

# PRESENTING RESULTS IN (CONFERENCE) TALKS

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# THE GOAL(S) OF A TALK

- To impress people?
- To interest people?
- To interact with people?
- To structure your own thoughts?

**Most importantly: to get your key messages across!**

# THE GOAL(S) OF A TALK

Key messages:

- Who did this work?
- Why did you do this work?
- What did you do in this paper?
- How did you obtain the main results?
- Share the excitement with the audience!

“That (funny/cute/ugly/nervous) guy **from China** did an **interesting** and **non-trivial** work on **xxx**. I am gonna read his paper.”

# THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

- Understand your own work (seriously);
- Know your audience and think in their shoes;
- Structure your talk by sections;
- Ask questions to yourself;
- Keep the slides simple and |slides| < mins (excl. animation);
- Do not read or recite or translate the English text;
- Be in time;
- Rehearsal!

# SLIDES MAKING

- Think about the general structure first;
- Make few slides for the Wh- and How questions and then extend them;
- Visualize the definitions by examples;
- Ideas of the proofs are more important than details;
- Make good use of itemize with short sentences;
- Highlight the most important contributions;
- Prepare some backup slides for the potential questions.

# TALKING

- The first/last few minutes are golden: let people understand;
- Repetition: Tell them what you are going to tell them; Tell them; Tell them what you just told them;
- Look at the audience especially the chairperson;
- Interaction with the audience if it helps;
- Connect to previous talks and the work by the audience;
- Relevant jokes / funny pictures may help (to relax);
- Be able to finish your talk at any moment within 2 mins;
- You may leave the last conclusion slide on when finish.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

- Leave some time for questions unless you fear to ...
- Let the questioner finish their questions;
- Ask for clarifications if you didn't get the question;
- You can postpone some questions to the end of the talk;
- "It is a good question": be grateful to people;
- "Let's take it offline": continue after your talk;
- Brave enough to say "I don't know";
- You should know your own work best thus be confident!
- The talk is under control by you!

# TECHNICAL ISSUES

- Use  $\LaTeX$  beamer class (if no better tools);
- Wear a watch or set a timer (if there is no clock);
- Copy and test your slides in advance;
- Check if there is a board to write;
- Space at the bottom of a slide: people might not see it;
- Do not use too many light colors unless necessary: the beamer may be very dim;
- The remaining time may be different from what you think: ask the chair person.



## PERSONAL PREPARATION

- Make the slides in advance when possible;
- Sleep well;
- Don't make big last-minute changes;
- Don't speak too fast or too slow;
- Speak loudly enough or use microphone;
- Thank the organizers/chairperson at the beginning;
- Don't forget to mention the co-authors;
- There is no perfect talk: don't overspend time on slides.

# HOW TO LEARN?

Attend and give many bad talks!

A classic reference:

Ian Parberry. How to Present a Paper in Theoretical Computer Science: A Speaker's Guide for Students