

Some Hints on Professional Oral Presentations

EE492
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Outline

- Introduction
- Getting Started
- Audience
- Visual Aids
- Time Limits
- Practice and Evaluation



Introduction

- Professional Oral Presentations
 - Technical content
 - Knowledgeable audience
 - Formal organization and presentation style
 - Usually a strict time limit



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Getting Started

- Start with a formal structure
 - Introduction
 - Explain topic and its significance
 - Summary of related work
 - Outline of the talk—refer back to it frequently
 - Main concepts/findings
 - Results and future work
 - Conclude presentation clearly and professionally



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Getting Started (cont.)

- Consider:
 - What are the two or three key points I want the audience to remember?
 - What would most surprise the audience about this information?
- Contingency plans
 - What if visual aids don't work?
 - What if I find out I have less time than planned?
 - What if someone asks a complicated question right in the middle of the presentation?



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Audience-Focused Prep

- Organize your talk with introduction, body, and summary or conclusion.
- Include only facts or concepts that can be explained adequately in the allotted time.
- Rehearse the presentation so you can confidently deliver it in that time.



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Audience Focus (cont.)

- Arrive early enough to familiarize yourself with the microphone, slide controls, laser pointer, A/V staff, etc.
- Every time you display a slide the audience needs time to interpret it.
 - Describe the abscissa, ordinate, units, and the legend for each curve.
 - If the shape of a curve or some other feature is important, tell the audience what they should observe in order to grasp the point.



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Audience Focus (cont.)

- In general, do not just read from a prepared script. Use an outline or note cards as topic reminders
- Do not read text from the screen
- Superfluous animation, display effects, sounds, blinking text, etc., should be avoided
- Use the pointer only when necessary



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Visual Aids

- Allow at least one minute of your talk for each slide or other visual aid, e.g., no more than 12 slides for a 15-minute talk.
- Minimize the number of lines of text and the number of curves shown on one visual aid.
 - More than 12 lines of text or 5 curves are too many to be comprehended within one minute.
 - *Too little is better than too much.*



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Visual Aids (cont.)

- In general, characters in any visual aid should have a height at least $1/40$ of the total frame height.
- Make symbols no less than $1/3$ the height of a capital letter. Break away any line that would otherwise pass through a character or symbol.
- Black lines or white lines on a solid background are more legible than colored lines. Use color only if unavoidable.



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Visual Aids (cont.)

- Verify that the presentation format matches the available projection equipment.
- Laptop, DVD, overhead slides, or VHS tape: make sure such a player will be on hand—and test it in advance!!



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Time Limits

- Know how much time you have been allotted: never exceed the time limit, and avoid leaving lots of extra time
- PRACTICE in front of a critical audience with a stop watch
- Keep track of time during the presentation
- Never try to “fly through” the last set of slides if time has run out: PREPARE to “cut to the chase” if necessary



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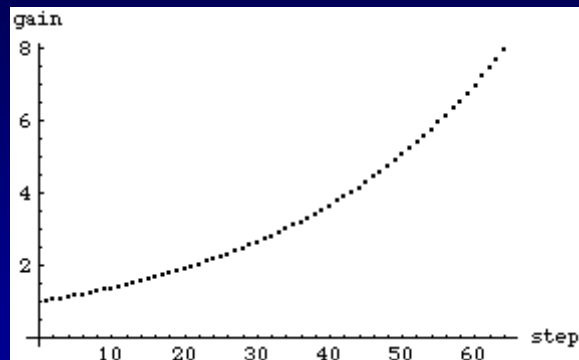
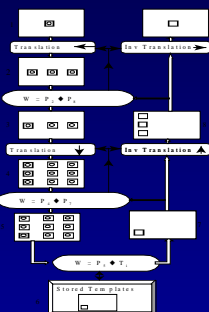
Practice and Evaluation

- Public speaking takes practice: you need to *do* it to get better at it
- Solicit critical feedback from others
- Practice good posture when facing the audience, pointing to slides, etc.
- Work on speaking clearly and evenly



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Bad Examples



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Bad Examples

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