Group Oral Presentation Guidelines

Overview

Design projects often require presentations to colleagues, clients, and users. These are given at various stages in the process. A great presentation accompanying a proposal may mean the difference between getting and not getting a contract. Presentations are frequently given during a project to report on progress or prepare the clients or users for the changes that they can expect once the project is complete.

Presentation Schedule

In ECE496, each group will give an oral presentation on their project. These presentations will be run in the evenings during the winter term, beginning in the second week. Presenters will be given two evenings and are expected to stay through the entire session each evening. The first evening is a practice session. The presentation will not be marked but will receive comments from a representative of the Engineering Communication Centre and the administrator for the group. The second evening is the actual grading session. The oral presentation schedule link will be placed on the schedules and deadlines page when available.

Presentation Evaluation

During the grading session, the oral presentation will be marked by the administrator only. Marking will be done on an individual basis as far as delivery goes, and on a group basis for content and coherence of material. The other students presenting that evening will be part of the audience. Students in the audience are expected to take part by asking questions and becoming involved in the discussion of the other design projects presented in the second evening. The point here is not to be critical of other projects so much as to learn about them. Audience participation is included as part of the oral presentation mark.

- Presentation grading form in [Word] or [PDF] formats.

- Summary of evaluation criteria and grading scheme can be found here.

Note 1: The course administrators will not assign an actual grade until after all groups have presented. This is done in order to get an overview of how all presenters performed. The administrator for your section will however comment on your presentation so that at least you have some preliminary feedback.

Note 2: Please do not request your mark during the term. The mark will be posted in early April. You can request a grade confirmation or explanation from your administrator after the marks are posted.

Presentation Format and Delivery

Time limits: groups of two have 11 minutes total, groups of three have 14 minutes total and groups of four have 17 minutes total. Groups will lose marks if their presentations are too long or the time is not reasonably divided among the group members.

Presentation Order: You will have to decide how you wish to divide up the presentation amongst yourselves. Switching back and forth between speakers usually takes away from a talk's momentum; therefore arrange your presentation material such that each member delivers a single part of the presentation. Make sure you practice the presentation beforehand and receive comments from peers or friends. Get the talk well organized at least a week before the date of the presentation so you can make appropriate modifications. Make sure that the presentation is of the right length and that the material is roughly evenly divided between group members.

You are always welcome to make an appointment with tutors at the Engineering Communication Centre to get help preparing or rehearsing your presentation. This may also help if there is considerable time between the two sessions.

Presentation Format: Presentations are typically done using a laptop computer and a presentation program such as Microsoft Powerpoint. Each group is responsible for bringing in their own laptop computer (or arranging access to a computer from another group) for both practice and grading sessions. The presentation material should be preloaded on a CD, memory stick, or on the laptop's hard drive before the oral presentation. The first 10 minutes of the period will be available for the groups to set up their laptops so that the switching from one presentation to the next can be accomplished as quickly as possible.

In your presentation, summarize your project and your progress to date. Draw material from past reports and possibly from your Individual Progress Reports (depending on the timing of your scheduled presentation).

Almost every presentation will have:
- A title slide
- Introduction (explain to those not familiar with your work the background and motivation for your project)
- Project Goal
- Overview of System-level Design
- Report on progress to date and work yet to be completed
- Summary & Conclusions

Most presentations will also have:
- Outline (One slide which outlines of the presentation's contents and generally is specific to your project; if you don't have this, you should still be sure to tell the audience what you are going to do)
- Project Requirements, or key requirements

Remember that you are trying to capture the interest of your audience, so you might also want to include such things as:
- Significant decisions, problems encountered, etc.

- Interesting technologies used
- Other information relevant to your project

You do not have a lot of time, so being concise where you need to be is important. Time limits will be enforced.

Some key points:

- Use PowerPoint or some other presentation software, or use a standard word processor, but remember to use large fonts (at least 20 points), for example, 20 points, 24 points, 36 points. All information presented should be legible or you should explain why it isn't and what it is (for example a copied picture with small text detailing the operation of a part). Use 'sans-serif' fonts such as Helvetica and Arial which show up better on screen.
- Pictures, graphs, diagrams!!!
- For text: use bulleted lists, short forms and stick to key points. No sentences.
- Only a few points in text per slide.
- Use a spreadsheet such as Excel to prepare simple graphs.
- Do not (usually) present more than about one overhead per minute.
- "Walk" the audience through each overhead, and explain each graph and diagram.
- Think about ways to make your presentation and slides interesting and entertaining, without detracting from the technical and other informative content.
- There are many books and articles on preparing effective presentations, and there are some great YouTube videos on presentation (search "bad presentations"). A professor also posted the following: link.

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