

PPTools Narrator

Narrator is an add-in that helps you to produce narrated PowerPoint presentations with high-quality sound.

Instead of using PPT's own sometimes-troublesome Record Narration feature, you use better, more flexible dedicated sound recording software like Audacity to record the narration for your presentation.

Once you've recorded your narration files, Narrator automatically adds them to your presentation, each on the correct slide. It sets the narration to play automatically and sets the slide to advance after the narration ends.

Narrator benefits

You could, of course, do that manually, but it would be quite error-prone, and would take dozens of mouse-clicks per slide. Narrator saves you all that trouble.

Narrator makes it simple to use your favorite audio recording software instead of relying on PowerPoint's rather cantankerous Record Narration feature. This lets you control the audio quality and compression level of your audio rather than relying on PowerPoint's default settings, whatever they may be.

Narrator makes it possible to link your narration to external files if you wish; PowerPoint doesn't offer this option.

Since Narrator can re-insert your sound files at any time, you can trim them, edit them re-record them or change them in any way you wish. Simply re-run Narrator to add them again.

If you want to remove all sounds that Narrator has added, put your presentation file in an otherwise empty folder then run Narrator. Narrator removes any previous sounds it added, but since it finds no new sounds to insert, no new sounds are added.

You can switch from linked to embedded sounds and back at any time. Switch the Link option in the Narrator dialog box on or off, click OK and Narrator makes the change.

You can change from one sound file format to another at any time (for example, WAV to MP3). Convert the files to the new format, run Narrator, tell it the extension for the new sound format and click OK. Narrator removes the old format files and adds the new ones in their place.

Install Narrator

Narrator is compatible with PowerPoint 2010 and later, in either 32-bit or 64-bit versions. It's NOT compatible with earlier versions of PowerPoint.

To install Narrator after downloading Narrator.zip, open Narrator.zip, extract the Narrator files (Narrator.PPAM and Narrator_HELP.PDF) to any convenient folder. We suggest your Add-ins folder:

C:\Users\[Your_User_Name]\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\AddIns

Substitute your actual Windows user name for [Your_User_Name]

Start PowerPoint and choose **File | Options | Add-Ins**

At the bottom of the Add-Ins pane that appears on the right, next to **Manage:** choose **PowerPoint Add-Ins** then click **Go**.

In the Add-Ins dialog box that appears, click **Add**. PowerPoint will automatically open the Add-ins folder mentioned above. If you copied Narrator's files to another folder, browse to that folder. Select NARRATOR.PPAM and click **OK**. Click **OK** again to dismiss the Add-ins dialog box.

After installing Narrator, you'll see a new **Narrator** group on the **Transitions** tab of the ribbon, just to the left of the **Timing** group. We'll explain what the different Narrator buttons do later.

The Narrator demo

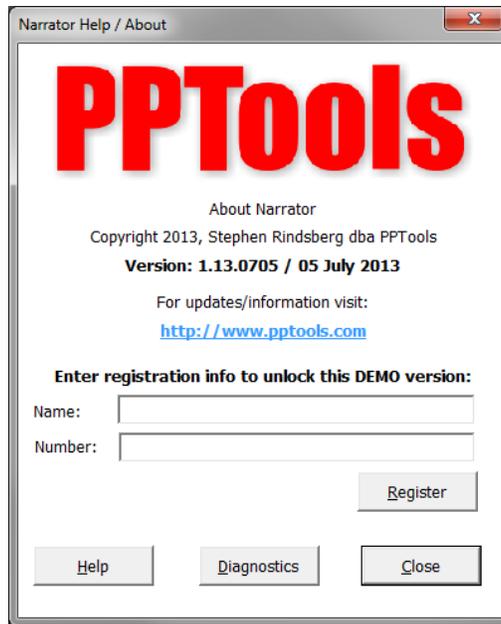
When you install Narrator, you get a free demo version. The demo is not time-limited but it will only apply narration sound files to the first five slides in your presentation. To remove this limit, you must purchase Narrator.

