

Speaking at LAA for beginners



Hey folks. My name is Darren Wallace and I'm one of the London Apple Admins Organisers. Most people know me as Daz_Wallace on the Mac Admins Slack. Today, I wanted to share some tips for speaking at meet ups and conferences generally, and at LAA specifically.

This talk

- Preparation
- Delivery
- Nerves
- Topic Ideas



I've split this talk into 4 key areas as shown above.

I'll look at preparing and writing a talk, tips for delivering it, trying to deal with nerves and lastly, how to come up with talk ideas in the first place.

1. Preparation



So, Preparation and writing your talk

Minimal words per slide



First thing, try to keep the words on a slide minimal. They should be used as pointers or summarised information instead of a wall of text.

People are here to listen to you talk, the last thing you want is for them to sit and read slides and miss what you've said.

Scripts are ok



If you've seen my speaker notes, you know I'm terrible with this, but writing out exactly what you want to say isn't an issue.

I find it's a helpful safety net that I can use should I get stuck! Especially if you're nervous, or haven't had much time to practice.

Practice!



Talking about practicing, try to run through your talk multiple times before the day. Ideally you want to make sure that it makes sense and fits the time you have.

I find I often will read what I wanted to say instead of what I actual put down. When it then comes to delivering the talk, it doesn't make sense

If it helps you, practice until you're super bored, but can recite it almost fully off by heart

Tell a story



Try to tell a story throughout your presentation.

I haven't done a great job of telling a story with this one but do try to walk through the process and the journey.
How much you can do this will greatly depend upon the time you have for a talk, but it should still have some sort of organisation.

This will help keep people engaged and interested, and keeps away from appearing as the ramblings of a mad person!

Bring along a friend



Why not deliver your talk with someone else?

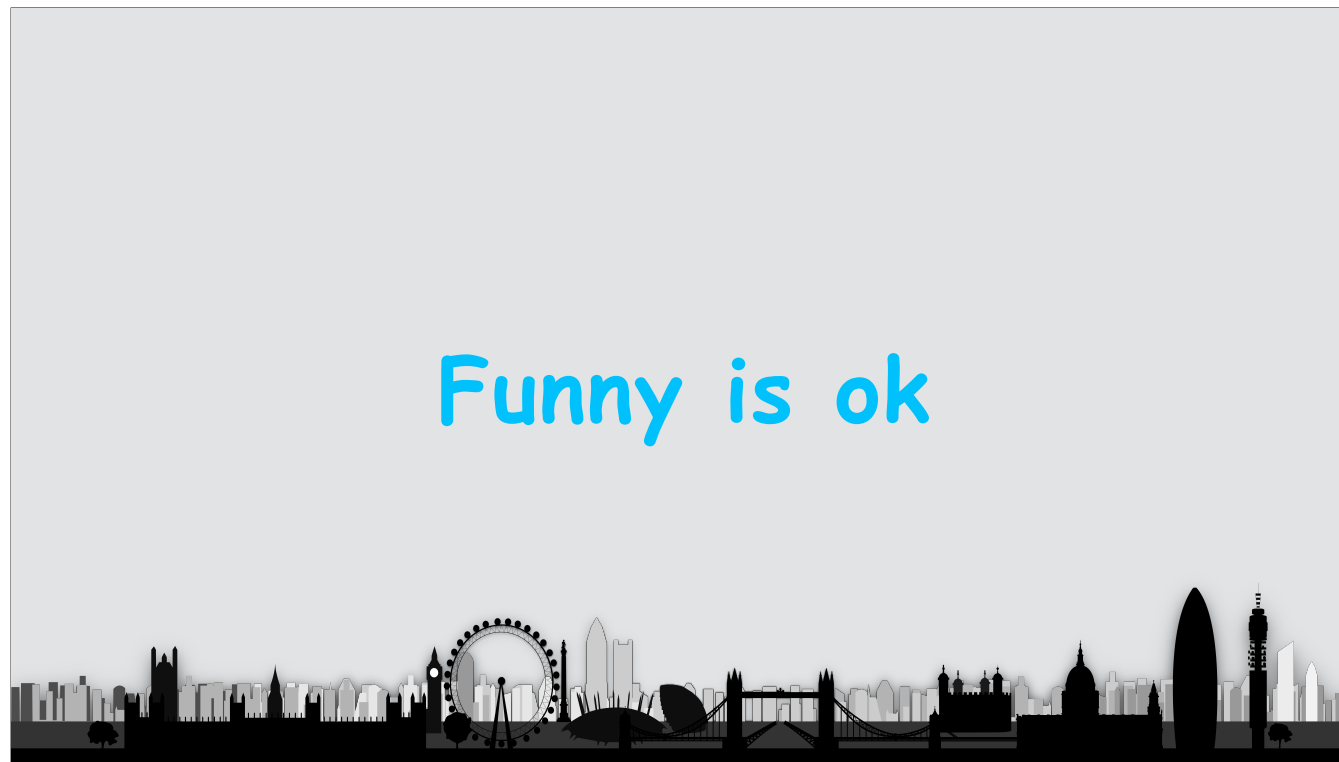
There's no limit on the number of people who can be involved with a presentation, and this may help to share both the work, and ease some of the nerves!

