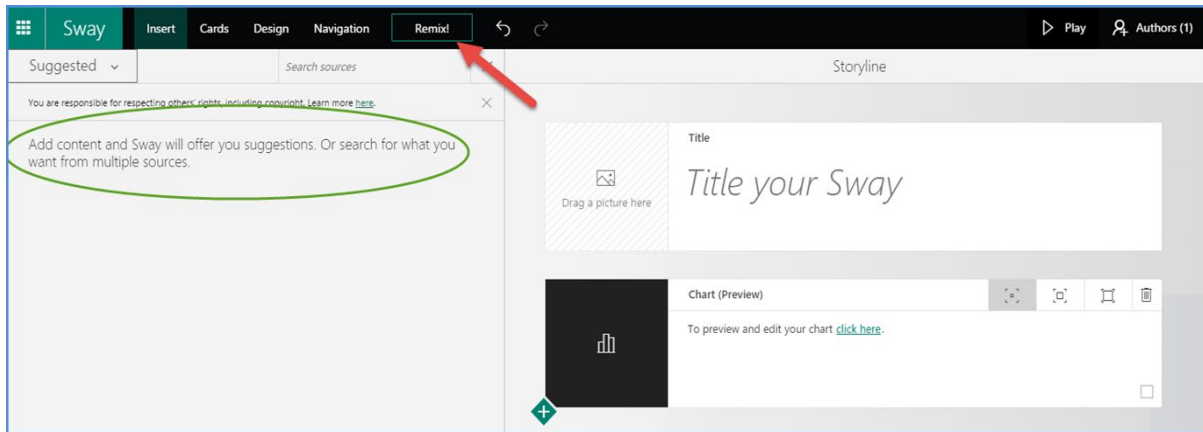
Let's dive in!

Sway is a free app from Microsoft Office that helps gather, format, and share reports, newsletters, web pages, and presentations on an interactive, web-based canvas that looks great on almost any screen.
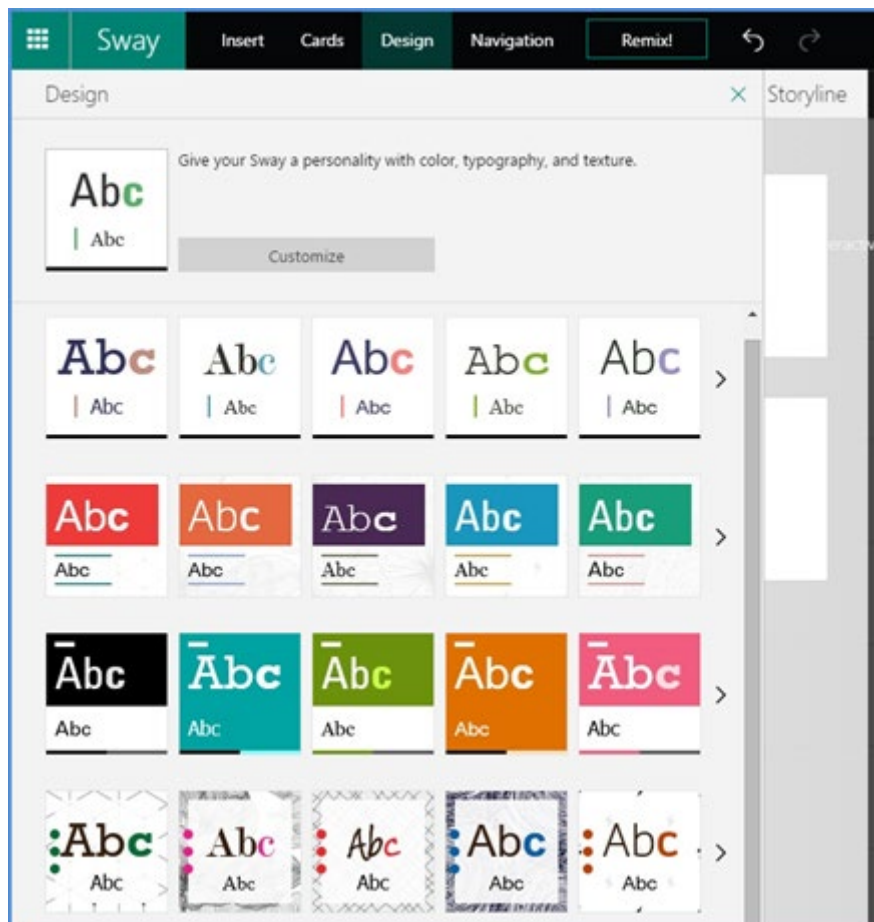
That's right, I said *interactive*! Use videos or interactive charts to engage your audience like never before.

