

## 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

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## 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!**

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## The Basics

- Know your audience
- Prepare well
- Define your message

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## 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.

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## 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)

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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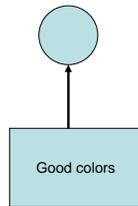
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## The Good

- Large simple font
- Very simple animation



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## The Ugly

- *Small odd font*



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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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)

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## Practice

- Practice
- Practice
- Practice
  
- In the mirror
- To friends
- To your advisor

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## General Outline

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

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## Introduction

- Define problem
- Motivate the audience
- Introduce terminology
- Discuss prior work
- Emphasize contributions
- Provide a roadmap
  
- Outline slide (bad or good?)

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## Body

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

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## Technicalities

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

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## Conclusion

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

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## 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

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## Resources

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

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