Purchase Narrator

When you purchase Narrator, you will choose the name you'd like it registered to; you'll receive a registration "key" consisting of your chosen name and matching registration number by email.

Please SAVE this email. You'll need the registration key later if you want to install Narrator on a new PC.

- Start PowerPoint.
- Go to the **Transitions** tab and click **About** in the **Narrator** group.
- The Narrator Help/About dialog box appears:



- Copy/Paste the registration name and number you received in email into the appropriate text boxes.
- Click **Register**.
- You'll see a message indicating that you've successfully registered Narrator. If not, try again and pay close attention to the exact registration name and number. **Name** is not case-sensitive but it must otherwise exactly match what's in the registration email.

Record your narration

Before using Narrator, you need to record the narration for the slides in your presentation using any audio recording software you like.

Save the narrations out to a set of sequentially numbered files, one file for each slide that needs narration. If there's no narration needed for the slide, don't make a file. Some recording programs let you insert cue points for each slide's narration and then can split the overall narration out to individual files, one for each cue point, which will simplify things. See below for tips.

Save the individual sound files in the same folder as the presentation you're narrating.

Give your narration files names like:

XXXX001.MP3
XXXX002.MP3
...
XXXX042.MP3

The XXXX part can be anything you like, and any reasonable number of characters long. Just be sure that it's the same for each sound file you save. We'll call this the sound file's "base name".

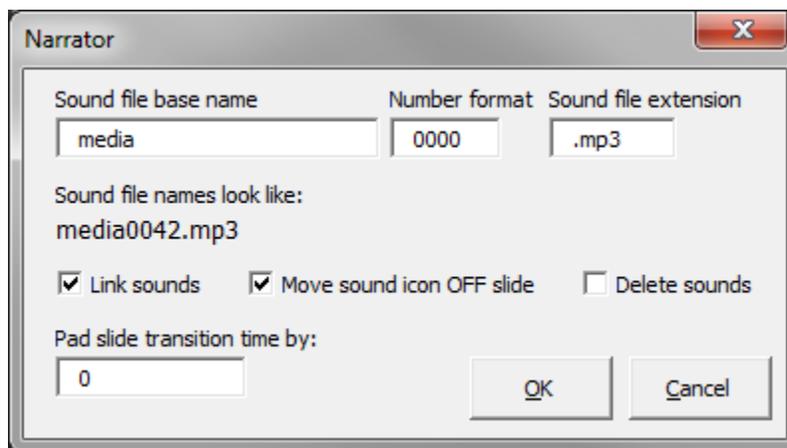
After the base name, add the number of the file, which should match the number of the slide the narration is for. Use any number of “places” you like for the numbers, but be consistent. All sound files should use the same number format.

The extension, in this example .MP3, should be whatever’s appropriate for the file format you’re saving sounds to. .MP3, .WAV, etc. Naturally, you should save to a format that’s compatible with PowerPoint.

If any of the narration files need a bit of trimming or other editing, this is a good time to do it, though you’ll be able to do it later as well.

Use Narrator to add your narration

Open your presentation in PowerPoint, and click **Add Narration** (it’s on the **Transitions** tab, **Narrator** group). The Narrator dialog box appears:



In the first text box, type the base name you’ve chosen for your narration files.

In the second text box, you can tell Narrator how many places the numbers in your audio filenames have. Type a 0 for each place. For example, if your files have numbers like “003” and “042”, type three zeros here. Narrator allows no characters other than zero, by the way.

In the third text box, type the extension of the files you’ve saved (ie, .mp3, .wav etc). UPPER/lower case doesn’t matter; whichever you prefer; Narrator will add the leading period if you don’t.

As you change each of these text boxes, the text under **Sound file names look like:** changes to show you the effect of your settings.

If you want your sound files linked rather than embedded, put a check next to **Link sounds**.

Put a check next to **Move sound off slide** to have Narrator insert sound icons just off the slide, at the bottom right. Otherwise, Narrator will put the sound icon on the slide at the top left. If there’s enough interest in the feature, a later version will allow you to specify where on the slide the sound should appear.

