



OUT OF THE BOX SMARTDRAW 7 SUITE EDITION



SmartDraw 7, a program with more than 60,000 ready-made graphics, templates and chart wizards, offers a quick and easy way to create complex diagrams that can be placed in Microsoft PowerPoint and other applications.

The program comes in five specialized versions: Flowchart, Org Chart, Gantt Chart & Calendar, Technical, and Floor Plan. Each specialized version costs \$198. The SmartDraw Suite Edition (tested here), bundles all specialized versions into one package for \$297.

Templates, templates, templates

SmartDraw 7 relies heavily on a sizeable library of templates and symbols. There are hundreds of templates for creating flowcharts, forms, certificates and quizzes. The templates are divided into 13 categories — flowcharts, org charts, floor plans,

etc. — or you can begin with a blank sheet and design from scratch. There are plenty of custom shapes and line choices and it's relatively easy to create, edit and change pieces within a diagram.

Wizardry

A Wizard area on the left side of the interface provides guidance for most tasks within SmartDraw. There are actually 33 wizards accessible from the Open icon at the top of the Wizard area. The drop-down menu provides several dockable wizards, and each provides a step-by-step process for creating diagrams.

With the Wizards area, the interface and the drop-down menus, navigating and using SmartDraw is self-explanatory and all its features easy to find. Within 10 minutes we were able to create a usable organization chart.

We were also impressed with SmartDraw's help and how-to functions. SmartDraw 7 has a large help library and it comes with free technical support.

If you have existing graphics or data to be added, you can import text, images and Microsoft Word and Excel files into SmartDraw. You can access Microsoft's Graph charting engine through SmartDraw and use the file conversion wizard to convert Microsoft Visio documents.

The program can export files in BMP, EPS, GIF, HTML, JPG, PDF, PNG and TIF format. It can also export Adobe Illustrator-compatible files.

Overall, we found SmartDraw to be an impressive diagramming tool. The program provides templates, shapes and options to quickly and easily create charts, graphics, flowcharts and other graphics — all of which can be exported into an electronic slideshow.

(JULIE HILL)

Price: \$297. **Contact:** SmartDraw.com Inc., 858.225.3300, www.smartdraw.com.

CIRCLE 302 ON READER INQUIRY CARD



PLUG-IN ARTICULATE PRESENTER

Articulate Presenter is one of many PowerPoint-to-Flash conversion tools on the market today. But what makes it unique is the "and then some" features it brings to presenters. Presenter 4.1 captures Microsoft PowerPoint slides, complete with animation, and then gives you options for narration, interactivity, quizzes and additional Flash objects. The result is a multimedia presentation that can play within any Web browser that has access to a Flash player.

This plug-in works with Windows-based versions of PowerPoint 2000, 2002 and 2003, adding its own drop-down menu to the PowerPoint interface to make all of its features easily accessible.

There are three types of games and quizzes in Presenter: multiple-choice, word quiz and sequence. Time limits and a passing score can be set for quiz questions as well.

Once a file is complete, it can be published as a Flash presentation for CD, Web and e-mail, and even as a Word-document handout. Articulate Presenter 4.1 is a little pricey, but it offers a lot of e-learning tools and a simple way to make Flash presentations.

(JENNIFER JUNEAU)

Price: \$600. **Contact:** Articulate Global Inc., 800.861.4880, www.articulate.com.

CIRCLE 303 ON READER INQUIRY CARD

RATING

SmartDraw 7 Suite Edition

PROS: Wizard how-to system easy to use. Lots of template and shape-diagram options.

CONS: Some templates difficult to manipulate.

9