PowerPoint Cross-Platform Compatibility

In this tutorial, we'll explain some of the idiosyncrasies involved with transferring a PowerPoint presentation between Microsoft Windows and Apple OS X.

Some of the most common problems resulting from moving a PowerPoint presentation from one platform to another are listed below. If you encounter a problem not discussed here, visit the references listed at the end of this tutorial for more help and information.

1. Fonts and Encoding
   a. Problem: There are many different fonts available, many of which are not the same on both system platforms. You may also have installed additional fonts on your system that are not commonly found on other systems (or may be platform specific). The characters cause errors in the way the text is viewed on the other system.
   b. Solution: Use common, standard fonts such as Arial and Times New Roman. These can be found on almost all systems, and are generally considered to be "safe".   The chances of encountering a compatibility issue with these "safe" fonts are slim.

2. File names and naming conventions
   a. Problem: Operating systems use different alphanumeric characters and symbols for different uses in files (usually behind the scenes, so to speak, outside of the user experience). The PC and Mac file systems use different file naming conventions. For example, one system could support certain characters in your file names (i.e. '?', '*', '@') while the other may not.
   b. Solution: Avoid usage of characters that aren't letters or numbers when naming your files. Avoid characters such as " / ", " @ ", " $ ", etc. If you need to use symbols in your file names, stick to underscores (workspaces) and dashes (" – ").

3. Video and Video Formats
   a. Problem: You have video files in your presentation, but are not sure if they will work when transferred to another platform
   b. Solution: Typically, both systems will play any type of video if the codec (used to decrypt the video) is available for both platforms. To determine usability, test out the video on each system. If it works, then obviously there is no problem. If it doesn't, find the codec for the system which cannot play the video and install it, or, make two separate video files encoded with codecs native to each system. If you are unsure about which codec to use, try encoding to mpeg1 as this format is supported on every system.

Further sources of information:

Overall: http://www.rdpslides.com/pptfaq

PC to Mac and Back: http://www.rdpslides.com/pptfaq/FAQ00281.htm

PPT Sound and Movies: http://www.rdpslides.com/pptfaq/FAQ00155.htm