

Tips for Effective Presentations

PREPARATION

Your Session Chair will be giving a short introduction. Please make your presentation no more than 15 minutes for a regular talk, no more than 25 minutes for an invited and no more than 40 minutes for a plenary paper. There will be about 5 minutes for questions at the end of your talk. Rehearse your talk out-loud and time it. If it takes too much time, reduce the scope or exclude details that are unnecessary to support your points. Don't just talk faster. Practice until it flows smoothly. Present it at work and get feedback from your co-workers.

Arrive early and familiarize yourself with the computer, the laser pointer, microphone equipment, etc. **Plan to meet with your Session Chair in the conference room 20 minutes prior to the session, i.e. during the preceding break.** Your Session Chair will have some final instructions for you and you may have some questions for your Session Chair.

PRESENTATION

Be enthusiastic! Show your excitement about the work you are presenting. Let your audience in on the fun of discovery.

Speak up. Place the microphone close to your chin. Speak clearly so that the audience in the back rows can hear you. Engage your audience. Present your talk as if you were discussing your discovery with colleagues. Forget about yourself. Focus on your friends sitting in front of you. Speak to the audience, not the screen.

Practice makes perfect, and with enough rehearsal, you will be able to memorize your talk, control your timing and present your ideas clearly and with a personal touch. Do not read from your paper.

It is elegant to present a good idea simply! Do not confuse or burden your audience with long mathematical developments or complicated illustrations.

In order to allow your viewers to fully absorb the information on your slides you should concisely demonstrate one basic idea in each slide and plan for about one or two minutes per slide. Time your talk, and do not be tempted into using too many slides.

Define acronyms at least once. Please keep in mind that the attendees have diverse backgrounds.

When you finish presenting your conclusions, leave your final slide on screen. The audience may need time to absorb all of your points.

During the Q&A, if the Session Chair does not do it for you, repeat the question before answering it.

THE VISUALS

All presentations should be made using Microsoft PowerPoint with a 16:9 aspect ratio. It is preferred that you e-mail a copy of your presentation to your Session Chair at least a day before your presentation as this will allow all presentations to be pre-loaded onto the session computer and also serves as an added precaution for unforeseen technical problems. Bring a copy of your presentation on a USB memory stick to the session before the start of the session as a precaution, and check in with your session chair before the start of the session to ensure your presentation is on the computer and that everything is working.

Clarity is job #1. Limit the number of words on a slide – leave a lot of clear background. Titles on your slides are helpful to the audience. Use a very large font, never smaller than 18 point; people in the back of a large conference room should be able to read your slides. Make sure symbols on graphs are large enough to be distinguished by the audience; the default size is usually much too small.

For slides with text only, there should be no more than 30 words and no more than 6 lines. Use phrases rather than complete sentences. **Use an uncolored, clear background;** colored backgrounds are often difficult to read. If you must use a template with a colored background, choose the font colors to give the best contrast. Color within figures is great, but check the contrast within your graphics; for example, black lettering on gray shading or red on blue are not readable. If you have the option, put your company logo at the bottom, rather than the top of the slide.

Be creative. Slides are powerful visual aids; make each one count! Illustrations enhance your presentation. Graphs are more audience friendly than tables. **Do not present “eye charts”.** If you are tempted to say “you probably can't read this”, find a better way to present your message.

Keep your memory stick with you during travel!