

How to Give Presentations



Saul Greenberg
University of Calgary

First things first:

- never check your presentation with your luggage
- check out media long before the talk starts
- make sure all audience can see projected image
 - walk around
 - 2 projectors
 - wall vs. screen
- focus
- know equipment: switches, bulbs
- light and glare: media tradeoff
- backup media should always be available

This slide: intro slide

introduce self, where from, and topic

The Message

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Prepare yourself | -know your message
-know your audience & venue
-practice, practice, practice |
| Typical presentations | -top-down structure
-keep it simple
-use media effectively |
| Style | -stay in control
-use body language
-let your enthusiasm show! |

I always write out what the goal of the talk is, that is, the main message that I want people to remember from the presentation

The entire talk should be crafted to deliver this message

Page 2

Outline

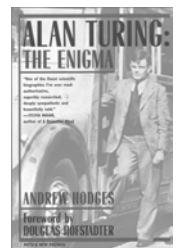
- Why present?
- Presentations you may give
- Presentation structure
- Presentation tips
- The use of media
- Handling questions and discussions
- The thesis oral

The outline provides a road map, and should relate back to the message

Motivation

Why present?

Science includes the dissemination of knowledge



Dissemination:

-papers & presentations, demos, videos, www, systems...

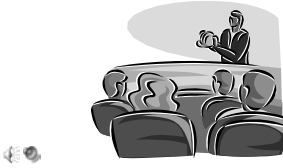
Why present?

Audiences are an opportunity

- to get people interested in your work
- for them to associate of a "face" with the work
- for encouraging discussion/feedback

The downside:

- risky!



Dissemination:

Audience:

-is this the audience I want e.g., good conference?
A write only paper?

-are there people I want to hear me in this audience?

-will the work be remembered afterwards
surprises, skits, this intro!!!

Risks:

-people remember bombs and bad talks

-hard to recover

-risk worth it: eg, live demo implies faith in the software

-possible to produce a paper which sounds ok in writing but may seem stupid or trivial as a presentation

Presentations you may give

Research papers

- seminar/conferences, workshops

Surveys / topic introductions

- tutorials/conferences/class

Discussions / points of view

- seminars, workshops
- panels

Defense of known subject matter

- Thesis, proposals



Your minimum presentations:

MSc: Should be capable of producing at least one paper / outside presentation

Thesis Oral

Presentations to your peers (other grads)

Presentations you may give

Audiences

- topic specialists
- area specialists
- computer scientists
- scientists
- academics
- public



Audience:

-your talk must be prepared at the right level for your audience.

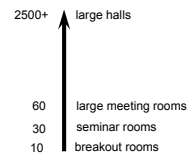
-A great talk for one audience may bomb with another.

-the audience determines the amount of detail you can get into

Presentations you may give

As room size increase, so does:

- formality
- inability of audience to cope with detail



Larger audience:

-broader interests

-less overall knowledge of your area

-less able to cope with detail

Exception: thesis oral

-small but formal

Presentation structure

The Opening: 1

1-2 minutes

- Introduce yourself and co-authors
- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Define the problem
- Provide a road map (outline)

Give the chair notes to introduce you,
and discuss it with them

so you get a good intro!

Page 9

9

Presentation structure

The Opening: 2

~5 minutes

- Tell them why they should listen
- Motivate the audience
 - define the problem in greater detail
 - emphasize your goal and contributions within that context
- Remind audience of background/terminology they need
 - avoid or explain jargon
 - relate to earlier work

Example:

-Apply theoretical aspects to real
world problems and applications

- how it fits in
why it is useful

-Gives background to understand
your talk

-Avoid or explain jargon / acronyms

Page 10

Presentation structure

The Body

- Tell them
- Describe what you did, and how you did it without
excessive detail
- Explain its significance

-Avoid excessive details:

Refer to paper for details

-Significance

Tell audience why they were
there

Presentation structure

The Conclusions

2-3 minutes

- Tell them what you have told them
- Summarize purpose and main point(s)
- Discuss current work/open problems
- Indicate that your talk is over

-Mention gaps that weren't covered
(avoids awkward questions)

-Be open and honest
increases credibility

Presentation tips

I can't overemphasize the importance of being clear in your own mind what you want the audience to get from your presentation.

