

SET YOUR PRESENTATION SLIDES TO FILL THE ZOOM VIDEO FRAME

Presenters can maximize readability and education impact of their presentation slides by setting the slide aspect ratio to 16:9. When using the 16:9 aspect ratio for presentation slides, each slide will fill the Zoom video frame for live transmission and for video recording. Learn how to set the 16:9 aspect ratio in PowerPoint and LibreOffice Impress.

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Introduction

For many years, both PowerPoint and LibreOffice Impress have supported various slide aspect ratios, meaning the length ratio of the horizontal edge length and the vertical edge length. As you might suspect, the earliest aspect ratios were specifically for printed slide decks and supported various paper sizes that were in use in the US, Europe and other major markets.

With the rise of large analog television screens, both PowerPoint and Impress also offered 4:3 aspect ratio, which was the aspect ratio of analog TV. Later, both applications supported the 16:9 aspect ratio of HDTV. That 16:9 ratio is now widely available in desktop monitors and on laptops screens.

Zoom now by default transmits and records in the 16:9 aspect ratio. If you want your slides to fill the screen of the live audience during a Zoom meeting or a hybrid meeting, meaning local plus remote audience, and the later audience watching a Zoom recording, use the 16:9 slide aspect ratio for your presentation slide deck.

This has a definite advantage for you as a presenter: the live remote audience and the recording audience may be watching on a giant HDTV screen, a computer screen, or a tiny smartphone screen. When you make your presentation slides the same aspect ratio that Zoom uses, your slides will fill the screen of the viewer and will get your points across to the audiences with maximum impact.

Set PowerPoint 16:9 aspect ratio

I have PowerPoint 365 installed on my Windows 10 and Windows 11 computers. The PowerPoint illustrations in this article were captured on my Windows 10 laptop.

Open PowerPoint. Ideally, you will set the slide aspect ratio at the beginning of your slide deck presentation creation process. In the menu ribbon at the top, choose Design. At the far right, click the **Slide Size** menu. You can see the displayed menu in **illustration 1**. In that menu, select **Widescreen (16:9)**, which is circled in the illustration.

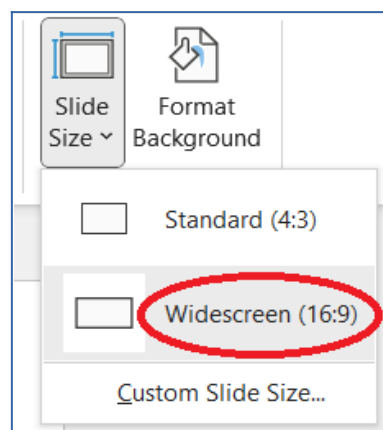


Illustration 1

The menu closes. The chosen side size is applied to the visible slide immediately, and all sides created in the current slide deck from this point forward. The chosen slide size becomes the default for all slide decks created from that point forward unless and until you again use this method to change the slide size.

If PowerPoint does NOT provide the Widescreen choice in the Slide Size menu, then select **Custom Slide Size**. In illustration 1, the choice shown in the menu below **Widescreen**.

The menu closes and a Size Side dialog box appears. You can see that dialog box in **illustration 2**. Below the dialog box name, a field named **Slides sized for** appears. Click the down-arrowhead by the field, and the menu of slide sizes appears. That menu is depicted in the illustration. In that menu, select **Widescreen**, which is circled in the illustration near the bottom of the menu.

When you select that Widescreen choice, the menu closes. Tap the **OK button** at the bottom of the dialog box, which is not shown in the illustration.

The chosen side size is applied to the visible slide immediately, and all sides created later in the current slide deck. The chosen slide size becomes the default for all slide decks created from that point forward unless and until you again use this method to change the slide size.

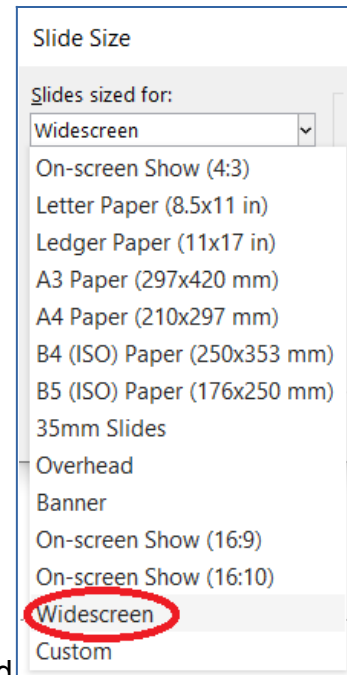


Illustration 2

LibreOffice Impress 16:9 aspect ratio

The illustration below was captured on my Windows 10 laptop using LibreOffice version 24.8.0.3.

