

How to Give Presentations



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The Message

Prepare yourself

- know your message
- know your audience & venue
- practice, practice, practice

Typical presentations

- top-down structure
- keep it simple
- use media effectively

Style

- stay in control
- use body language
- let your enthusiasm show!

Outline

Why present?

Presentations you may give

Presentation structure

Presentation tips

The use of media

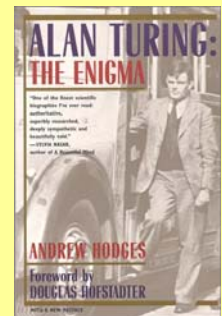
Handling questions and discussions

The thesis oral

Motivation

Why present?

Science includes the
dissemination of knowledge



Motivation

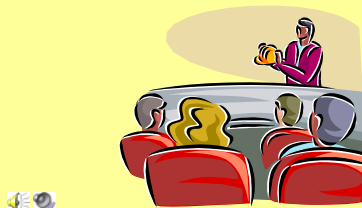
Why present?

Audiences are an opportunity

- to get people interested in your work
- for them to associate of a “face” with the work
- for encouraging discussion/feedback

The downside:

- risky!



Presentations you may give

Research papers

- seminar/conferences, workshops

Surveys / topic introductions

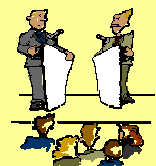
- tutorials/conferences/class

Discussions / points of view

- seminars, workshops
- panels

Defense of known subject matter

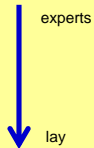
- Thesis, proposals



Presentations you may give

Audiences

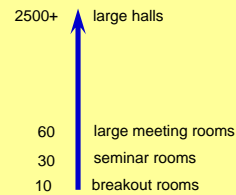
- topic specialists
- area specialists
- computer scientists
- scientists
- academics
- public



Presentations you may give

As room size increase, so does:

formality
inability of audience to cope with detail



Presentation structure

The Opening: 1

1-2 minutes

- Introduce yourself and co-authors
- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Define the problem
- Provide a road map (outline)

Presentation structure

The Opening: 2

~5 minutes

- Tell them why they should listen
- Motivate the audience
 - define the problem in greater detail
 - emphasize your goal and contributions within that context
- Remind audience of background/terminology they need
 - avoid or explain jargon
 - relate to earlier work

Presentation structure

The Body

- Tell them
- Describe what you did, and how you did it without excessive detail
- Explain its significance

Presentation structure

The Conclusions

2-3 minutes

- Tell them what you have told them
- Summarize purpose and main point(s)
- Discuss current work/open problems
- Indicate that your talk is over

Presentation tips

I can't overemphasize the importance of being clear in your own mind what you want the audience to get from your presentation.

Only then can you really concentrate on doing a good job of getting it across.



Bruce
MacDonald

Presentation tips

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Bruce
MacDonald

Know your message

Presentation tips

Don't get bogged down in details

- will lose people and never get them back
- main point forgotten by audience
- fit details to your audience

Keep it simple

Presentation tips

Good body language

- maintain eye contact
- speak clearly and audibly
- be enthusiastic
- don't read from a script



Presentation tips

Watch the time!



Presentation tips

Prepare, practice, revise, practice

- get talk to match slides
- know your notes, but don't rely on them
- get feedback
 - friendly but critical audience

Use of media

None

- practiced speakers are best at this



Whiteboard

- best for small rooms/groups
- best for developing examples
- very slow



Use of media

Transparencies

- must be legible by all (assume the worst!)
- typeset
- don't prepare too many
- prefer pictures/figures/tables over words



Computers

- less text / slide
- expect poor lighting
- best for animations and demonstrations



Use of media

Video

- excellent for short system demonstrations
- don't let them take over!
- can talk over longer ones



Demos

- superb at showing
- talk over them



Microphone

- place it well



Text description

GroupSketch (1991)

