

Giving Good Presentations

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Goals of a Presentation

- Why are you presenting?
 - To communicate some idea, concept, or method to an audience
- Communication is two way
 - Speaker (giver)
 - Audience (receiver)
- Goal: Communicate a message

Importance of the Skill

- We make presentations for:
 - Thesis and Dissertation defense
 - Conference talks
 - Course lectures
 - Interview talks
 - Presentations to employer
- You will be judged by your ability to communicate
 - If they don't get it – **it's not their fault!**

The Basics

- Know your audience
- Prepare well
- Define your message

The Audience

- Listening is difficult
- Your job is to make it easier by continually asking yourself if they get it.
- As such
 - Give the audience time to think
 - Don't talk nonstop
 - The don't know the material as well as you
 - Figures and equations need time to digest
 - New terminology and definition need to be repeated
 - Remind the audience of key facts, definitions, etc.

Know the Audience

- Expert, knowledgeable, novice, student, general public?
- A talk to your peers should be different then talking to a more general audience
- Find out who will be in the audience
- However, do not under estimate
- An audience may have very preconceived notions about the topic (or terminology)

Engage the Audience

- Ask real and rhetorical questions to keep people's minds active and engaged
 - This is a clue to their understanding
 - What if they don't respond?
- Make eye contact
- Don't just talk to one person
- Walk towards a person who asks, or response, to a question – look at them directly
- Try to make examples interesting and compelling

Verbal Presentation Style

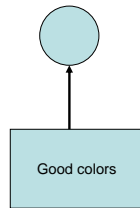
- Speak clearly
- Slowly and loud enough to be heard
- This is especially needed for non-native speakers
- Speak to the audience not to the screen, white board, or computer!!
- Point to the screen (NOT to the computer)
- Walk over, emphasize, and point

Slides

- Do NOT over do PowerPoint!
- Slides should be simple without distractions
- Moderate use of color
- High contrast between lettering and background
- Appropriate font size
- Each slide should be:
 - Terse (i.e., not verbose)
 - Highlight key points
 - Have a meaningful title - not Introduction(5)
 - Be focused

The Good

- Large simple font
- Very simple animation



The Ugly

- *Small odd font*



Message

- What do you want to communicate?
 - Use a top-down approach
 - Give big picture first – the what and why
 - Then go into detail – referring back to the big picture
- State the message in three levels:
 - One or two sentences
 - One or two paragraphs
 - The complete details

General Organization

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them
 2. Tell them
 3. Tell them what you told them
- Summarize at the beginning and end
 - Use this for each major section of the presentation

Emphasize the Important

- Typically, much of the material you present is well known or obvious
- As such, the new and important material can get lost
- Clearly highlight the important part by:
 - Physical – Tone of voice, body language
 - Visual – Good slides
 - Verbal - Tell them!
 - Mental - Related it to what they already know

Repetition

- Repeat the important parts:
 - 20% or more of the audience are thinking about something else at any given time
 - Again, they have not thought about this as much as you (hopefully)
- Emphasize main message repeatedly
- Remind audience each time a new term is seen
- Again, listening is difficult

Know Your Material

- There may be someone who knows the material as well (or better) as you in the audience
- Do not includes slides/material that you can't explain
- Anticipate questions (give them leads)

Practice

- Practice
- Practice
- Practice

- In the mirror
- To friends
- To your advisor

General Outline

- Introduction
- Body
- Technicalities/evaluation/experiment
- Conclusion

Introduction

- Define problem
- Motivate the audience
- Introduce terminology
- Discuss prior work
- Emphasize contributions
- Provide a roadmap

- Outline slide (bad or good?)

Body

- Abstract the major results
- Explain the significance of the results
- Sketch the evaluation method, experiment, proof, supporting argument for your results

Technicalities

- Present methods of evaluation, experimental setup, or lemmas
- Present details

Conclusion

- Refer back to previous sections and results by summarizing
- Emphasize contribution or major result
- Give open problems and future work
- Questions?

Summary

- Presentations are about communication – not just talking
- Listening is hard work and your job is to make it easier
- Give the audience a chance to think and digest the material
- Speak clearly and TO the audience
- Use a top-down approach – what is the message
- Repeat, repeat, repeat
- Engage the audience
- Summarize
- Practice, practice, practice

Resources

- Google “giving presentations computer science”
- Frank Kschischang at:
www.comm.utoronto.ca/frank/guide/guide0.html
- Adapted from slides of Matthew Turk at UCSB