In LibreOffice Impress, right-click the initial blank slide. A menu appears. In that menu, select **Slide Properties**. The menu closes and the Slide Properties dialog box appears.

That dialog box includes tabs for **Slide**, **Background** and **Transparency**. Select the **Slide tab**.

You can see the left side of the Slide Properties box Slide tab in **illustration 3**. This tab includes a Format field with a down-arrowhead. Click the down-arrowhead, and a menu appears.

The drop-down menu is depicted in the illustration. It is a long list. In the list, scroll down to **Screen 16:9** and select that aspect ratio. That choice is highlighted in the illustration.

When you select a menu choice, the menu closes, and the chosen aspect ratio appears between the word Format and the down-arrowhead. The effect of the choice is immediate on the chosen slide, and on all slides inserted later in the presentation. Ideally you should make the choice when you begin creating a presentation slide deck.

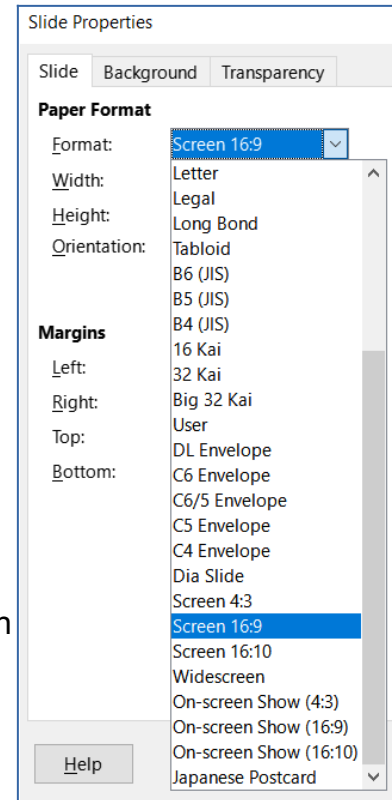


Illustration 3

Additionally, this choice becomes your default aspect ratio for the future. Any new slide deck you create will use this choice. You can override the default by using this same process to choose another format from the menu.

Zoom Cloud recording issues

My user group normally meets in hybrid mode, and records presentations using the Zoom Cloud recording method for later viewing via our Web site. Our Web site provides an archive of most presentation slide decks and presentation videos for members to search and enjoy at any time, even when needing a refresher of knowledge provided during past meetings.

Zoom live transmission is not impacted by the recording-specific matters discussed here.

Zoom cloud recording has for some years recorded the shared slides and superimposed a thumbnail video of the presenter. You can see an example in **illustration 4**. My slide fills the screen, but part of each slide is blocked by the thumbnail video.

That frame, and the following two, were captured on my Windows 10 laptop at full screen resolution, which happens to be Full High Definition, 1920×1080. That aspect ratio is 16:9.

The screen was captured from the Zoom cloud recording of my September 2024 presentation for my user group. For about a year prior to that point, I have reworked my new presentations to avoid use of that corner blocked by the video thumbnail. Sometimes I need that corner for a slide headline, and sometimes for a tall screen capture from a smartphone. As you can see, my rework was not always perfect. Part of the headline is blocked.



Illustration 4

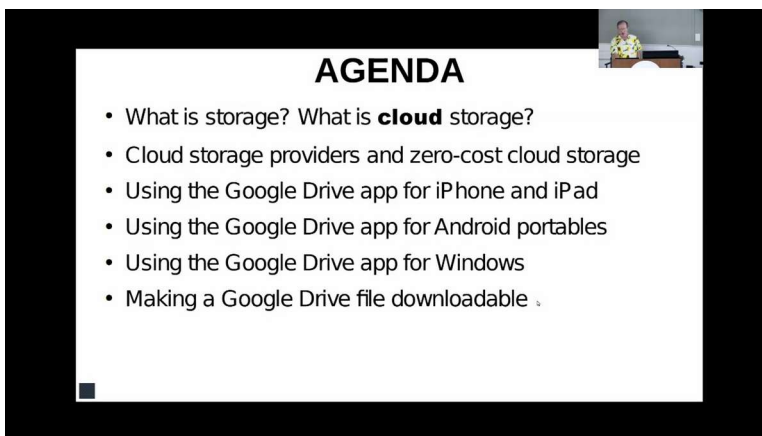


Illustration 5

In October 2024, Zoom changed its cloud recording format with the result of **reducing the size** in the Zoom cloud recording video frame. You can see an example video frame from the recording of my presentation for my user group that month in **illustration 5**. I was especially disappointed by this change because the slide occupies far less than the entire video frame, making the recording even less useful for viewing on portable devices.

