Effective Presentations

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Goals

- A presentation is a reflection of you and your work. You want to make the best possible impression in the short amount of time given you.

- This session will cover:
  - How to prepare for a presentation.
  - Guidelines for creating effective slides.

Guiding Principles

- Make it simple.
- Make it clear.
- Don’t let the technology dominate the presentation. You want the audience to remember the quality of your research, not your PowerPoint wizardry.

Preparation

- What are the key points you want to make?
- Who is your audience? What are they interested in hearing and how familiar are they with your topic? Do they expect data or concepts?
- Remember: A presentation is different than a paper. Don’t try to cover everything.

Gather Resources

- What will you cover, what can be eliminated?
- How much detail do you need?
- Remember, your time and your audience's attention are limited. For any part of your presentation, ask yourself "So what?"

Logistics

- How big is the hall where you will be speaking?
- How much time will you be given?
- What time of day is your talk?
- Carefully consider if you will depend on anyone else for producing your presentation—allow plenty of lead time.

Equipment Needs

- Ask what you will be given and what you must bring with you.
- Consider all equipment you will need—
  - Internet connection
  - Computer
  - Microphone
  - Software

Disaster Planning

- Consider what could go wrong and plan accordingly.
- Always have a backup.
- Bring a handout that covers all of your slides. Make sure they are legible.

Organize the Material
Introduction

- Time to sell your idea or research.
- Answer the question, “Why should I listen to you?”
- Establish your personal credibility.

Organize the Material
Body

- Make sure you cover your main points.
- Be concrete. Use examples, statistics, reiteration, comparison.

Organize the Material
Conclusion

- Give a summary

- Emphasize the most important points.

Format

- For a presentation in a dark room, choose a dark background with light letters. This is yellow text on a dark blue background.

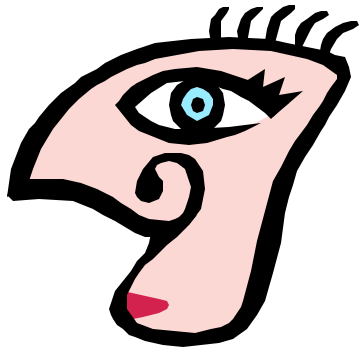
- When making slides, use a light background and dark letters.

- Use a big enough font. This is 32 points.

Format for Scientific Presentations

- Stick to plain backgrounds. Fancy formats are more appropriate for business presentations.

- Avoid cute clip arts.



General Format Rules

- Stick to a maximum of two READABLE typefaces.
- Limit the use of color.
- Pick a style and stick with it.
- Keep it short, especially titles.
- Leave empty space.

Fight clutter!

- Don’t include every word you will say.
- Limit to one idea per slide.
- Rule of six! No more than six words per line and six lines per slide.

Presenting Data

- Make data/results the focus of your presentation.
- Don’t try to include all data—use handouts for detailed information or refer audience to a Web site.
- Use color or special effects sparingly and consistently.

Bad Tables

Resource	FY 98-99 median	Jul-1999	Aug-1999	Sep-1999	Oct-1999	Nov-1999	Dec-1999	Jan-2000	Feb-2000
SAM: Scientific Amer. Medicine	51	77	76	43	69	70	466	480	530
African Health Anthology	0	0	0	0		0	0	4	17
AMED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Bioethicsline	20	19	10	23	23	30	5	5	23
Cancernet	23	11	11	17	36	36	15	19	25
Cochrane (Complete)*	45	47	34	49	39	163	163	263	344
Diagnostic Imaging	15	39	21	15	12	22	4	4	7
Practical Approach to Infect. Dis.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	19
PubMed (NCBI)	128	153	113	237	205	125	689	1,143	1,736
Medical Letter on Drugs and Therap.	50	40	38	47	38	43	5	6	9
Merck Manual (StatRef)**	74	80	90	281	299	141	122	94	111
Sabiston	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	36
Textbook of Internal Medicine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	9
Williams-Obstetrics	28	26	35	31	31	26	8	8	16
Williams Textbook of Endocrin.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	32
Allergy: Principles and Practice	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	18	48
Brenner	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	21	16
Clinical Dermatology	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	33	40
Clinical Laboratory	18	12	13	10	13	16	3	12	19

What was wrong?

- Too many lines. Limit to six or seven rows of data. If you want to give more details, use a handout.

- Use effective headings with the table.

- Test the table for readability in a real-world setting, e.g., a large lecture hall.

Better Table

Resource	Jul-1999	Sep-1999	Oct-1999	Dec-1999	Jan-2000	Feb-2000	July to Jan
							%Increase
PubMed (NCBI)	153	237	205	689	1,143	1,736	1034.6%
Scientific Amer. Med	77	43	69	466	480	530	588.3%
Cochrane	47	49	39	163	263	344	631.9%
Allergy	0	0	0	25	18	48	na
Clinical Dermatology	0	0	0	15	33	40	na

Electronic Resource Usage July 1999-February 2000

As measured in Web hits

Why Use graphs?

- You need to get your audience's attention.
- Many people respond better to visual cues than to straight text or lists of numbers.
- An effective graph can help drive home your point.

Data Using Only a Table

Here's a table with data that illustrates an important point I want to make to my audience.

Ovid accesses, by connection type.

		1998	2000	%Change
1	Web	20%	83%	315%
2	Telnet	70%	10%	-86%
3	Other	5%	7%	40%

The Same Data, Now With Graphs

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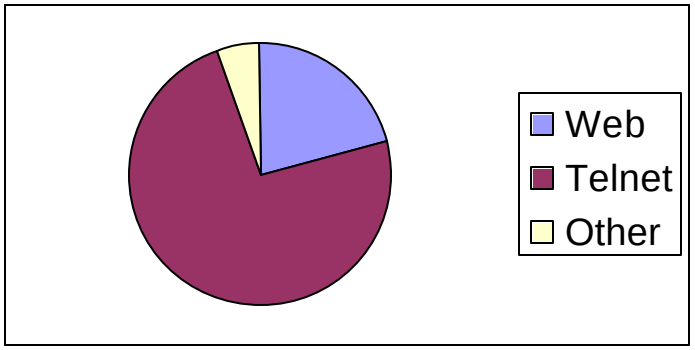
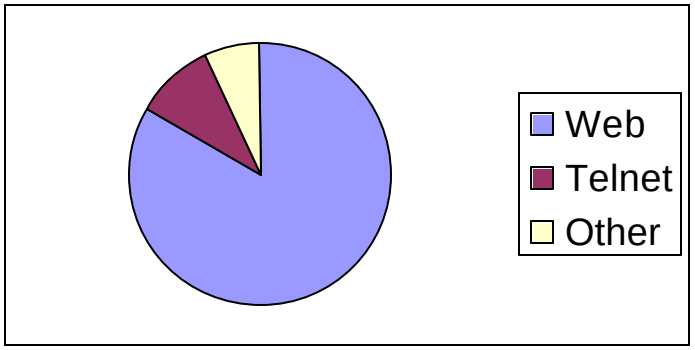
1998



2000



Final Steps

- Practice! Recruit a friendly and constructively critical audience.
- Recruit a grammar expert.
- Show your presentation to someone who knows nothing about your field. Do they get what you want to say?

Remember!

- Keep it simple.
- Don’t let the technology dominate your message.
- Rule of six.
- Cover your important points.

Resources

Davis, Martha. Scientific papers and presentations. Academic Press 1997. Call no. Med Ref 20 T11 .D324 1997.

Wilkinson, Ian. Super seminars, legendary lectures, and perfect posters: the science of presenting well. AACC Press 1998. Call no. Med PN4193 L4 W534 1998.