If you've ever struggled with getting your PowerPoints to look exactly right, then you'll love the design capabilities of Sway. Sway does all the formatting, themes, fonts, and more with its built-in design engine. All you have to do is put in your content and sit back and let Sway take care of the rest.
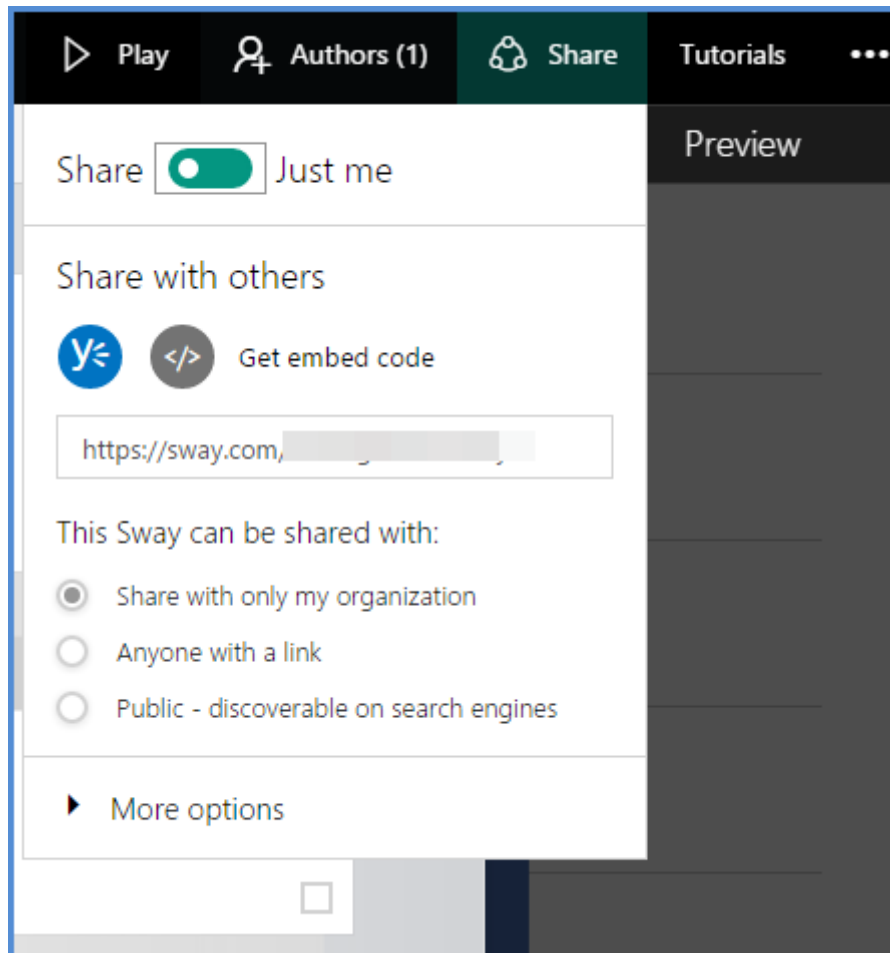

You can even use the Remix! Button to see automated looks in a snap. Drag and drop your favorite web content all without having to exit Sway. Get content from your social media accounts, Flickr, YouTube, Bing, and more! Creating engaging and interesting presentations has never been this easy. Trust us!

One of my personal favorite features about Sway is how easy it is to share your Sway creations. Simply send a link to anyone you wish to share with and they can see your work! No need to already have Sway or Office 365, literally anyone can see a Sway presentation you share.

Want to keep things more private? No problem. You can change the privacy settings for any presentation so that you can control who sees the content or who can edit the content.

Sway is an app for creating presentations. I know what you're thinking – I already have PowerPoint, why do I need another program for presentations? With Sway, think more interactive, multimedia presentations and less slide deck – and it's all online.

Sway is a visual platform, so instead of explaining how it works here, we built a Sway presentation about getting started with Sway.

Ok, it's pretty – but why would I use it?

The real benefit here is the ease of use. It's easy to add your own content and supporting materials from a variety of sources (and even have content suggested to you). You can search platforms like YouTube, Twitter and Bing and pull content directly into your presentation. Or Sway can suggest content to you, making building presentations with a variety of content much, much simpler.

Sway, like other Office 365 programs, also allows for real time collaboration. You and your team can be building a presentation together without having to be at the same computer – which can be a life saver for remote employees or anyone who travels.

And because Sway is all online, you'll never lose your work. Everything you do saves in real time.

Sway versus PowerPoint

What is it and what can I create?

- *Sway*

Presentations. Sway is the newest presentation creation tool from Microsoft.

- *PowerPoint*

Presentations – and more. PowerPoint is the most popular presentation creation software around and that's still its primary function. But it can also be used to do things like create images for social media and create video (especially when you add Mix).

Where does it live?

- *Sway*

Sway is entirely online. Presentations are created and viewed in your browser or can be accessed with the free mobile app.
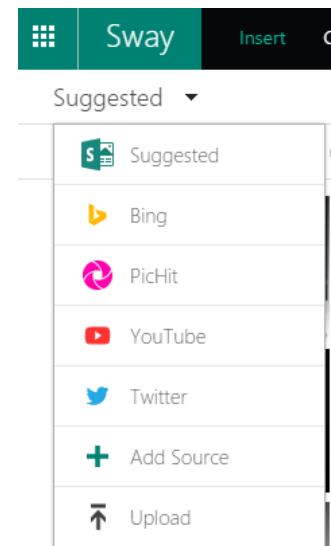
- *PowerPoint*

PowerPoint is primarily a desktop application. With Office 365, you can get an online version with limited features. You can also access PowerPoint with the free mobile app.