Put a check next to **Delete Sounds** if you want to REMOVE any sounds that Narrator has previously added. This also removes the check next to **Advance After** and sets the time to 0. NOTE: Narrator only removes sounds that it has added, not sounds you've added yourself or that PowerPoint or other add-ins may have added. Narrator only resets the advance time for a slide when it removes a sound that it has added. Other slides are left unmodified.

In the last text box, you can enter the number of seconds you'd like to "pad" the sound with, or more accurately, how much time Narrator should add after the end of the sound but before the transition to the next slide. At the moment, PowerPoint and I disagree as to how this should work and it's winning. For some reason, the pad time gets added at the start of the slide, before the narration begins. This is not useful, so for now, leave this set to zero.

Finally, click **OK** to start the magic.

What Narrator does

Once you click **OK**, here's what happens:

Narrator looks at each slide and deletes any sounds it's already added (and only those sounds). You can use Narrator repeatedly without stacking up a new set of sounds atop the old each time you use it. This means that you can edit your sound files, re-record any or all of them, substitute other sound files ... pretty much anything you need to do, and then use Narrator again to match (or re-match) the narration sound files with the correct slides.

Next, for each slide in the presentation, Narrator looks for a matching sound file in the same folder as the presentation. For example if you saved your narration files with "media" as the base name and ".mp3" as the extension, Narrator will look for media1.mp3 for slide 1, media2.mp3 for slide 2 and so on.

If the sound file for a slide exists, Narrator adds it to the slide (linking or embedding, depending on what you've chosen) and moves it off the slide (or not, again, at your option).

Narrator then determines the length of the sound and sets that as the **Advance Slide After:** time for the slide and sets the sound to start playing immediately. In other words, it automatically sets the sound to play immediately and sets things up so PowerPoint will move to the next slide as soon as the narration ends.

In short, Narrator saves you dozens of mouseclicks per slide.

Narrator tips

Set slide advance times for slides without narrations

Narrator automatically sets slide advance times on slides that it adds narration sounds to, but what if you want the other slides in your presentation to have slide advance times also?

You can manually apply advance times to any of the slides, of course, but instead you might want to select all of the slides (e.g. in Sorter View, press Ctrl+A to select all) and then apply an advance time;

THEN run Narrator. It will add the narration sounds and set appropriate advance times for only the slides that have narrations. If you've already run Narrator, you can also do this, then re-run Narrator to reset the times on the slides with narrations.

