



# 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?

**Important: 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/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
- Know your audience and think in their shoes
- Structure your talk
- Ask questions to yourself
- Keep the slides simple
- Do not read or recite
- Be on time (especially for the online ones)
- Be in time
- Rehearsal!

# Slides making

- Prepare 1 slide per minute on average;
- Think about the general structure first (like the paper);
- Make few slides for the Wh-questions and then extend then. Don't simply copy the paper;
- Visualize the definitions by examples;
- Ideas of the proofs are more important than details;
- Make good use of items with short sentences;
- Highlights the most important contributions;
- Pictures may help;
- Don't forget important references;
- Prepare some backup slides for the potential questions.

# Talking

- Check the clock or your watch
- The first/last few minutes are *golden*: let them understand + let you relax and be focused;
- 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;
- Point to the public screen (with your pointer);
- 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.

- 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;
- "It is a good question": be grateful;
- "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!

# Technical issues

- Use  $\text{\LaTeX}$ 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;
- 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;
- Sleep well;
- Don't make big last-minute changes;
- Don't speak too fast or too slow;
- Speak loudly enough or use the microphone (note the position of the microphone);
- Thank the organizers/chairperson at the beginning;
- Don't forget to mention the co-authors;
- There are no perfect talks and perfect slides: don't overspend time on it.
- Say thank you in the end.

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