Adding content

- *Sway*

There are a few different ways you can add content to Sway.
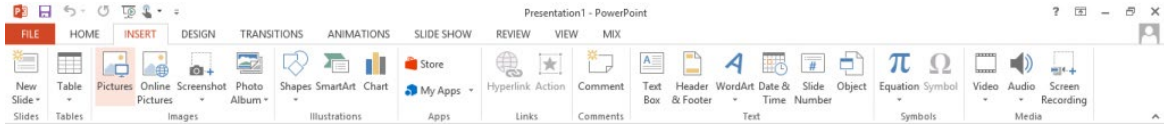

- You can upload content (like a Word Document) directly to Sway and let it build the bones of your presentation for you.

- Sway supports OneDrive, so you can add content you've saved there – including graph you've made in Excel Online.

- You can pull in web content. From within Sway, you can search Bing and pull in content directly from sites like Wikipedia, Youtube and Flickr. Or you can search Twitter and pull embed Tweets directly into Sway. Or use SoundCloud to embed audio.

- You can let it suggest content for you. Sway will take your content into account and make suggestions for other content to add.

New types of content and new ways to add them to your presentation are constantly being added. Check the Office 365 blog for the latest Sway news.

- *PowerPoint*

You can manually add a wide variety of content to the presentation. Content you can add includes (but is not limited to): text, images, photo albums, pictures, charts and graphs (which you can create from within PowerPoint), audio and video, equations, screen recordings (which you can record from within PowerPoint), and objects (like full Word docs or Excel spreadsheets).
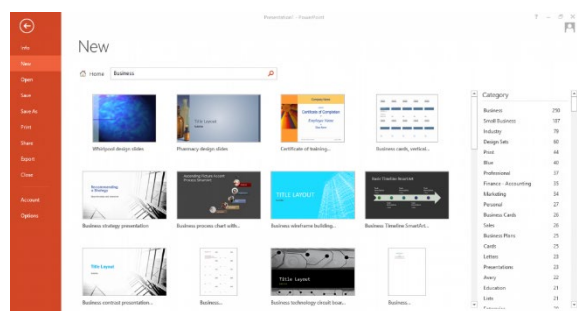

Designing your presentation

- *Sway*

Compared to PowerPoint, your design options in Sway are limited. There are several templates with customisable colours (with more in the works to be added soon) to choose from. You can choose between horizontal or vertical scrolling. Your options are pretty limited, though.

The templates are built to look like one continuous page with different sections, so scrolling is a big part.

The best way to really customize your Sway is by using images. Sway is great for handling large images and using your own images as the background. Even though your choices for template are limited, by adding in your own images, you can make your presentation look like your own.

- *PowerPoint*

PowerPoint comes with a ton of premade templates or you can design your own. Templates are built around slides. You can add transitions between slides but its primarily static content.
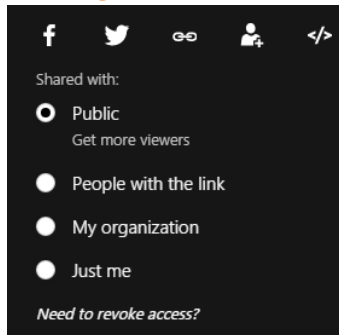
Collaboration

- *Sway*

Sway has collaboration – meaning you and co-worker(s) can work on the same presentation at the same time.

- *PowerPoint*

If you only have a desktop version of PowerPoint, only one person will be able edit the presentation at once. If you have Office 365, though, you and co-worker(s) can work on the presentation at the same time in both the online and desktop interface.

Sharing

- *Sway*

Sway presentations can be shared a few ways. You can share directly with Facebook, Twitter or with a link. Or you can embed a presentation into a website. You can also control who can see the presentation and revoke access if needed.

- *PowerPoint*

Sharing your PowerPoint presentations is dependent on what version you're using. If you have an Office 365 subscription, you can easily share by email or link. If you're using a desktop version of PowerPoint that isn't connected to Office 365, you'll have to save your presentation and share it via email (or whatever you use to share other types of files).

Accessibility

- *Sway*

Anyone can use Sway for free with a Windows Live account. It's also part of Office 365.

- *PowerPoint*

To use PowerPoint, you'll need either an Office 365 subscription or to buy the software.

When should I use each?

There are no hard and fast rules about when to use Sway vs. when to use PowerPoint. Each has their strengths but ultimately it comes down to how you build your presentation and how it's being presented. Before deciding which program to use, take a few minutes to evaluate what your content is and who your audience is.

If you are creating a data heavy presentation with charts that you'll be presenting to an audience, PowerPoint is probably your best bet.

If you're building a presentation dependent on imagery including a lot of online content or if your audience will be guiding themselves through the presentation, Sway is probably going to work better for you.

If you have any queries please contact me

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