PREZI

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INTRODUCTION

What is Prezi?

Prezi is a fresh way to create presentations. It is non-linear presentation software, moving away from the idea of the individual slides of Powerpoint presentations. The software is used entirely online, requiring an internet connection in order to create and edit presentations. However, finished presentations can be downloaded and shown without needing a connection to the internet.

Prezi works by moving and zooming in and out from one element of the presentation to another. Prezi allows you to zoom in to slides within slides, include videos and flash animations, and explore the whole "canvas" during a presentation without losing your place in the regular playback order.

Presentations are called "prezis," and I have used the terms interchangeably in this handout.

Should I Use Prezi or Powerpoint?

Prezi is powerful, but it's not all-powerful. There are several limitations which could make it less useful for some purposes. If you want a professional, strictly business presentation appearance, Powerpoint is probably the way to go. If you want to inject some fun and energy into your presentation, and present your information in a way that others aren't used to seeing, Prezi is a great option.

A few things to consider when deciding between Prezi and Powerpoint:

- When using a free account, Prezi inserts a small logo into the corner of your presentation.
- The font and color options are limited in Prezi.
- All the zooming can get a bit much if you're moving around too frequently.

GETTING STARTED

Account Options

Prezi offers different account options. Its premium paid accounts offer additional features, but the basic "Public License" is free, as is the "Educational License," available to teachers and students with .edu email addresses.

Public Account (Free)

The free public account offers the basic Prezi functionality. You are able to create presentations through the Prezi web site, and can download your completed presentation for viewing on any PC or Mac. This account comes with 100 MB of storage space for your presentations and their images, videos, etc. A drawback to the public account is that everything you create with it is made publicly available on the web site.
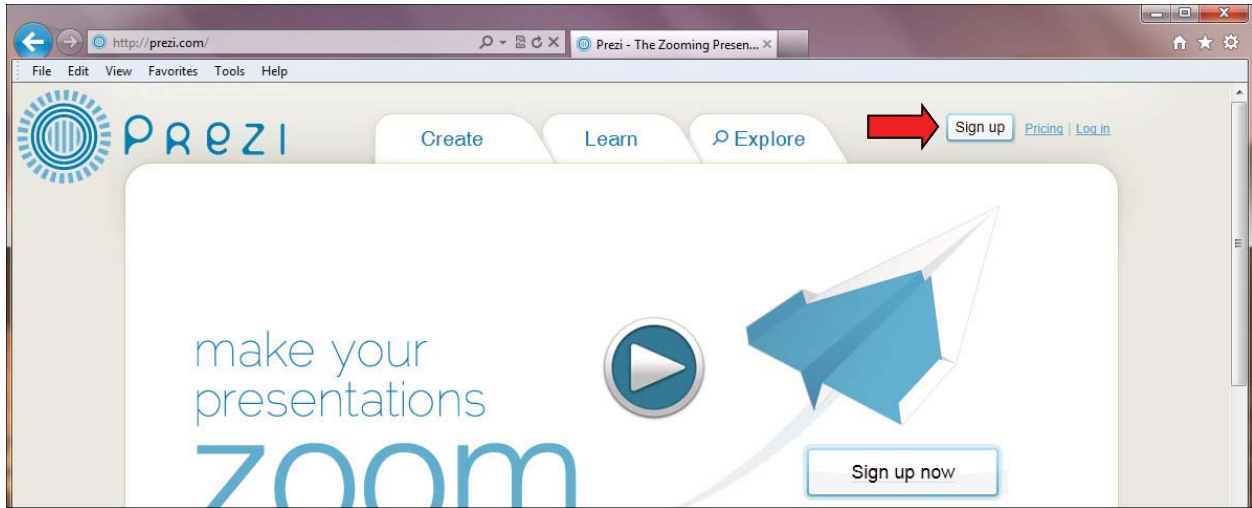
Educational (Free)

The free educational account requires you to sign up with an email address that clearly shows your association with an educational institution (like a .edu email address). This account gives you 500 MB of storage, and gives you the option of making your presentations private. You can also insert your own logo into your presentation, which replaces the default Prezi logo. There is also a premium educational account that requires a fee.

Paid Options

The "Enjoy" account, for $59 per year, includes the same features as the free educational account: 500 MB of storage, private presentations, and a custom logo. The "Pro" account costs $159 per year, and in addition to the features of the "Enjoy" account increases your storage to 2 GB and includes an offline editor. The offline editor allows you to create and edit presentations without having to be connected to the internet.
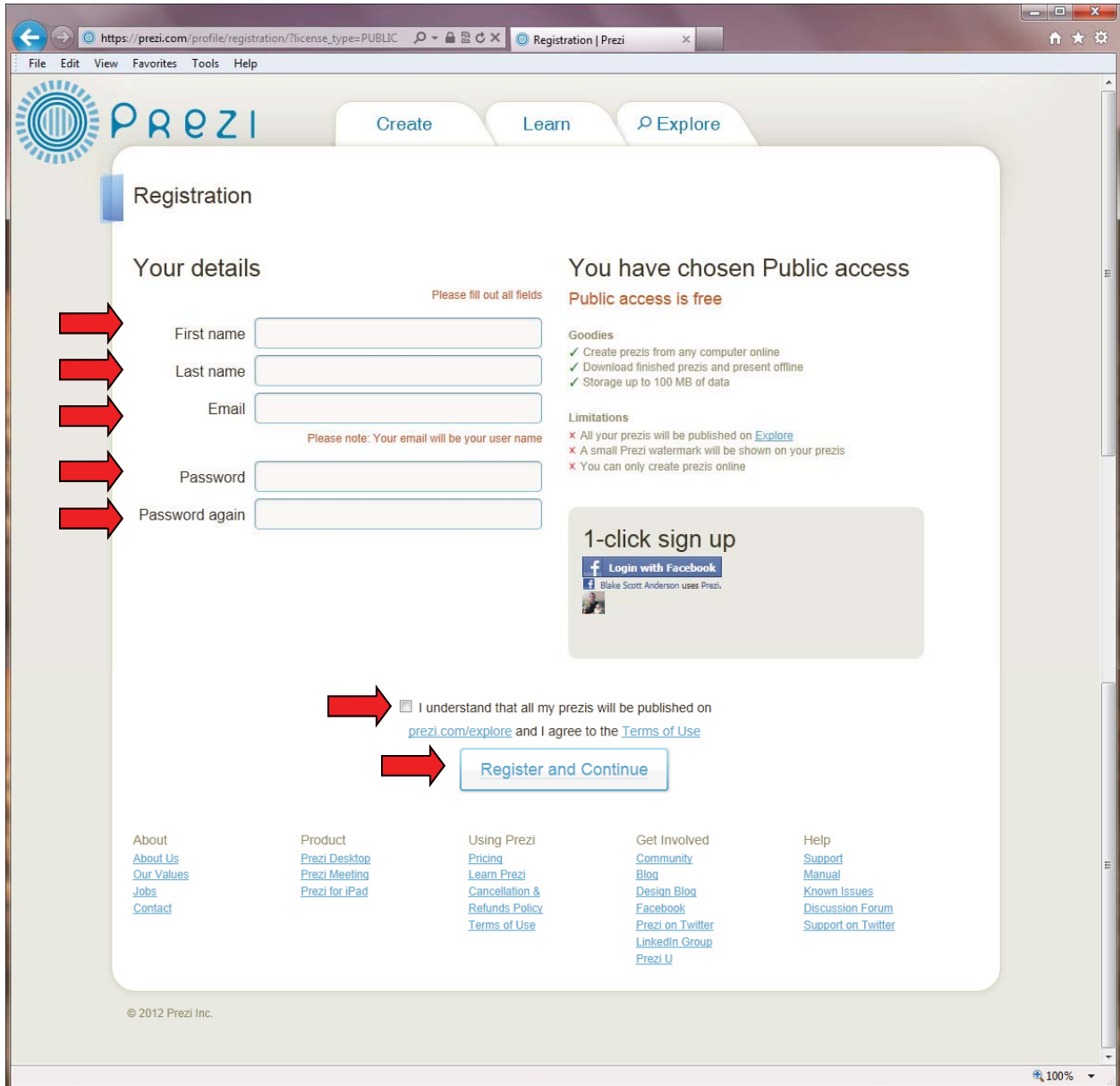
Creating an Account