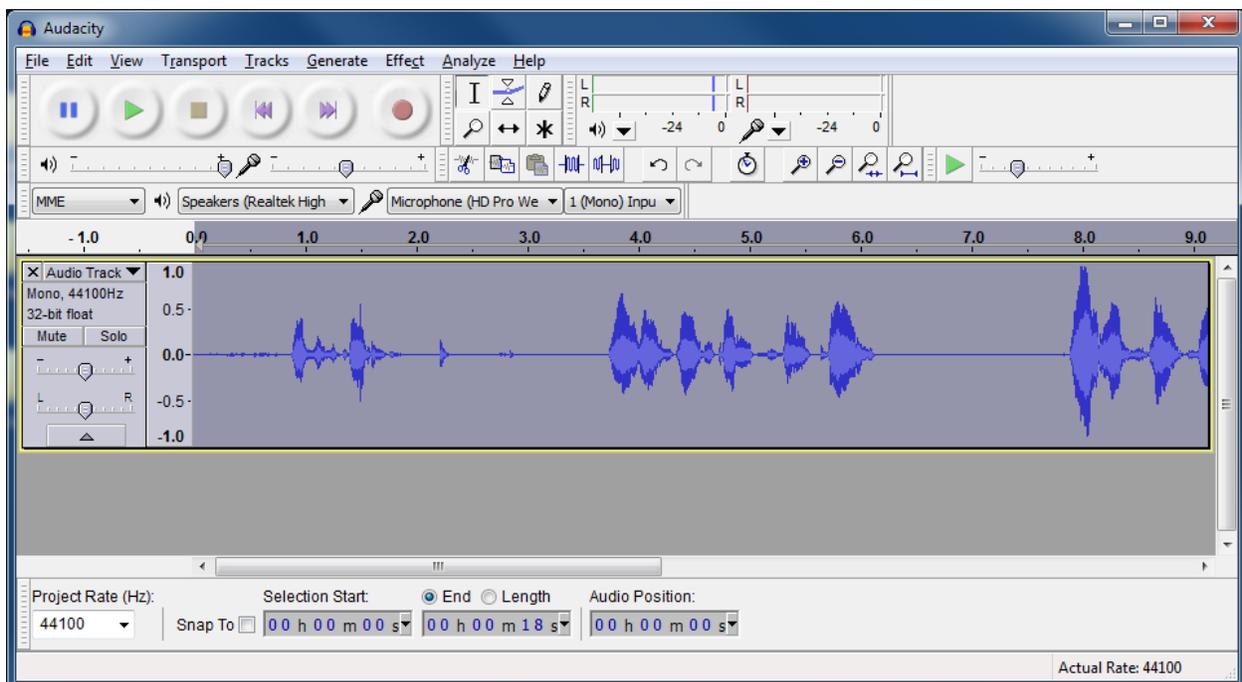
Audio tools/tips

Audacity

Audacity is an excellent, free audio recording program.

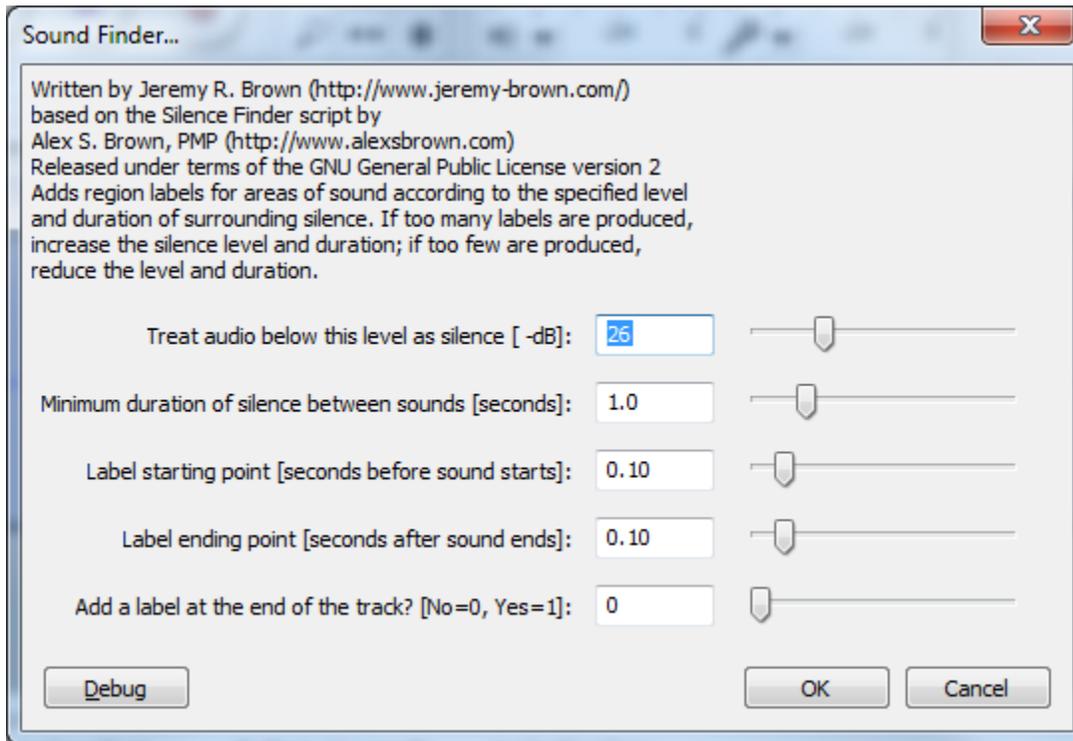
If you haven't yet recorded your narration, try this:

