GIVING CONFERENCE

TALK

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The purpose of a conference talk is to whet appetite.
The purpose of a talk...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is not</th>
<th>Is</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To flood the audience with every detail of your paper</td>
<td>• To whet appetite</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To convince the audience to not read your paper</td>
<td>• To demonstrate that your work is interesting and significant and that your paper is worth reading</td>
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<td>• To be as incomprehensible as possible hoping to impress people</td>
<td>• To be noticed by the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To embarrass or punish you</td>
<td>• To discuss problems</td>
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<td>• To get over with it</td>
<td>• To practice giving talks</td>
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PURPOSE

PREPARATION

DELIVERY

SUMMARY
Assembly of material

• Cannot present everything
• What should the audience remember?
  – Gather potential ideas
  – Select important point(s)
  – Drop the rest
• Create a script, tell a story
  – Context of your problem
  – Minimum of details necessary for understanding
  – Key points and results
  – Conclusions and outlook

Why is each part included? Why at this position?
Explaining pagerank to your grandmother (V1)

- $N$ pages + hyperlinks
- Create $N \times N$ matrix $A$
- $A_{ij} = 0$ if page $j$ does not link to page $i$
- $A_{ij} = 1 / (\text{#distinct links on page } j)$ otherwise
- Add “small” constant $\alpha$ to every entry, then divide by $(1 + N\alpha)$
- Pagerank of page $i = i$-th component in principal right eigenvector of $A$.
Explaining pagerank to your grandmother (V2)

Text provides structure. Figures and examples help grasping ideas.
Legibility, simplicity, relevance

- Small fonts are hard to read
- Minimize **Font** variations
- Animated entry is fun... for kids
- Unnecessary animations distract
- Ornaments don’t add to your talk
- White background, black text is just fine
Practice, practice, practice

- Prepare thoroughly (think early, slides later)
- Don’t write out, don’t memorize
- Rehearse alone
  - Take timings (after 5, 10, 15, ... minutes)
  - Stand (no mirror, maybe tape/video)
- Rehearse before people
  - Big favor → prepare
  - Encourage, take and work in feedback

"Thanks for letting me rehearse my presentation."
PURPOSE
PREPARATION
DELIVERY
SUMMARY
Be you

• You are nervous? That’s good!
  – Shows you care
  – Adrenaline helps

• No need to be funny
  – Need to be certain that your joke is actually funny
  – Don’t laugh at your own jokes
Style

• Slow down (but do not go over time)
• Preview-do-review
• Do not diminish or suggest unimportance
  – “I’m so nervous”
  – “This is just another of our results”
• Do not show off

Your algorithms

My algorithm
Questions are good

1. Acknowledge (every) question
2. Repeat or clarify the question
3. Answer the question
   – To the audience
   – *Do not bluff, be honest*
   – Take questions offline
4. Check back whether question has been answered
That concludes my two-hour presentation. Any questions?

Did you intend the presentation to be incomprehensible, or do you have some sort of rare "PowerPoint" disability?

Are there any questions about the content?

There was content?
Conference talk = teaser
Focus on key point(s) to be remembered
Legibility, simplicity, relevance
Being nervous is good
Practice, practice, practice

Thank you!
Pointers


• http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/people/simonpj/papers/giving-a-talk/giving-a-talk.htm


• MPII’s presentation skills seminar
Checklist (1)

- What is the key thing the audience should remember?
- Is there enough background material for the intended audience?
- Is any material unnecessary?
- Could so of the material be left for people to read about later?
- Is the talk self-contained?
- Does the talk have a motivating preamble?
- Have complex issues been explained in gentle stages?
- Are the results explained?
- Are the numbers necessary (e.g., experimental results)?
- Are more diagrams needed?
- Are the slides simple? Do they have unnecessary ornamentation or distracting use of color?
- Is there any unnecessary animations?
Checklist (2)

• Is the font size reasonable?
• Are there enough examples?
• Have you rehearsed your talk?
• Have you prepared something to say about each slide?
• What are the limitations of the research?
• Do you explain why the research is interesting or important?
• Is there a clear conclusion?
• Have you memorized your talk?
• If you are asked a question you can't answer, how will you respond?
• Have you rehearsed your manner? Will your enthusiasm show?
• Do you know how to use the equipment?