Creating a new account on Prezi is quite simple. These steps show how to create a free public account, but signing up for an educational account or paid account is not very different. At the top right-hand corner of the main Prezi web page (*http://www.prezi.com/*) there is a "Sign up" button which will take you to a page where you can select which account you wish to sign up for. Choose "Start now" under "Public."
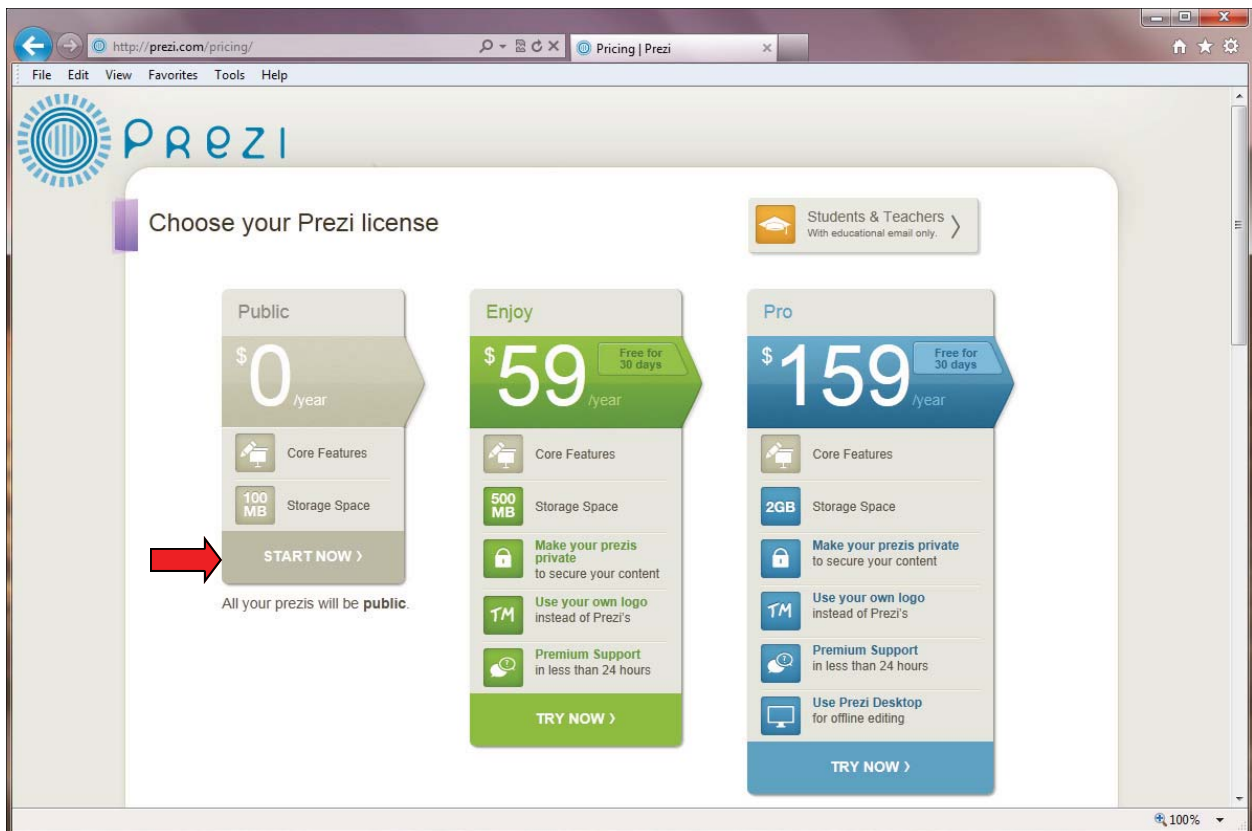
Creating an Account (continued)

On the registration page, enter your name and email address, and create a password for your Prezi account. After reading the Terms of Use, check the box agreeing to them. Then click "Register and Continue" to register your account and sign in.

You can also sign up for Prezi using your Facebook login, but I prefer to create individual accounts for different services I use, rather than have them all go through Facebook.

CREATING A NEW PRESENTATION

When you log in to Prezi your default page is "Your prezis." This page lists all the presentations you have in your account, and allows you to create new ones. Click on "New prezi" to start creating a new presentation.
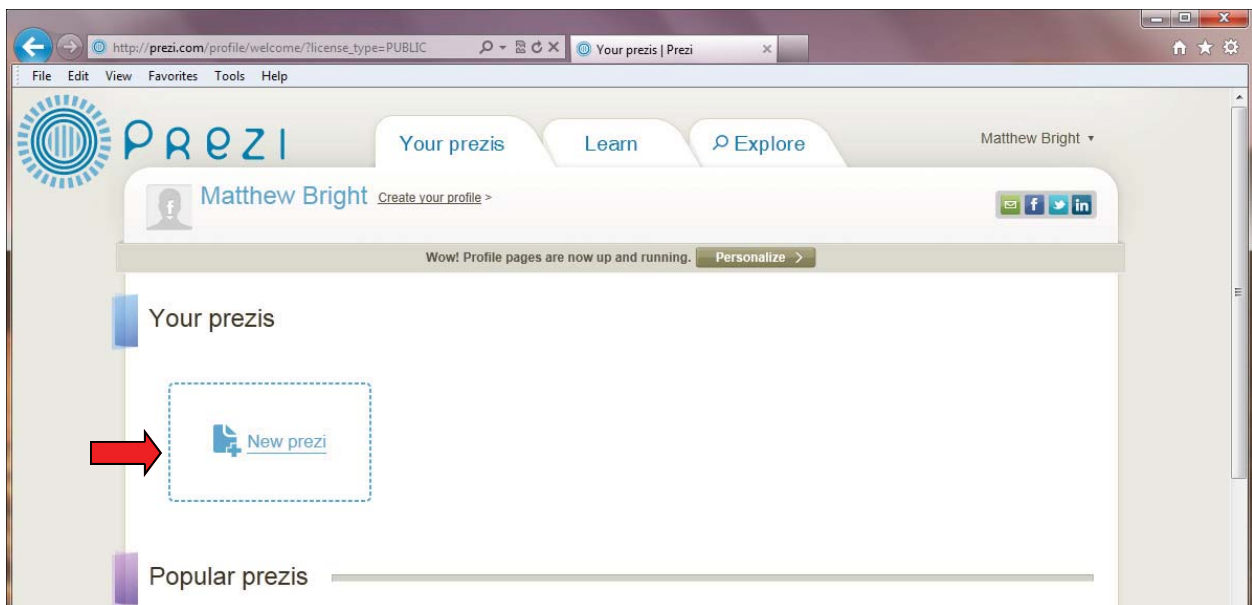