Record the entire narration as one track in Audacity. Leave some silence between each slide's narration. The result will look something like this:



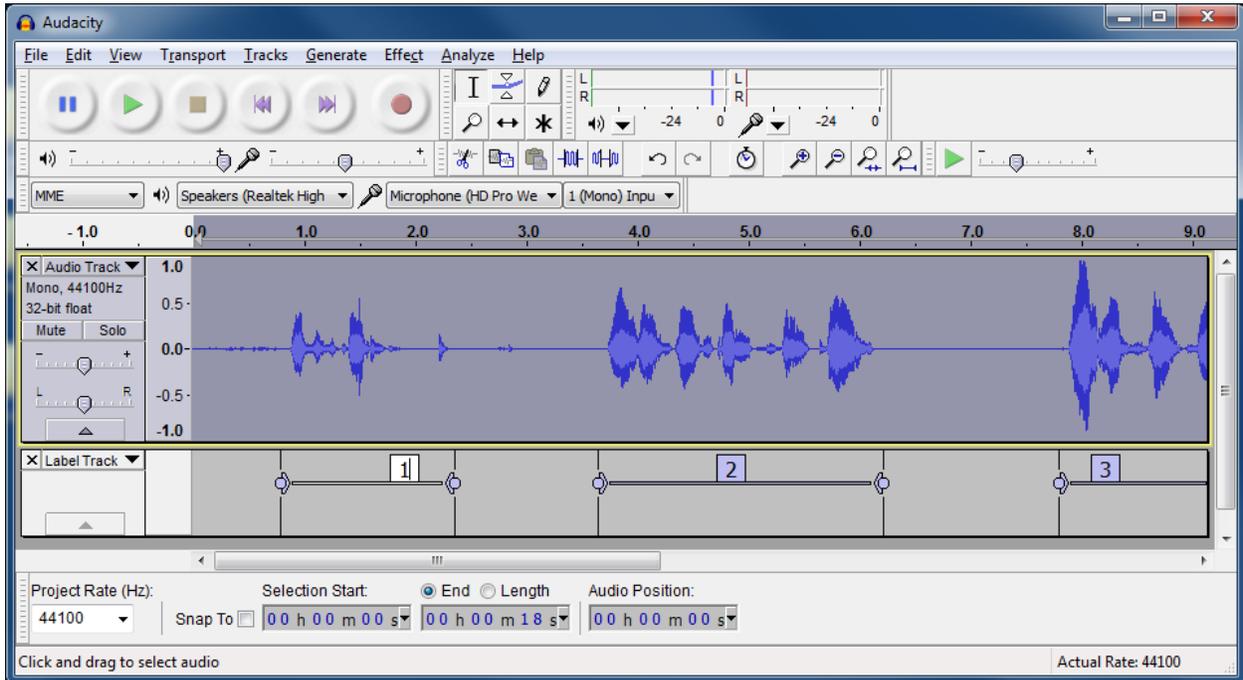
Save the project before continuing.

Choose Analyze | Sound Finder from the Audacity menu bar. The Sound Finder dialog box appears:



