Presentation Guide

Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

SO, ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR TALK?
I THINK SO. I GOT MY LAPTOP, MY LASER POINTER...
I GOT BACKUPS OF MY MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION AND I GOT ON CD-ROM A HARD COPY AND USB TRANSPARENCY VERSION JUST IN CASE...
YES, BUT ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR TALK?
I DON'T THINK SO. EVEN THE BUTTERFLIES IN MY STOMACH ARE THROWING UP...

www.phdcomics.com

Roger S. Taylor (2016)
Psychology Department
Outline of Presentation

• Introduction (~4 min.)
  • "Big Picture" Description & Motivation for Project (i.e., why would others find this interesting?)
  • Brief Review of Prior Research (i.e., Literature Review)
  • Smooth Transition into Clear Research Question(s) (i.e., question(s) paper will answer)

• Method (~ 2 min.)
  • Subsections: Participants, Materials, Design, Procedure (include example(s) of stimuli / survey questions)

• Results & Discussion (~ 4 min.)
  • Briefly Revisit the "Big Picture" & Motivation for Project
  • Descriptive & Inferential Statistics addressing Research Question(s) / Hypothesis(es) / Prediction(s)
  • Discuss if Hypothesis(es) / Prediction(s) supported
  • Implication, Limitations, and Future Research
Presentation Guidelines

How to Give an Academic Talk, v5.2

Paul N. Edwards
School of Information
and Dept. of History
University of Michigan

pne.people.si.umich.edu
# Presentation Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usually Better</th>
<th>Usually Worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand</td>
<td>Sit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move</td>
<td>Stand still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vary the pitch of your voice</td>
<td>Speak in a monotone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak loudly, facing the audience</td>
<td>Mumble, facing downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make eye contact</td>
<td>Stare at your laptop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on main points</td>
<td>Get lost in details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use outlines, images, and charts</td>
<td>Have no visual aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish within your time limit</td>
<td>Run overtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearse</td>
<td>Don’t practice because you’re too busy working on the slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize your main points at the beginning and end</td>
<td>Start without an overview; trail off without a conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice your audience and respond to its needs</td>
<td>Ignore audience behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emulate excellent speakers</td>
<td>Emulate your advisor, even if s/he gives lousy talks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presentation Guidelines

Preparing your Talk

Hack it down to size. If you’re basing your talk on a finished paper, you will have to cut large parts of it for the talk. The most common mistake in academic presentations is to try to cram everything in: don’t do it.

100 words per minute. As a rule of thumb, most people talk at about 100 words per minute, so in a 15 minute conference talk, you can say only about 1500 words. If you were reading aloud (which you shouldn’t), that would be about 6 pages of double-spaced text in 12-point font. So your first step must be to plan, very carefully, exactly what you want to say.

Make an outline. Once you have your plan, reduce it to an outline. You can put this on paper (as notes for yourself), or on slides (as bullet points), or in the notes section of your presentation software. Your outline needs just enough detail that you can remember what to say, but no more. An ideal outline consists of short phrases, rather than complete sentences (which will tempt you to read them aloud).

One good strategy is to go through your paper and collect a series of sentence fragments, then rearrange these until you’ve got what you need. The outline view in word processing software can be helpful for doing this.
Presentation Guidelines

**About Presentation Software**

**Make slides extremely concise and visually uncluttered.** Text slides should be seen as maps, not as territories. They’re tracking devices that let both you and your audience follow the flow of the talk. Therefore, they must not be overfilled. 6 lines of text per slide is plenty. 9 lines is a lot. 12 lines is pretty much unreadable. Bullet points should be no more than 2-6 words — and they should NOT be complete sentences.

**If you need more text, use more slides.** One of the beauties of software is that you can make as many slides as you want. I’ve seen extremely effective presentations with only one word on most slides, only one image on many others. Why cram one slide full of text when you can make two or three uncluttered slides instead?

**Use images.** People are visual creatures, and the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words is especially apropos in presentations. Pictures, graphs, charts, cartoons, and other images can be extremely helpful. As with text, keep them simple and uncluttered. Also, avoid dark images that won't show up well on a screen.
Presentation Guidelines

Always choose white or light-colored slide backgrounds. Why? To see light text on dark slides, you’ll have to turn down the lights, or even turn them off. This makes it hard to see your notes, the podium, etc. Worse, it will tend to put your audience to sleep. Really. By contrast, dark text on light-colored slides can usually be read with lights on and shades open. Don't let your host, or anyone else, manage the lighting for you. Tell them you prefer to leave the lights on. If you can see it, your audience can probably see it too. If in doubt, walk to the back of the room and check.

Keep the glitz factor low. Fades, transitions, backgrounds, sound effects, and so on can be a real pitfall. Glitzing up your presentations can turn into a serious time sink, detracting from the far more important time you spend on content. Also, they can give your audience the impression that you care more about surface than substance. Finally, they can cause breakdowns during the presentation if they don't work as you expect them to — which will be often. Nothing irritates an audience more than watching somebody fiddle frantically with a computer in the middle of a talk. So keep everything basic, at least until you've completely mastered the software. Always practice the final version.

Talk to the audience, not the screen. Everyone else is staring at the screen, so you may find yourself drawn to stare at it too. If you do this, the audience will be looking at your back, and they won't be able to hear you. Instead, have your laptop, or a paper version of your notes, in front of you. Speak from that, rather than from the slides on the screen. This takes practice, practice, and more practice.
Presentation Guidelines

Life After Death by PowerPoint 2012

With Don McMillan

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjcO2EtxHso
Presentation Guidelines

**Murphy's Law applies directly to you: plan for disaster**

Computers, networks, and projectors introduce many possible points of failure into presentations. So Murphy's Law — "whatever can go wrong, will go wrong" — applies in spades, and it applies directly to you. Something can, and very often does, go wrong with the computer, the projector, the software, the connector cables, the local network, the Internet connection, your thumb drive, or your presentation itself. Never assume that what works on a PC will work on a Mac, or vice versa. You also can't assume your host will have the same version of PowerPoint (or Keynote, etc.) that you do. Inquire in advance.

**Be prepared to use your own computer.** I always prefer to project from my own machine, because I know its quirks and I know exactly how to connect it. You may prefer to use your host's — but bring your own and be prepared to use it, just in case. Be sure you have any necessary dongles.

**Bring backup.** Badness can always happen. My hard disk drive once crashed — permanently — on slide number 3 of a one-hour talk. This kind of thing not only can happen to you, it will happen to you; the question isn't whether, but when. So: if you use a computer, **always bring backup**. That's backup, backup, backup. Begin making backups several days before the talk, if not sooner. Use a USB thumb drive. Dropbox and other cloud storage is also good — but network backup isn't entirely reliable (that can break too!) On the day of the talk, keep the thumb drive in a pocket or hang it around your neck. That way, even if somebody steals your bag or your laptop, you've still got the backup.
Additional Presentations Tips

• Assume your audience is intelligent, knows about basic research, but doesn't know anything about your topic, so you need to explain it to them
• Define and give an example of technical terms when you introduce them
• Use a large font (at least 20 point)
• Proofread for spelling & grammatical errors
Final Presentations Tip

**Practice, Revise, Repeat**