You'll be prompted to enter a title and description for your new project. This information shows up in the list of your prezis and helps identify it later. You'll then be prompted to choose a template, which can provide a pre-made layout. For out demonstration we'll go without a template, selecting "Blank".
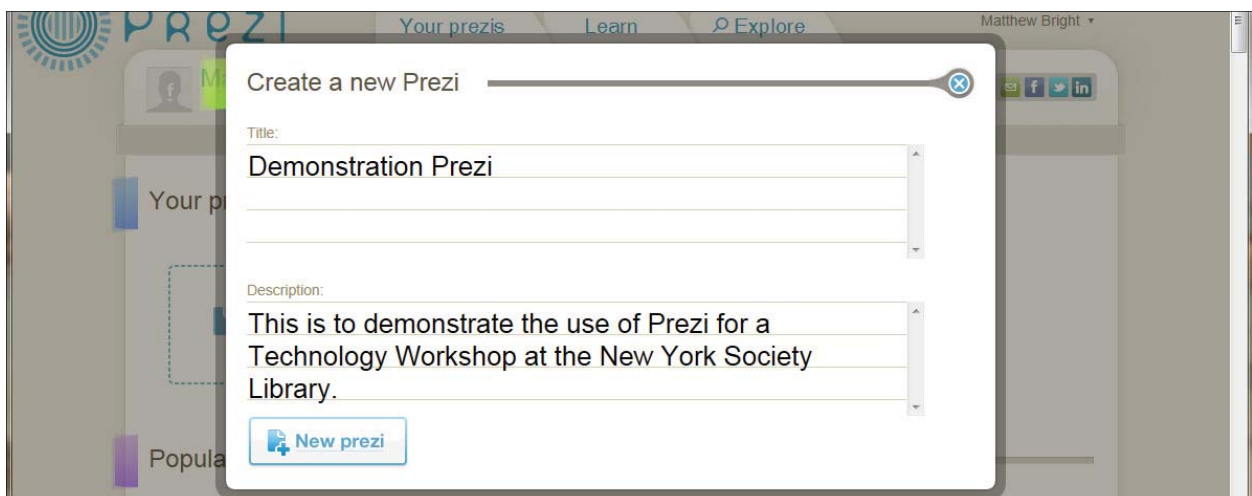
Navigating the Prezi Interface

The Prezi canvas is the large blank area on which you'll place all your presentation elements. The blank presentation starts with a single frame (the large square brackets—read more about frames on page 13) and a line of text. There is a menu bar at the top of the page, creation tools are found in the top-left corner of the canvas, zoom tools on the left of the canvas, and playback in the bottom-right corner. The bar on the left of the window shows the presentation path, which will be discussed on page 14.
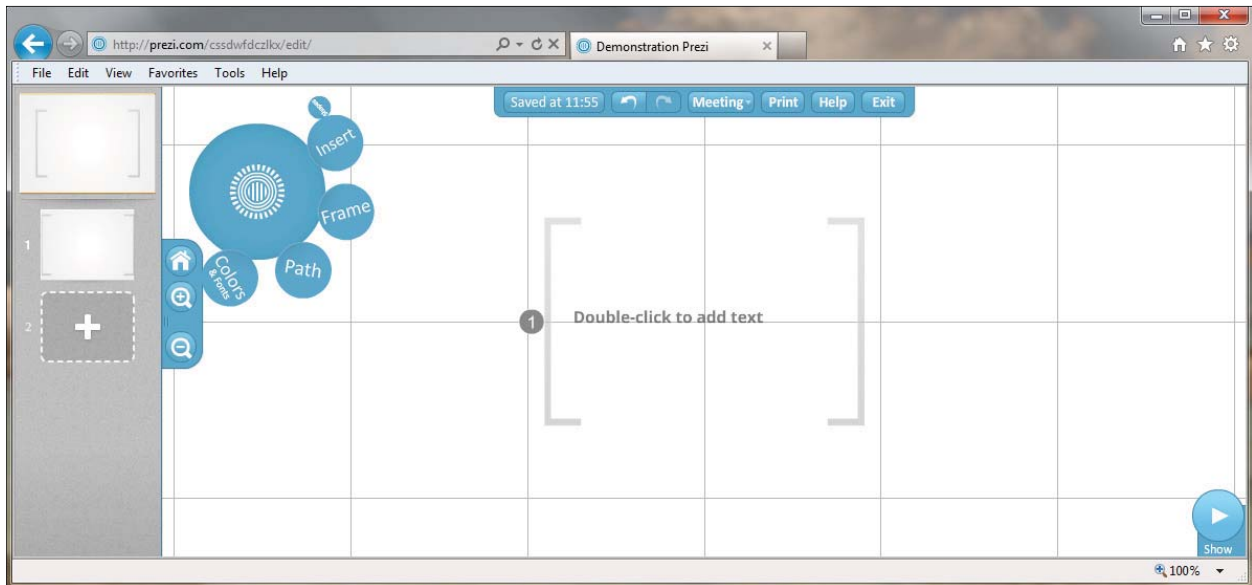
On the top menu bar, the first button shows the last time your prezi was autosaved.

The "undo" and "redo" buttons work the same way they do in other software. The "Meeting" button allows you to share your prezi with others, something that is covered in more detail on page 19. The "Print" button creates a PDF of your prezi, which you can then print. The first page of the PDF contains your whole canvas, with subsequent pages for each path point of your presentation in the path sidebar on the left of the window. "Help" brings up various help options. "Exit" saves the prezi and takes you out of the editor.

The creation tools allow you to insert elements into your prezi. We'll go into more detail on each of these tools as we go through the steps of creating a presentation.

The zoom tools allow you to zoom in and out of your canvas. The "home" button takes you to the default view at the center of your canvas. This gives you the default zoom setting and centers the rotation of your canvas, which can change when you're playing your prezi from the editor.

Inserting Text

Inserting text anywhere on your canvas is as easy as clicking where you want to start typing. The text box will appear, giving you layout options at the top (including creating a bulleted list) and a color selection tool. Below are three text styles (two titles and one body) which reflect your prezi's theme. The hand to the left of the text box allows you to move the text to another location on the canvas. Click "OK" or just click anywhere else on your canvas when done editing the text.
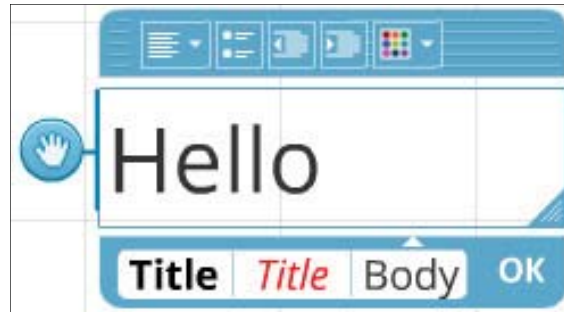

Manipulating Objects

Selecting the text box allows you to manipulate it some more. When you hover over an element, it becomes darker and bolder, showing you what you are about to select. Click the element to select it, and what is referred to as the "zebra" appears, letting you manipulate the object. This zebra performs the same functions for any kind of element: text, image, frame, etc.