Obviously we can't accommodate everyone up here, but we'll do our best

2. Delivery



So you've written your talk, and you've practiced it until even your neighbours and colleagues can't recite it off by heart.
Let's talk about delivering the talk



Not every talk has to be serious.

And not every talk has to be 100% serious.

Feel free to add silly gifs, funny animations and other things that you find funny.

This not only helps relax you, but helps to keep your audience awake, especially if you're covering dryer topics...like Adobe 😊

Comic Sans makes it's 2nd appearance in an LAA talk!

Avoid reading the slides



This ties in with my first point of having fewer words on the slide.

If all you're doing is showing a slide, then reading it out loud then it's not really a presentation and is more of a read-along.

Having some key points or phrases on show is fine, but try to add value to the fact you're up there. Talk around and about what's on the screen to really give that added value

Being wrong is ok



Obviously try your best to be as accurate as possible, but no one is perfect, and sometimes we miss something.

That can be in our assumptions or conclusions, or in misunderstanding what we've read.

That's ok.

Mistakes are also fine



Also mistakes happen.

We all flub words or lose our place, or even draw complete blanks mid-talk!

We're all friends here. And even if we're not, we're all here to learn and *want* you to succeed.

Hopefully some tips in this talk will help avoid mistakes but it's inevitable and an expected part of a live delivery.

Body Language



This is one I struggle with and that's body language.

I get so wrapped up in making sure I'm at the right part of my talk, speaking coherently and not messing up, I tend to struggle to maintain good body language for delivering a talk.

What do I mean? Well...

Body Language

- Hands out
- Eye Contact
- Project voice
- Speak slowly



Hands:

- Try to have them visible and use them to emphasis your points. Ideally don't have them in pockets or hidden away. This helps people feel connected to your talk, as well as show you have confidence in it.

Eye Contact

- Try to make eye contact with people in your audience. Don't stare loving at the same person for the duration, but sweep the room. This helps people feel engaged and keep interested in your talk

Project your voice

- Microphones aren't always an option, so try to aim for slightly louder then a normal speaking level. This will make sure people can hear you and are listening. But avoid shouting!

Speak slowly

- This is one I'm really really bad at. Watching my own talks back, I tend to talk in short, fast bursts. Try to speak at a slightly slower than normal pace. This helps your speaking to come across clearer.
- Additionally, what you'll actually find is you will naturally speed up when you're nervous and if you get in the grove of your talk.

3. Nerves



That's covered some areas of delivery, but I've split out the big one, nerves.
How do you cope with them, and how do you beat them?

Nervousness is fine and expected



Nervousness is fine and expected. I don't think I know anyone who's given talks not to suffer from nervous beforehand. Personally, I've suffered on and off with Anxiety and even Panic Attacks for a good few years now - and public speaking does not make that easier! That's from someone who's been lucky enough to speak at a few conferences, helps run these LAAs and used to delivery Jamf Jump Start training most weeks!

But.... I do enjoy talking about what I like with others. Once I get into the flow I tend to find it happens naturally and the nerves fade away. As much as I hate to say it, I've found that often it's something I've had to push myself through initially, to get past them

Attend a few LAAs...



If you're still nervous to talk, try attending a few of these meet ups.

Make friends, have chats and enjoy yourself.

For me, knowing most or even just some of the audience makes talking in front of them less of an issue.

...or don't!



Or maybe don't!

Some people feel much more confident when talking to a room of strangers instead of people they know and have met. We're more than happy to have new people up here sharing their skills and knowledge as well as the oldies!

Ask for help



If you're not sure, ask for help!

- Us 5 LAA organisers are happy to help, review your talks, or just give random opinions should if that's helpful
- There may also be many others that don't mind offering coaching - feel free to ask about in the London Slack channel. Also some of the conference channels offer help, such as PSU Mentors
- Your workplace may also be able to help. If you're lucky enough to have a Marketing team, they may be able to offer slide decks, review your delivery and offer feedback. But they may also add a requirement to review any content you wish to talk, so be prepared for that!
 - But on the plus side, you never know, it might also lead to a company-sponsored conference trip or two!
- We have such great talent here in the UK and close by, from various sectors, levels, experience, backgrounds and skills. We want to give you a platform and whatever support we can to show that off!

4. Topic Ideas



So hopefully some of you out there are interested in talking, but how do you come up with ideas?

What I did...



Is there a new cool thing you've built, or are working on for your job?

A show-and-tell type talk could work very well for this, either a deep dive or just a high level overview.

Please just make sure you check with your employer that they're ok for you to talk about it first!

What I learned...



Did you have to go out and learn something new?