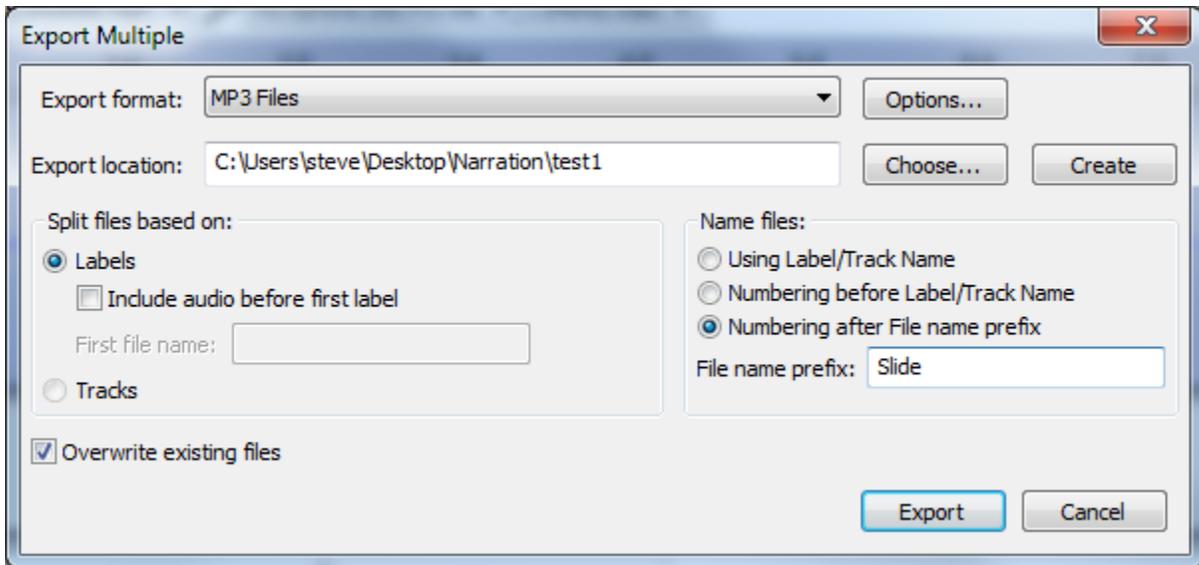
You may need to adjust these settings, depending on the ambient noise level in your recording environment, how much silence you've left between slide narrations and so forth. The default settings shown here are a good starting point, so click OK.

Audacity adds a label track, detects each slide's narration and adds a numbered label for it. Your project now looks like this:



Next, you'll export each labeled section of the sound track to an individual file. Audacity does this for you automatically. First, choose Edit | Preferences then click Import / Export. Remove the checkmark next to "Show Metadata Editor prior to export step". Otherwise, Audacity will pop up a metadata dialog box for each slide's narration as it's exported. Click OK.

Next, choose File | Export Multiple. The Export Multiple dialog box appears:



Choose an Export format. The best format will depend on the versions of PowerPoint you need to support in your presentation and whether you want to embed or link the sounds.

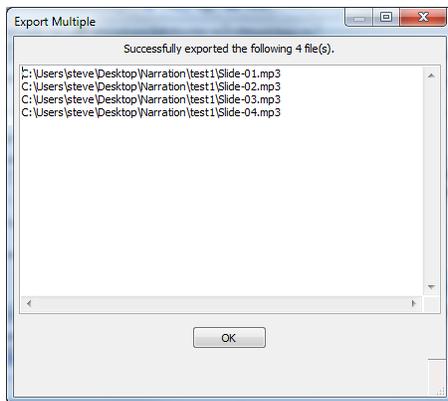
Click Options... to select quality options for your exported sound files.

Click Choose... to select a folder to export your sounds to (typically, the same folder as your presentation file if you plan to use the sounds with PPTools Narrator). Or if you wish, type the full path to the folder. Click Create to have Audacity create the folder for you if it doesn't already exist.

Choose Numbering after File name prefix and type a file name prefix. Audacity will insert a hyphen between the prefix and the slide number. For example, if the prefix is Slide, the exported sound files will be named Slide-01, Slide-02 and so on.

Other options should be as shown above.

Click Export. Audacity quickly exports each slide's narration to the chosen format/in the chosen folder:



No pauses in your recorded narration?

If you've already recorded the narration and haven't left silence between each slide's narration, Audacity may not be able to insert labels automatically, so you'll need to insert them manually.

Audacity's help describes various ways of doing this, but here's one method:

- Select the portion of the narration that belongs to slide 1, then press Ctrl+B to insert a label. Type 1 as the label text.
- Repeat until you've selected and labeled each of the narration segments in your overall narration.
- Be sure to save your project before you continue.
- Follow the instructions above, starting at the step that starts with "Nest, choose File | Export Multiple". From there on, the process is the same.