On the zebra tool, the "+" increases the size of the object, the "-" decreases the size. Dragging the hand moves it. The trash can deletes the object, and the pencil allows you to edit it. If you click and drag on the lines on the outside of the circle, you rotate the object. Clicking and dragging on the solid blue middle circle allows you to resize the object dynamically, giving you more choices than clicking on the "+" and "-".

8
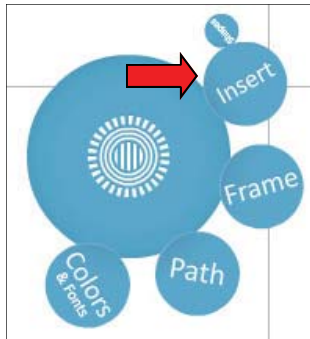
Inserting Images

In the creation tools in the top-left corner of your canvas, clicking "Insert" brings up options for the various elements you can insert into your presentation. Click "Image" to either upload an image from your computer or to insert one from the internet.

If inserting an image from your computer, choose "Select files…," navigate to the image you would like to insert, and click "Open." Supported image formats are .jpg, .png, .gif, .pdf, and .swf. You can also insert an image directly from the internet. Either provide the direct URL of the file (for example *http://www.nysoclib.org/graphics/index/front_hall.jpg*) or enter a search term and click "Search". Search results from Google Images will appear on the canvas, allowing you to select one for your presentation.

Your image will then appear on your canvas and you can select it and manipulate it using the zebra tool.
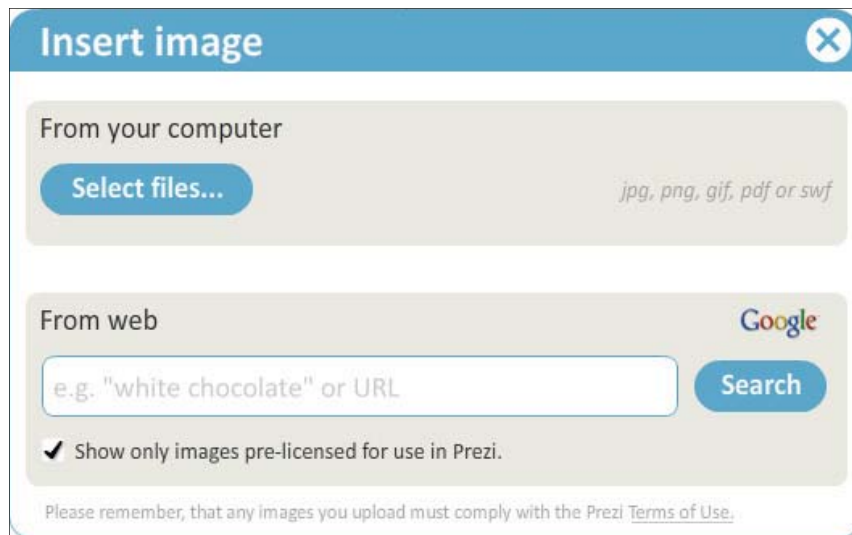
Inserting Videos

Videos can be inserted into your prezi. They appear as an image when zoomed out, and then play automatically when it is reached in your prezi path when viewing your presentation. Videos can be inserted from YouTube (which then requires an internet connection to play when viewing the presentation) or from a video file on your computer (in which case you will not need an internet connection when viewing your presentation).

From YouTube
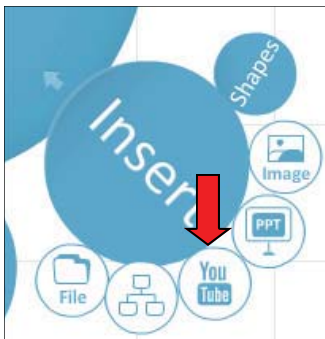
Click the "Insert" tool in the top-left creation tools, then "YouTube". Past the URL for the video you want to use into the box, and click insert. The video will then appear in the prezi with controls allowing you to play it. Something to keep in mind with YouTube videos is that not all of them allow you to embed them. If this is a case with a video you select, you will receive a message saying so when you try to play it in Prezi.
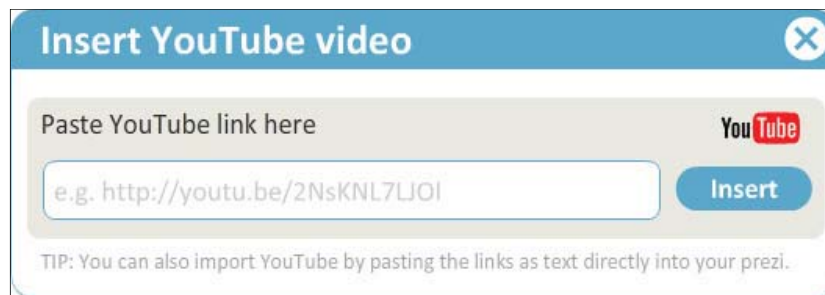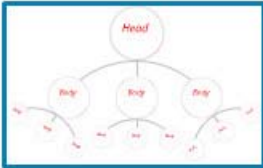

From Video Files
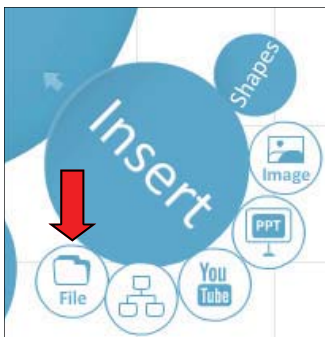
Click the "Insert" tool in the top-left creation tools, then "File". Navigate to the video file you want to insert, and click "Open". Your video will then be imported to Prezi. As with YouTube videos in your prezi, video files will appear with controls allowing you to play them. Video files can be quite large, so it is easy to run out of storage space on Prezi when you have the free 100 MB account. It might make sense to use video editing software to create smaller versions of videos you want to include in your presentation.
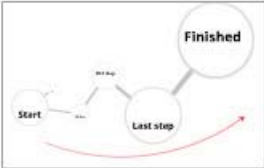
Inserting Drawings and Diagrams
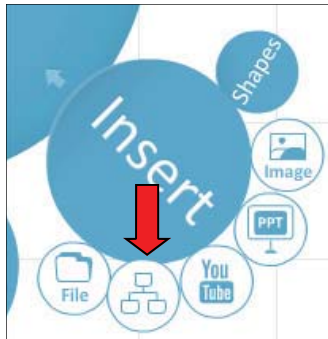
The "Drawings and Diagrams" tool allows you to insert org charts, timelines, tables, and other pre-designed elements. After clicking on the tool, you are given a selection of drawings to choose from. Select one, click "Choose," and it will appear on your canvas. You can edit each individual element of the drawing, changing and deleting individual text boxes and lines.
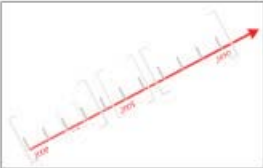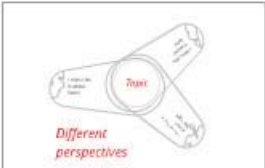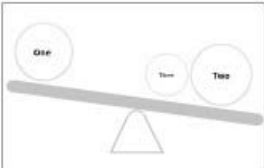
Importing Powerpoint Slides
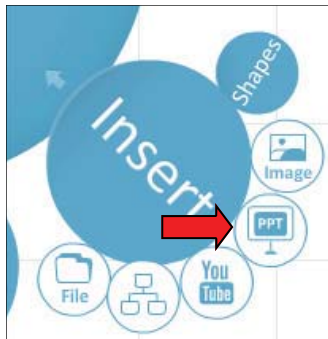
Click the "Insert" tool in the top-left creation tools, then "PPT". Navigate to the Powerpoint file on your computer, and select "Open". The slides from your presentation will appear on the right-hand-side of the window, allowing you to drag individual slides from there onto your canvas. Once a slide is on your canvas, you can edit and manipulate the individual elements.

