New Default “Virtual Screen” Behavior During Presentations from PowerPoint 2013

A new default setting being used in PowerPoint 2013 when it is connected to a projector may cause unfamiliar and confusing screen behavior. PowerPoint 2013 now automatically defaults to Presenter Mode when connected to an external projector for slideshows. This mode creates an imaginary “virtual screen” that extends the computer's desktop, effectively creating two separate monitors on the user’s computer. The first monitor is the laptop or tablet's built-in screen. The second monitor is the projector display device attached to the laptop.

With these two different screens, what the presenter sees on the laptop will be different from what the audience sees on the projected screen. The mouse cursor can be moved off the “edge” of one screen, and it will appear on the other. The audience sees just the slide show, and the presenter sees the slide show plus a lot of extra information about it (notes, timer, etc.). This also means that anything outside the PowerPoint slideshow (web pages, videos, other programs) show only on the computer screen.

If not expected, this Extended virtual display can cause unanticipated problems during presentations. Moreover, under some circumstances, PowerPoint 2013 leaves the display mode set to this Extended setting after it exits.

To stop Presenter View inside PowerPoint 2013 once the slide show has started, click “Display Settings” in the top left corner of the Presenter View screen (on the computer). Then click “Duplicate Slide Show.” To stop PowerPoint 2013 from automatically starting a slide show in Presenter View, click on the Slide Show ribbon, and then uncheck “Use Presenter View.” To return to identical, mirrored screens outside PowerPoint 2013, right click on an open area of the desktop and select screen resolution. Under multiple displays, select "duplicate these displays", then click OK.