Only then can you really concentrate on doing a good job of getting it across.



Bruce
MacDonald

Your message should permeate your talk

-the intro, the contributions, the conclusions

-all points should re-enforce it

-it should be the single thing the audience takes away with them

Presentation tips

I can't overemphasize the importance of being clear in your own mind what you want the audience to get from your presentation.

Only then can you really concentrate on doing a good job of getting it across.



Bruce
MacDonald

Know your message

Your message should permeate your talk

-the intro, the contributions, the conclusions

-all points should re-enforce it

-it should be the single thing the audience takes away with them

Presentation tips

Don't get bogged down in details

- will lose people and never get them back
- main point forgotten by audience
- fit details to your audience

Keep it simple

Details:

-You know too much, and can get bogged down / over-run time

-Shorter talks are harder!

-Decide what you want to include and leave out while still communicating the main message is hard work

Audience

-Different audiences require different styles / terminology / detail

Presentation tips

Good body language

- maintain eye contact
- speak clearly and audibly
- be enthusiastic
- don't read from a script



Sell your ideas. Much of message comes from body language and voice

Scripts: reading from them puts people to sleep.

Presentation tips

Watch the time!



Time:

Conferences - strict time

people hate missing coffee
breaks / lunch

you may lose your question
period

avoid going faster: trim instead

Page 17

17

Presentation tips

Prepare, practice, revise, practice

- get talk to match slides
- know your notes, but don't rely on them
- get feedback
 - friendly but critical audience

The most important single thing you
can do to improve your presentation!!!

Page 18

Use of media

None

- practiced speakers are best at this



Whiteboard

- best for small rooms/groups
- best for developing examples
- very slow



Avoid no media

Whiteboard:

-can use with other media

eg for recording static list of
points during presentation

Use of media

Transparencies

- must be legible by all (assume the worst!)
- typeset
- don't prepare too many
- prefer pictures/figures/tables over words



Computers

- less text / slide
- expect poor lighting
- best for animations and demonstrations



Overhead

-always reliable

-bright, easy to see

-limits talk (no demo, animation etc)

-once standard, but now the presentation bar is much
higher

-falling out of favor!

Computers:

-can be a real pain

-unreliable, hard to set up, projector problems, power
issues, resolution dilemmas, projector brightness

-expect them to fail

-maximize font size / images / contrast due to poor
lighting

-have backup media just in case

Use of media

Video

- excellent for short system demonstrations
- don't let them take over!
- can talk over longer ones



Demos

- superb at showing
- talk over them



Microphone

- place it well



Videos

- great, but don't let them take over

Demos

- they see it, they believe it
- risky, but well worth it
- have backup (video) just in case!

Microphone:

- placed too high, breathing
- too low, bad audio / feedback
- keep mouth by mike
- watch out for wires
- know where the switch is

Page 21

21

GroupSketch (1991)

A multi user distributed drawing package

Features include:

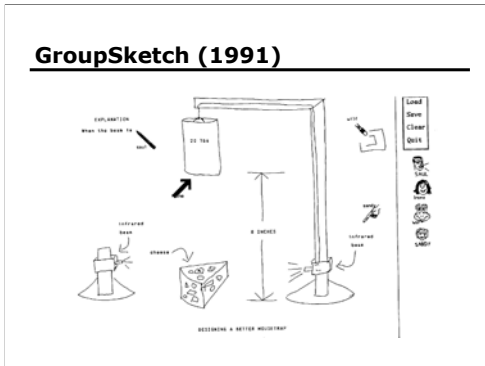
- a shared drawing surface
- multiple labeled cursors
 - one per participant
 - indicates its owner's mode
- simultaneous interaction
- fine-grained display of all people's actions
- real time response

