

4: Presentation

MENG311 English V:
Technical Writing Practice I

Items to be discussed

- ▶ Preparation of Presentation
- ▶ During Presentation

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Presentation preparation

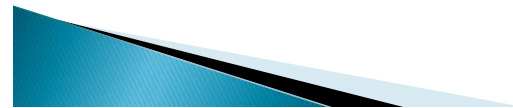
- ▶ The first two key steps in planning a presentation are to decide what to say and in what order.
- ▶ During this stage you clarify your presentation's objectives, taking into account the audience who will be attending and the time you have available.
- ▶ Thereafter you can proceed with the details of how to say it.
- ▶ In other words, you should begin thinking about your key message(s) and developing a structure for your presentation, and then fill in the details.



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Deciding what to say

- ▶ Will you be discussing the project itself rather than its outcomes (for example, its problems, solutions, how you performed the project and so on)?
- ▶ Alternatively, you may be presenting the technical outcomes of your project to a more scientific audience.
- ▶ You should also consider the assessment criteria being applied to your presentation.



Good Presentation

- ▶ A good oral presentation is characterised by
 - being clear,
 - to the point,
 - interesting, and, of course,
 - inspiring.
- ▶ All of these characteristics can be achieved only by planning the presentation well.



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Presentation Structure

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Main Body
- ▶ Conclusion/Summary



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Presentation Structure

Content	Slides
Title Page	1
Outline	1
Background	1
Arguments	1
Aim and objectives	1
Approach	2
Results	2
Conclusions	1
Future work	1
Total	11

An example presentation structure

Presentation Introduction

- ▶ To cover all the points necessary for your introduction, tell your audience *who, what, how, why* and *when*:
- ▶ Who are you – what is your affiliation, why are you there?
- ▶ What are you going to talk about?
- ▶ How long will the presentation last?
- ▶ Why should they listen to you – why is what you are going to say important and timely?
- ▶ When can they ask questions – during the talk or at the end?

Main Body of Presentation

- ▶ The main body of your talk needs to meet the promises you made in the introduction.
- ▶ Depending on the nature of your presentation, clearly segment the different topics you will be discussing, and then work your way through them one at a time – it's important for everything to be organised logically for the audience to fully understand.
- ▶ There are many different ways to organise your main points, such as, by priority, theme, chronologically etc

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Conclusion of Presentation

- ▶ You should always conclude and summarise your presentation; never end abruptly.
- ▶ Signal that it's nearly the end of your presentation, for example, "As we wrap up/as we wind down the talk..."
- ▶ Restate the topic and purpose of your presentation – "In this speech I wanted to compare..."
- ▶ Summarise the main points, with emphasis on the main contributions you have made.
- ▶ State the conclusions from your work. How do you feel the work can be developed in the future?
- ▶ Thank the audience and invite questions.

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Guideline for preparing slides

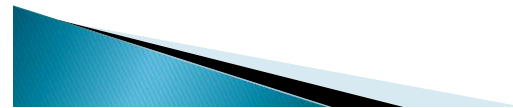
- ▶ *Layout*
 - Use a consistent layout.
- ▶ *Font size*
 - The whole audience should be able to read the text, and not only those sitting in the front rows.
 - It is also worthwhile to keep in mind that the default text size, used in some tools for making slides, is 32 point.
 - You can of course adjust this, but generally speaking, the font should never be smaller than 18 points for the body of the text.



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Guideline for preparing slides

- ▶ *Portrait or landscape orientation*
 - Use a consistent orientation throughout your presentation.
 - Landscape is normally the preferred orientation.
- ▶ *Language*
 - Use short expression.
 - The text on the slides should be short, but not too cryptic.



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Guideline for preparing slides

- ▶ *Emphasis*
 - Sometimes, having a lot of text on a slide is unavoidable, you can help the audience by emphasising important words or concepts using boldface or underlining.
- ▶ *Figures*
 - To help the audience interpret what you are saying, make use of visualization techniques instead of relying just on text.
 - A presentation that relies too much on figures, without proper explanation in words, can also become vague and difficult to grasp.



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Guideline for preparing slides

- ▶ *Number of words*
 - A rule of thumb that we suggest is to strive to have a maximum of approximately seven rows of text and seven words per row.
 - This “seven by seven” rule of thumb corresponds roughly with what most other authors suggest, and has the advantage of being easy to remember.
 - Sometimes, having a lot of text on a slide is unavoidable, you can help the audience by emphasising important words or concepts using boldface or underlining.



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Guideline for preparing slides

- ▶ *Numbering of slides*
 - Put a small slide number in the lower right hand corner of each slide.
 - The number should be small and sufficiently close to the edge of the slide not be confused with the contents.
 - Anyone asking questions after your presentation can then refer to the slide number in the question, and you can more easily find the slide referred to.
- ▶ *Use of headings*
 - It helps the clarity of your presentation if each slide has a short heading, showing to which part of the presentation it belongs, such as “Background (1)”, “Background (2)”.



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Guideline for preparing slides

- ▶ *Notes or manuscript*
 - Think beforehand about what to say, so that you will not spend time during the presentation thinking about the phrases and words to use.
- ▶ *Overuse of notes during the presentation*
 - Notes and manuscripts should mainly be used before the presentation, rather than during it.
 - They are for practising, so that you will know your talk well enough to be able to give it without such aides.
 - It is very boring to listen to a talk where the speaker reads from the notes.



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Last Stage of Presentation Preparation

- ▶ The last stage of preparation is to compose yourself mentally by rehearsing your talk again and again (sometimes in front of a mirror).
- ▶ **Don't Try to Cover Too Much Material.**
 - You should prune your presentation to the time available.
- ▶ You must also familiarise yourself with the room and equipment you will be using.



During the presentation – Reminders

- ▶ *Meet and Greet. Smile.*
- ▶ *Talk to the audience.*
 - Avoid talking to the floor, the wall or to the screen. Try to keep contact with your audience.
- ▶ *Actively Engage the Audience*
- ▶ *Show the slides properly.*
 - Avoid showing a slide for just a second or two before going on to the next one.
- ▶ *Explain things.*
 - For each slide you have to explain clearly to the audience what it shows.



During the presentation – Reminders

- ▶ *Avoid reading word by word from the slide.*
 - This should be done only occasionally, when the slide contains, for example, a very important definition, or “a quote that is fundamental for your work” and very important to communicate exactly to the audience.
 - Normally, your slide should contain short phrases (“New method improved results by 20%”), whereas your talk should be more explanatory (“I found in my experiment that the new method, when compared with the current standard, improved the results on this test case by 20%. This was certainly a pleasing result since it fulfilled my first objective.”).
- ▶ *Physical movement*
- ▶ *Keep an eye on the time.*
 - Use your allocated time well.
 - If you have, for example, 20 min for your talk, then practice the talk so that you know how long each part takes.



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During the presentation – Reminders

- ▶ *Monitor the tempo.*
 - Do not talk too fast, or too slowly.
- ▶ *Use a glass of water.*
 - If you get uncertain or nervous during your talk, it can be a good idea to have some form of distraction.
- ▶ *Do not block the view.*
 - Find a convenient place where you can stand, so that you do not block the projected slides.
- ▶ *Use a pointing device.*
 - Think beforehand about how you will point to things on your slides if you need to.



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References

- ▶ Berndtsson, M., Hansson, J., Olsson, B., Lundell, B. (2008), Thesis Projects, A Guide for Students in Computer Science and Information Systems, Second Edition, Springer Publishing.
- ▶ Christian W. Dawson (2015), Projects in Computing and Information Systems, A Student's Guide, Third Edition, Pearson Education Limited.