Frames

Frames allow you to control a group of elements simultaneously, and can also be used as selections for stops in the path of your presentation. Manipulating a frame will also manipulate the objects within it, allowing you to resize, rotate, and move the group.

Visible Frames

Visible frames show up when viewing your presentation. Prezi has three visible frame options: brackets, circle, and rectangle. Just click on the style you want, and then click and drag over the area you want contained in the frame.
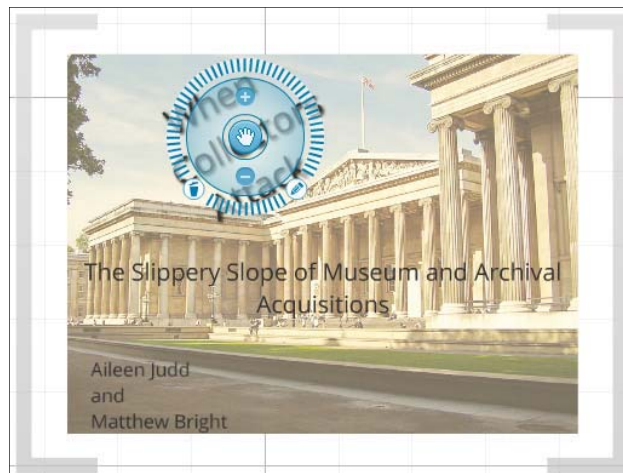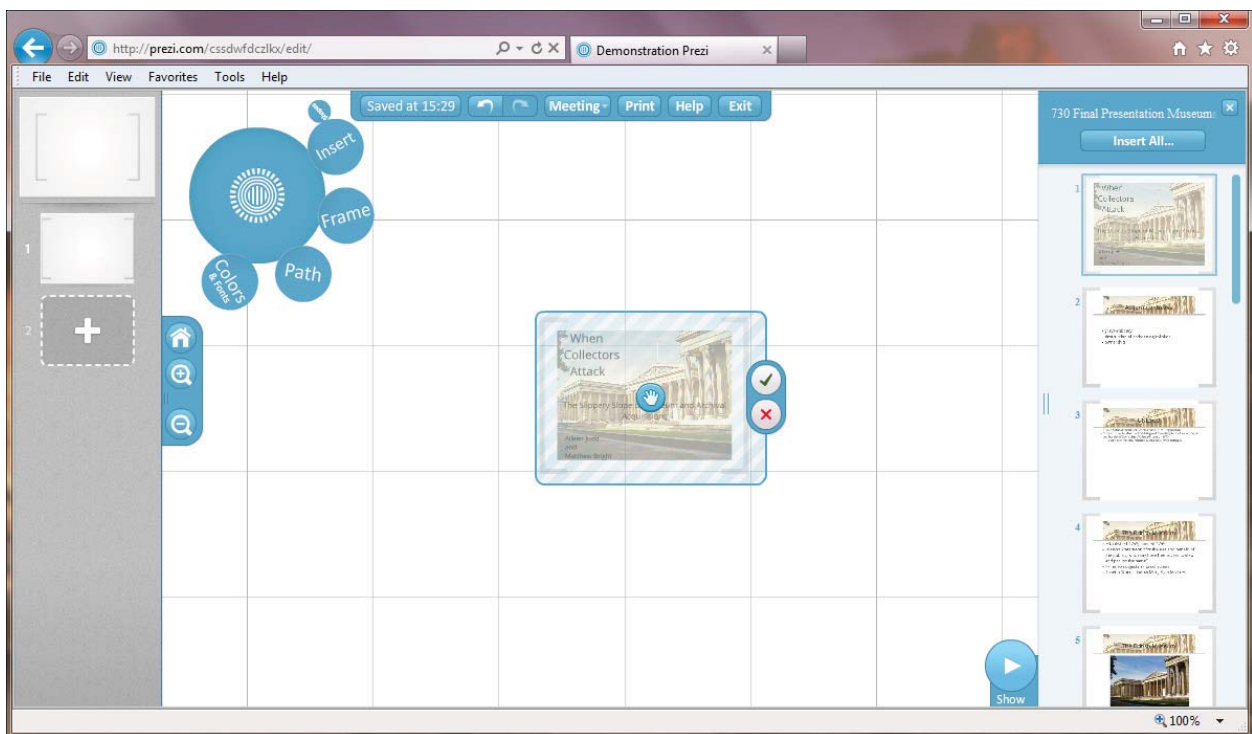
Hidden Frames

Hidden frames work in exactly the same way as visible frames, except that they do not display when viewing your presentation. They are useful if you don't like the look of the Prezi frames or if you want to frame only a certain smaller area within another frame and don't want lines from the frame to get in the way of other content. Hidden frames appear on the canvas as blue, with thick corners and a narrow outline.

Paths: Giving Order to Your Presentation

The path allows you to define the different views (basically the "slides" of your presentation) and the order in which they are shown. Click on "Path" in the creation tools in the top-left corner of your canvas. Now, any frame or individual element you click on will be added to the path list on the left of the window. To change the order of the presentation, just drag a view up or down in the list. To remove a view from the list, hover over it and click the "X" that appears in the corner of the view. You can also click the "Add current view" button at the bottom of the path list to create a view based on the current display of your canvas.

When viewing your presentation, Prezi automatically rotates the display when zooming into any frames or elements that have been rotated so that the text or image appears right-side-up for that view only, restoring to the default rotation for the next view.