Illustrating a system by text

- hard to understand

Page 22

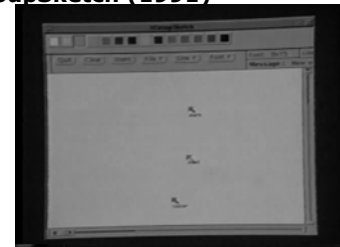
GroupSketch (1991)



Illustrating a system by image

- weave a scenario around it

GroupSketch (1991)



- telepointers
- fine-grained actions
- simultaneous interaction

Illustrate a system by image and video

- image to tell them what to watch for

Use of media

Always have backups in other media forms



Expect everything to work, but prepare for failure

May have 2nd lower quality version, but still works (eg overheads)

Page 25

25

Too much detail; cluttered

Appearance of Media

None

- practiced speakers are best at this, because they are comfortable talking to the audience

Whiteboard

- this is best for small rooms, for groups, and for developing examples where the example unfolds over time
- its really too slow a medium, because it takes time to write things down!
- it also puts your back to the audience

Transparencies

- must be legible by people at back of your expected meeting room in bad lighting conditions (assume the worst!)
- of course, it should be typeset. Some good things to remember are:
 - large, variable width fonts
 - uncluttered, with only a few easily remembered points on the slide that you can talk around
 - white space used as hints
- don't prepare too many, because people won't remember. Around 1.5-2 minutes/overhead or more is a reasonable rule of thumb
- people remember visuals, so prefer pictures/tables over words if possible

Example of different (bad) media use

Page 26

Appearance of Media (16 point courier)

None

- practiced speakers are best at this

Whiteboard

- best for small rooms/groups
- best for developing examples
- very slow

Transparencies

- must be legible by all (assume the worst!)
- typeset
- don't prepare too many
- prefer pictures/figures/tables over words

ALL CAPS

APPEARANCE OF MEDIA

NONE

- PRACTICED SPEAKERS ARE BEST AT THIS

WHITEBOARD:

- BEST FOR SMALL ROOMS/GROUPS
- BEST FOR DEVELOPING EXAMPLES
- VERY SLOW

TRANSPARENCIES

- TYPESET
- DON'T PREPARE TOO MANY
- PREFER PICTURES/FIGURES/TABLES OVER WORDS

Appearance of Media



None

- practised speakers are *best* at this

Whiteboard:

- best for
 - small rooms/groups
 - developing examples
- very slow



Transparencies

- must be legible by all (assume the worst!)
- Typeset it
- don't prepare too many
- prefer pictures/figures/tables over words

Slide 23, copyright Saul Greenberg University of Calgary

Appearance of media

Transparencies

- must be legible by all (assume the worst!)
- typeset
- don't prepare too many
- prefer pictures/figures/tables over words



Computers

- less text / slide
- expect poor lighting
- best for animations and demonstrations



Your screen may give far better contrast than the screen in the hall!!!

Question/Discussion

Anticipate questions ahead of time

- dry runs help

Turn "bad" questions into good ones you can answer

- always repeat the question

Maintain control

- guide discussion
- limit time on minor/irrelevant



-If you can't hear/understand the question after 2nd repeat:

-say what you think you heard and answer that

Control: don't get left out of the loop

-many prima donnas out there who want there seconds of fame

The Thesis Oral Presentation

Why?

- a warm-up period for you and the examiners
- reminds examiners what they have read

What?

- objective of your work
- very brief overview/motivation/history
- highlights of your methodology/results
- main contributions
- future directions

To prepare

- mock defense

Ask your advisor about what should be in it.

Summary

Prepare yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-know your message-know your audience & venue-practice, practice, practice
Typical presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-top-down structure-keep it simple-use media effectively
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-stay in control-use body language-let your enthusiasm show!

I always write out what the goal of the talk is, that is, the main message that I want people to remember from the presentation

The entire talk should be crafted to deliver this message

... and it should end with the same message