Maybe you had to research, or pull together multiple sources of information to deliver a solution?

Save time and effort for others by sharing some of that knowledge!

What Apple did...



What about something new Apple have released?

Maybe there's something new in a recent update, or some new feature that Apple Admins should know about?

Recent examples have included the fun and games with managing macOS Ventura upgrades, or the changes to Managed Login Items

Cool tech...



How about something techy, or geeky and cool?

We've had a talk about the BBC Micro but what about other systems?

What about Emulators, or computing history?

Or a selection of helpful tools you use for work?

All would make great possible talks.

Power Skills!



Are there any power skills you can share your knowledge and experiences about?

Dealing with tough customers or users?

Managing workloads?

Avoiding Burn out?

Things like this talk even!

One more thing...



One more thing...
Well two more things.

Trial runs



We want to use the London Apple Admins platform to help Apple Admins in the area to practice their skills and develop talks. We also want to help them to be comfortable speaking at conferences around the world - if that's what they want to do.

As mentioned already, we have such great talent here, and we want to help people showcase it!

Have Fun!

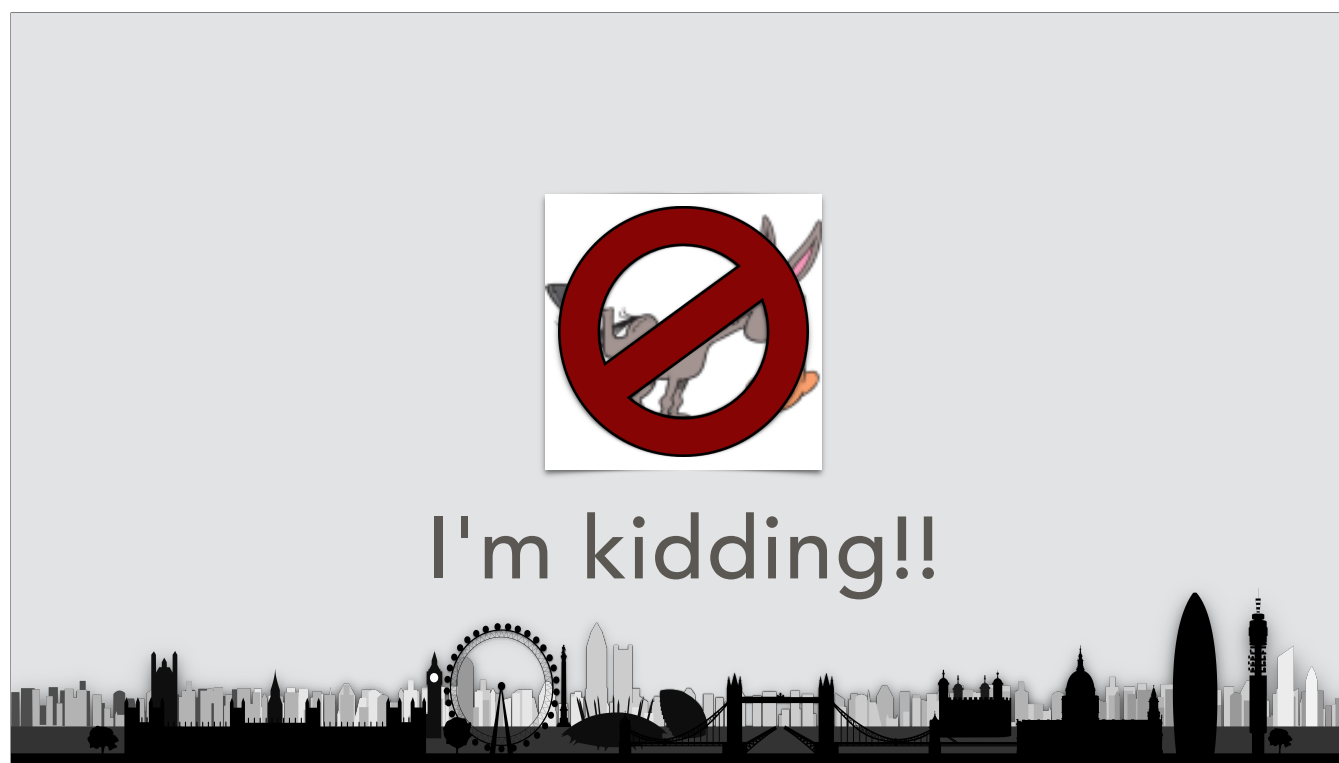


Most importantly though - have fun!

This is intentionally an informal setting, outside of people's workplaces (...mostly).

Make sure it is something you enjoy!

If it's not something you enjoy or want to push yourself to do, that's also fine.



Oh.....and don't talk to Ben before you're happy to speak, otherwise your name will be on the list already

I'm kidding, I'm kidding!

Q and A



Thanks everyone, is there any questions?

Get Involved!



We're always looking out for speakers and hosts. If you're interested, please reach out to one of us LAA Organisers, or fill out the form linked above