During a February 2025 meeting of my user group, due to adverse weather, we met only via Zoom. I delivered my presentation from my Windows 11 desktop computer, with the Zoom client Video switch off, so my own webcam video was not sent to the Zoom server farm.

You can see the Zoom Client Video switch in **illustration 6**. Also, Zoom provides a keystroke combo to turn the Video switch on and off: ALT+V. That is easy to remember, V for video.

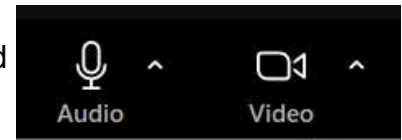


Illustration 6

When turned off, the Video switch is displayed with a diagonal red line through it, which is not shown in the illustration.

As it happened, the Zoom cloud video recording of my February presentation showed the slides at full resolution. You can see a video frame from that cloud recording in **illustration 7**.

On March 5, 2025, I delivered another presentation for my user group, this time using my Windows 10 laptop Zoom client. Again, I turned off the Video switch in my Zoom client. Again, the Zoom cloud recording showed my slides at full resolution with no superimposition of my Webcam image.

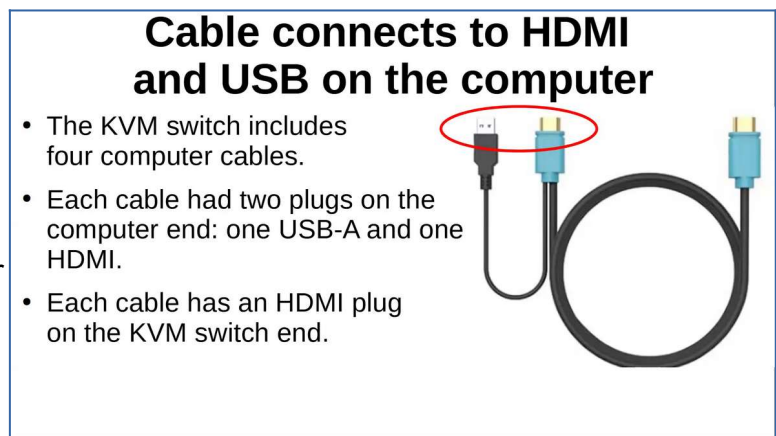


Illustration 7

On March 25, 2025, I delivered another presentation at a monthly joint meeting of PATACS and the GMU OLLI group OPCUG. There, the Zoom setup is more sophisticated. I turned off the Video switch on the podium computer we call the Audio/Visual computer, because that computer shares the presenter's video and microphone audio to the Zoom audience as well as the Zoom cloud recording system. The PATACS president Paul Howard sent me the cloud recording of that meeting the next day. Again, the Zoom cloud recording showed my slides at full resolution with no superimposition of my Webcam image.

So that is three times that I found the elimination of the presenter webcam video during a presentation enables full-resolution slide images to appear in the Zoom cloud recording. It works when delivering a presentation at the podium of our joint meeting location, and when delivering from home, and when delivering at our Arlington meeting location. As far as I know, this workaround by turning off the Zoom client video switch is not documented by Zoom.

The background of this workaround is that our user group takes advantage of a pre-configured Zoom account provided at no charge by our meeting site provider, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) At George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax City, Virginia. That account configuration prohibits Zoom local computer recording and includes the Zoom default option to superimpose the thumbnail presenter image. For the first Wednesday meeting, such as the march 5 meeting, PATACS uses its own Zoom account.

Most user groups are not likely in a similar situation. If your user group is in a similar situation, or if you provide a presentation for another group at work, church or school with a Zoom

account configured like the GMU OLLI Zoom accounts, now you have a viable workaround to avoid Zoom cloud recording superimposition and reduction of the slide resolution.

John Kennedy of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) informs me that Zoom accounts provided by APCUG at no cost to affiliate user groups of APCUG are configured to prohibit cloud recording and permit local computer recording. Zoom local computer recording imposes neither of the negative effects, superimposition or slide resolution reduction. Your presentation slides will fill the local computer recording video frame even if your Zoom client video switch is turned on.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout is a retired software developer. He has been writing about and delivering presentations on interesting uses of personal computers since the early 1980s. In the 21st century, as digital tech became more powerful and widespread, he has also been writing and delivering presentations about interesting uses of smartphones, tablets, digital music, digital photography, Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Pluggable Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs). He lives in Arlington Virginia.