In addition to the path list on the left of the window, the path is also reflected on your canvas, with lines connecting each of the views and numbers corresponding to their order.
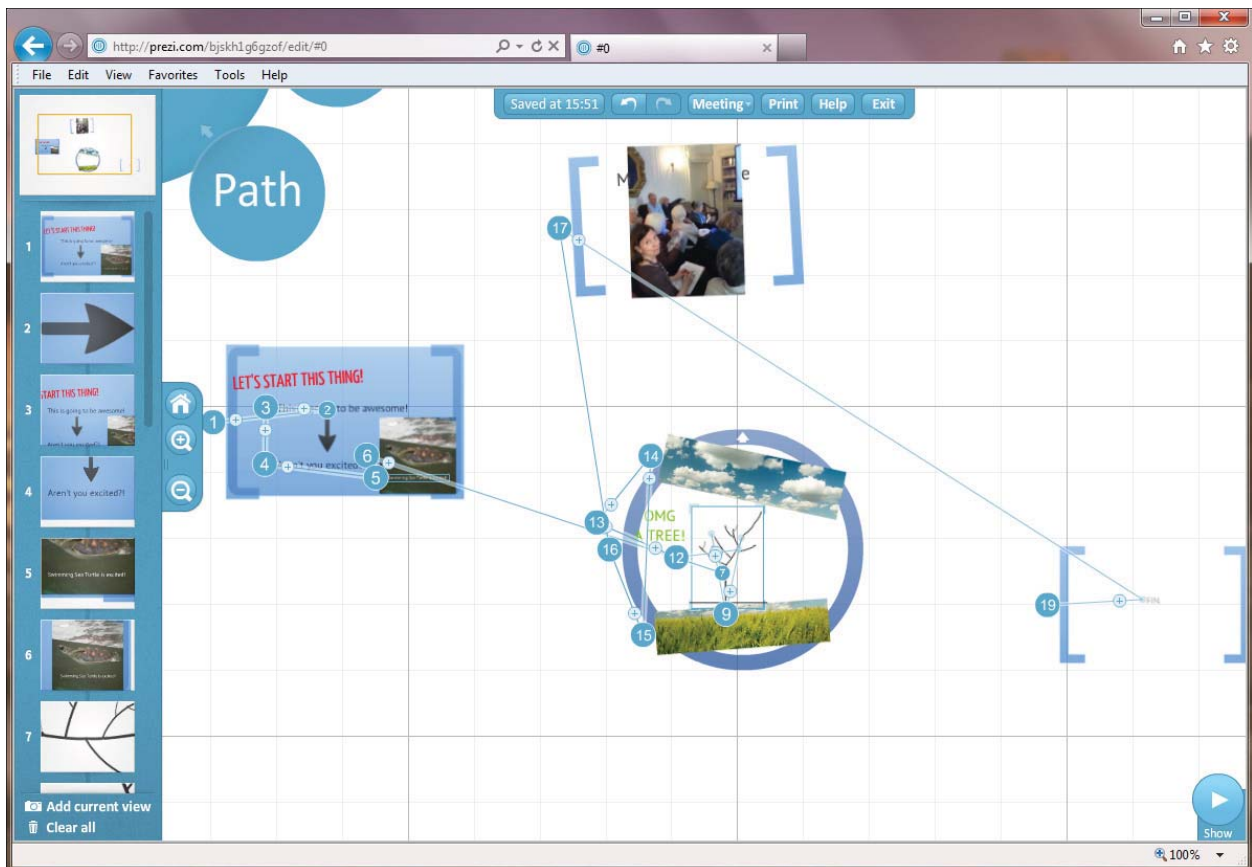
Tips for Creating Your Presentation

Create your structure first, fill in the details afterwards.
Think of your presentation like a building – you need to create the foundations and the structure first, and you need to know the outline before you start building. Think about what your top-down canvas view will be like before you start.

Make your sections bigger than you think you need to.
You won't believe how often you think you've made something massive, but ending up having to cram loads and loads of other stuff into the same space, and wishing you'd make it bigger in the first place. Remember, the Prezi canvas is to all intents and purposes unlimited in size – everything looks the same size when zoomed in on to fill the screen anyway.

Choose your color scheme well, and choose it early.
Unlike almost all other software we're used to using, Prezi does not allow an infinite range of possibilities in terms of fonts and colors. This is either a blessing or a curse depending on how creative you are. But as there are only a handful of options, there's really no excuse for not choosing the one which best embodies the feel of what you are trying to say.

Position your materials sympathetically to avoid motion-sickness.
There's no point in using Prezi if you're just going to stick a load of paragraphs of text on the canvas at random, then plot a path between them. You may as well use PowerPoint as you're not exploiting the platform at all, and it'll probably leave the viewer slightly queasy. If you arrange your materials sympathetically, it's better for everyone. So try and move progressively and consistently between items – from A to B to C, in a horizontal row or vertically or even in a circle, rather than from A – Y – D all over the place, wildly oscillating around the canvas.

Reign in your ambition!
Most Prezis suffer from the giddy excitement that comes from exploring a new medium. Oooh look, I can do this! And OMG, THIS! But consider if you really **need** to have that bit where the whole thing turns upside down and then on its side – if it serves as some kind of visual metaphor then great, but if it doesn't then keep things on an even keel.

…but still employ at least one extreme change of scale…
Epic scale changes are ace. Prezi can go REALLY big and REALLY small, so it's a nice thing to zoom in on something people won't have guessed is there from the top-down view at the start.

Make sure you are the dog, and Prezi is the tail…
Should be self-explanatory this one – always make sure Prezi is working for you, not the other way around. You chose Prezi because it serves a function for you – if it doesn't serve that function in practice, or using it drives you mad with frustration, then ditch it! Don't let the tail wag the dog – pick materials that suit this presentation platform, but don't let the medium dictate to you what you're doing.
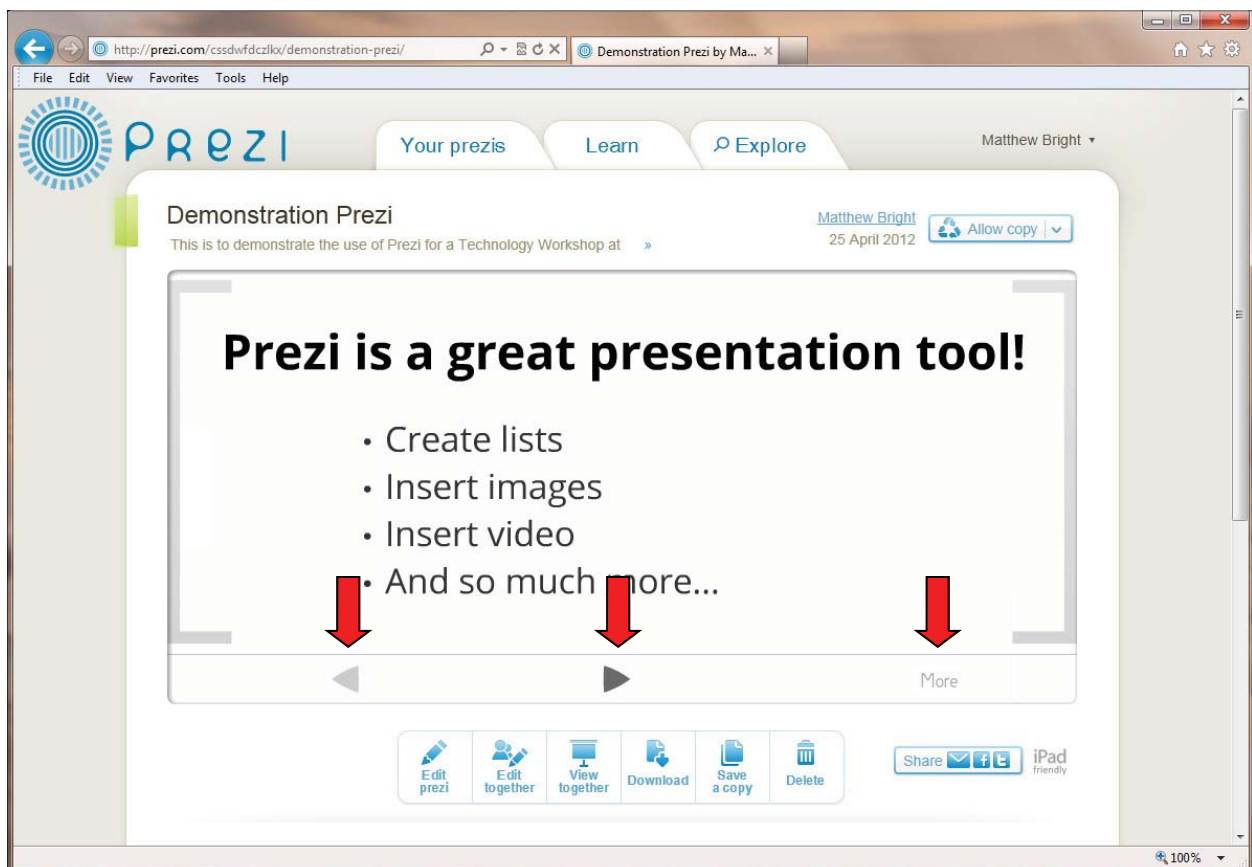
VIEWING YOUR PRESENTATION

