

RTFBeamer: Conversion Program for PowerPoint to Beamer

1 Introduction

RTFBeamer is a C++ program which converts a PowerPoint-written “Outline/RTF” file into a working Beamer presentation. It is a two step process:

1. From PowerPoint, use the file-as command to save the presentation selecting “Outline/RTF” as the format.

Outline/RTF captures all the text content of the ppt file, but not figures, tables, equations, or other graphical objects. (Tables and equations can be converted to tex by cut and paste into Word and then using the word2tex shareware program. It also converts figures, but its output format is .eps whereas Beamer wants .jpg or .pdf.)

(It would be nice to do it all in one step, reading the .ppt file directly. But, in the usual Microsoft mode, the file protocol is proprietary. Industrial espionage, not mere software, is required to recapture your work once you have entrusted it to Microsoft products.)

2. From RTFBeamer specify the .rtf filename and it will be converted into a file of the same base name, adding “B” with the extension .tex. This file is ready to compile (using PDF Texify) as a Beamer presentation of type .pdf.

RTFBeamer will create as many Beamer frames as there are slides in the .ppt presentation. Graphical slides will be created as empty slides with titles, ready to fill in the graphic content.

2 Defaults and Assumptions

RTFBeamer produces animated text at all levels. This roughly emulates the PowerPoint defaults that I have set up. This works with “bi” and “ei” macros that do begin and end itemize modified to produce automatic animation. PowerPoint titles become

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\frametitle{ }'s.
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Since Beamer supports a powerful

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\tableofcontents
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feature, an artificial structure is induced which divides the presentation into numbered sections of ten frames each. This obviously needs to be replaced by more thoughtfully named and placed section names.

All ascii text is successfully translated. But some exotic features of PowerPoint are not successfully translated. Certain non-ascii symbols, for example, will produce strange and useless RTF code, which needs to be edited before compiling the presentation. Because RTF uses the backslash as a control symbol, such stray code will aggravate latex, which wants all sequences beginning with the backslash to be known latex commands.

Some non-ascii symbols which are currently translated are left and right “smart” quotation marks, em dashes, and left and right apostrophes.

The program does, however, support italic and bold text as well as superscripts and subscripts and regular Greek characters (but not variants).

The default Beamer “theme” is Berkeley, which of course is easily changed. An introductory outline slide is automatically generated from the structure of the

`\section{}`

commands.