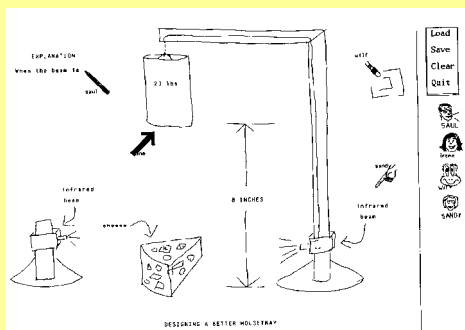
A multi user distributed drawing package

Features include:

- a shared drawing surface
- multiple labeled cursors
 - one per participant
 - indicates its owner's mode
- simultaneous interaction
- fine-grained display of all people's actions
- real time response

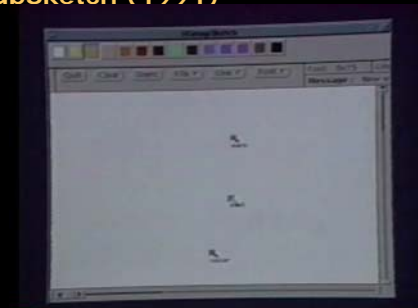
Picture

GroupSketch (1991)



Video

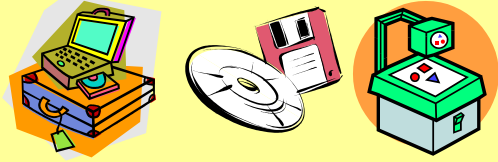
GroupSketch (1991)



- telepointers
- fine-grained actions
- simultaneous interaction

Use of media

Always have backups in other media forms



Too much detail; cluttered

Appearance of Media

None

- practiced speakers are best at this, because they are comfortable talking to the audience

Whiteboard

- this is best for small rooms, for groups and for developing examples where the example unfolds over time
- its really too slow a medium, because it takes time to write things down!
- it also puts your back to the audience

Transparencies

- must be legible by people at back of your expected meeting room in bad lighting conditions (assume the worst!)
- of course, it should be typeset. Some good thing to remember are:
 - large, variable width fonts
 - uncluttered, with only a few easily remembered points on the slide that you can talk around
 - white space used as hints
- don't prepare too many, because people won't remember. Around 1.5-2 minutes/overhead or more is a reasonable rule of thumb
- people remember visuals, so prefer pictures/tables over words if possible

Appearance of Media (16 point courier)

None

- practiced speakers are best at this

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Transparencies

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ALL CAPS

APPEARANCE OF MEDIA

NONE

- PRACTICED SPEAKERS ARE BEST AT THIS

WHITEBOARD:

- BEST FOR SMALL ROOMS/GROUPS
- BEST FOR DEVELOPING EXAMPLES
- VERY SLOW

TRANSPARENCIES

- TYPESET
- DON'T PREPARE TOO MANY
- PREFER PICTURES/FIGURES/TABLES OVER WORDS

Fontitis, overdecorated

Appearance of Media

None

- practised speakers are *best* at this

Whiteboard:

- best for
 - small rooms/groups
 - developing examples
- very slow

Transparencies

- must be *legible by all* (assume the worst!)
- **Typeset it**
- don't prepare too many
- prefer pictures/figures/tables over words



Slide 23, copyright Saul Greenberg University of Calgary

Bad colors, contrast

Appearance of media

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Computers

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Gratuitous animations (not visible in handouts)

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About right

Appearance of Media

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Transparencies

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Question/Discussion

Anticipate questions ahead of time

- dry runs help

Turn “bad” questions into good ones you can answer

- always repeat the question

Maintain control

- guide discussion
- limit time on minor/irrelevant



The Thesis Oral Presentation

Why?

- a warm-up period for you and the examiners
- reminds examiners what they have read

What?

- objective of your work
- very brief overview/motivation/history
- highlights of your methodology/results
- main contributions
- future directions

To prepare

- mock defense

Summary

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