From Within the Editor

The "Show" button in the bottom-right corner of your canvas allows you to view your presentation. Clicking this button automatically starts a full-screen view of your prezi. To navigate forwards and backwards through the presentation, just use the right and left arrow keys on your keyboard, or the arrows on the bottom-right corner of the screen. To end the presentation and get back to the editor, press the "escape" key or click the "X" in the bottom-right corner of the screen.

From Prezi.com

From the "Your prezis" page, which you are automatically brought to when you log in to Prezi, you can select any prezi in the list to open it. Doing so will bring up the screen shown below, where you can view it, or choose to edit it, edit it with others, view it with others, download it, save a copy, or delete it. Use the arrows at the bottom of the preview to navigate through your prezi on this page, or click "More" to view it in full screen mode.

Downloading an Offline Copy

      You can download an offline copy of your prezi. This is a great idea if you're going to be giving a presentation, as it allows you to use it on other computers, and without an internet connection. It also looks a little more professional than navigating to the Prezi web site and logging in before being able to start your presentation. To download your presentation, open it from the "Your prezis" page, then click the "Download" button below the prezi preview.
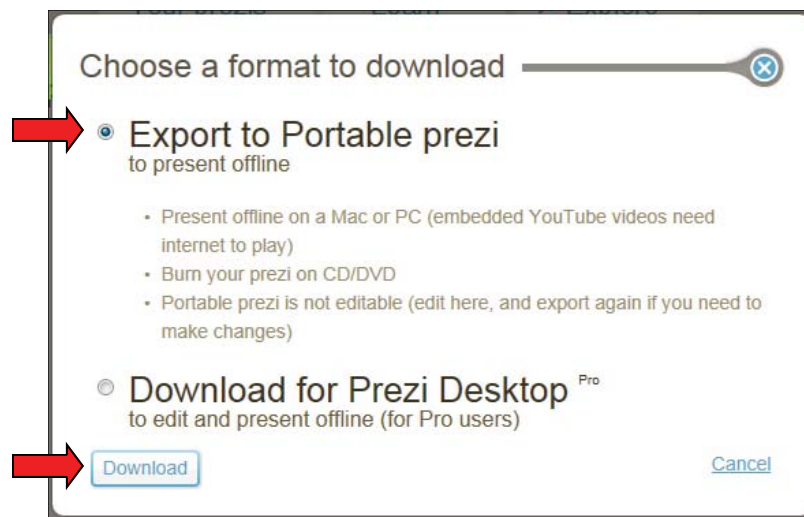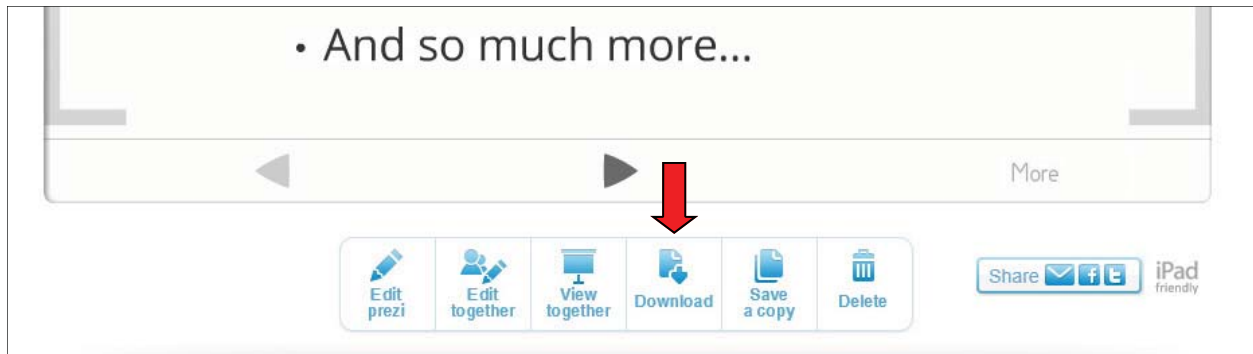

      Prezi will then compile your presentation, which takes just a few seconds, and then you will be notified that is it ready. Click on the download link to save the zip file of the presentation to your computer.

Downloading an Offline Copy (continued)

Viewing on Windows

To view your downloaded presentation, unzip the downloaded file. You will have a folder with the file "prezi.exe" and two folders. Run "prezi.exe" to view your prezi, which runs within Adobe Flash Player. Click on the "Fullscreen" option at the bottom of the window to display the presentation in full-screen mode, and navigate the same way you did when viewing online.
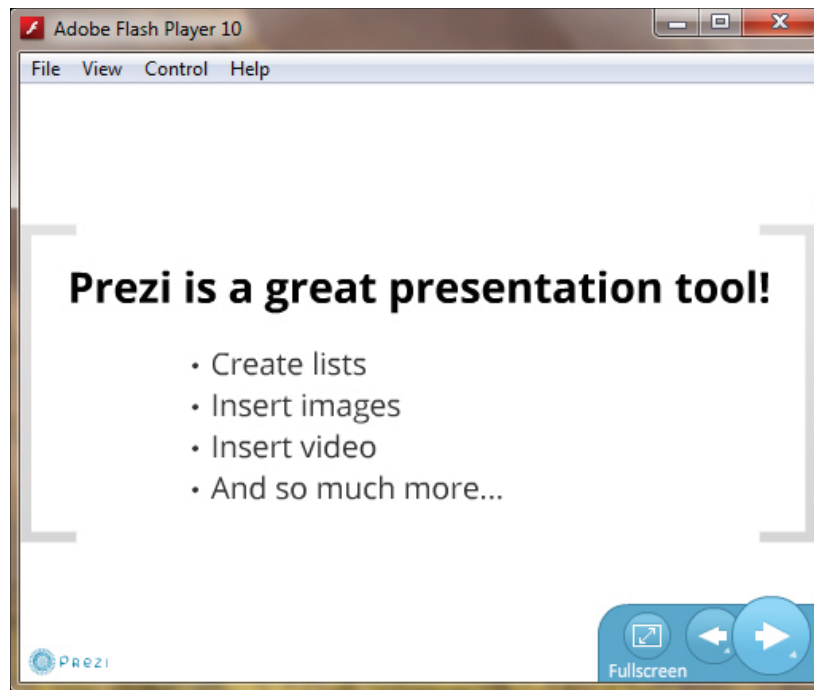

Viewing on a Mac

The download automatically unzips on the Mac, so all you have to do is open your presentation folder and double-click on the "prezi" file with the prezi logo (not the folder or the "prezi.exe" file). This will launch your prezi in a similar window to that displayed in Windows.

OTHER FEATURES

Sharing Your Presentation

You can share your presentation with others online, allowing them to follow along on their own computers are you give your presentation. Click on "View together" below the preview of the prezi you want to present online.
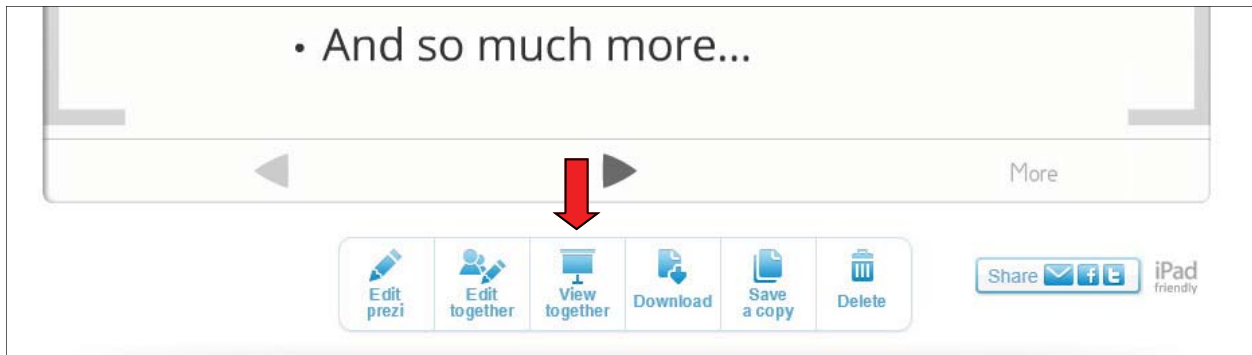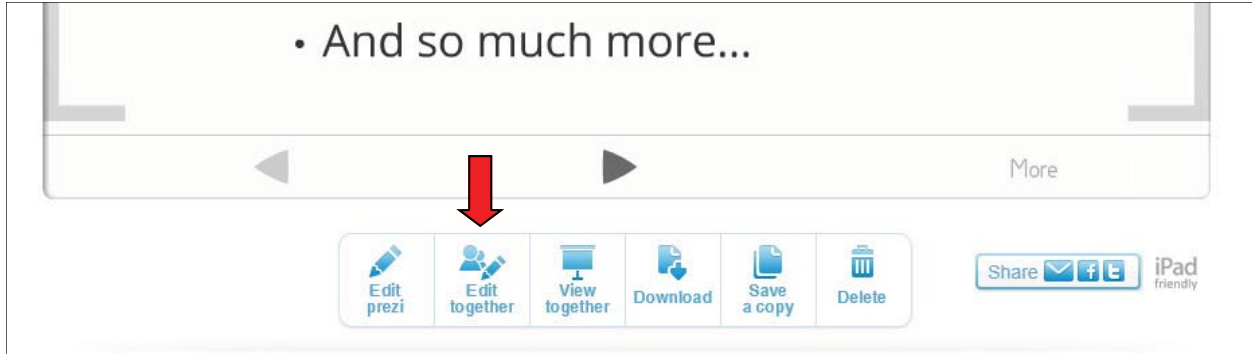

Copy the link provided, and paste it into emails or instant messages to invite others to join. You might want to use a URL shortening service like *http://goo.gl/* or *http://tinyurl.com/* to create a shorter URL that you can share more easily. Then click "Start presenting." As you step through the presentation on your computer, anyone viewing it will be taken through the same views.
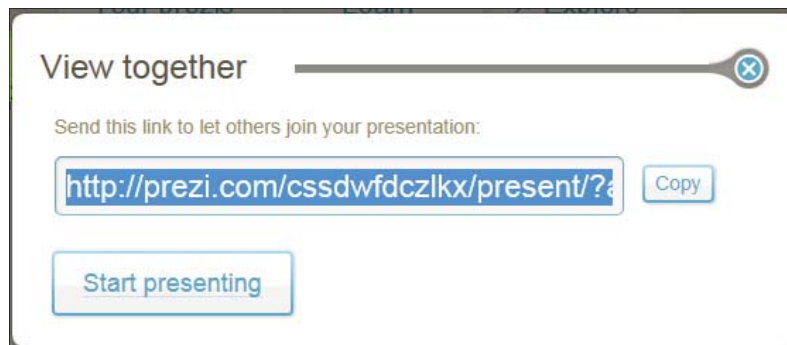
Collaborating With Others

   You can also allow others to edit your presentation. Click on "Edit together" below the preview of the prezi you want to invite others to collaborate on.

   Copy the link provided, and paste it into emails or instant messages to invite others to edit. Again, you might want to use a URL shortening service like *http://goo.gl/* or *http://tinyurl.com/* to create a shorter URL that you can share more easily. Other editors must have Prezi accounts in order to edit your presentation. Once you have shared editing access to your presentation, multiple people can edit the same presentation simultaneously.
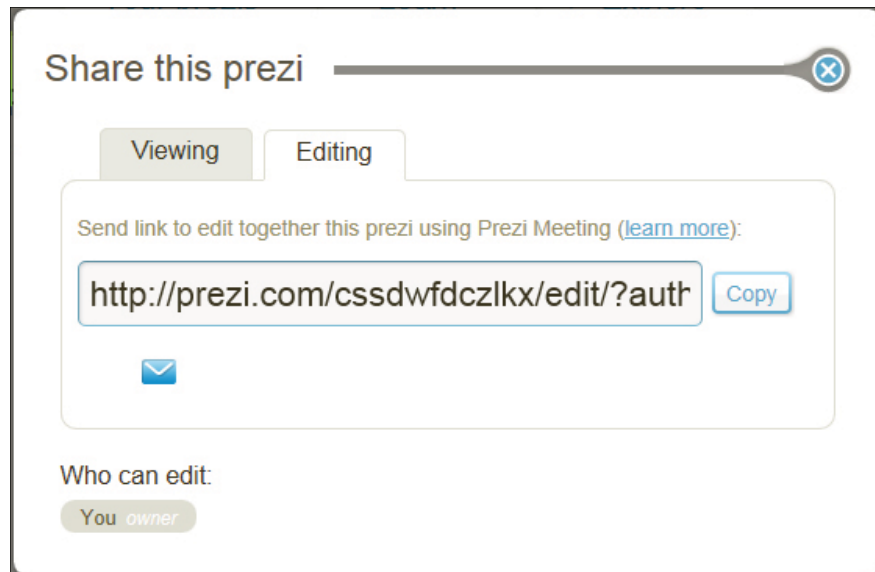
Additional Prezi Resources

The online help for Prezi is very useful, and includes video tutorials. The additional websites below may also be helpful.

"Learn": Prezi Online Help

http://prezi.com/learn/

10 Tips to Help Master Prezi

http://tippingpointlabs.com/2010/11/22/10-tips-to-help-master-prezi/

Ten excellent tips for creating better prezis. Talks quite a bit about how to think about the structure of your presentation.

Mr. President, Prezi Tips & Tricks

http://www.mrprezident.com/prezi-tips-tricks-2/

A few basic tips, and some advanced ones.

6 Tips for Making a Visual Resume with Prezi

http://billymeinke.wordpress.com/2012/01/22/6-tips-for-making-a-visual-resume-with-prezi-and-some-things-to-avoid/

An example of one of the things you can use Prezi for, along with some tips.