Have a great title!

Joe G. Scientist

U. of the Middle of Nowhere

www.UMN.edu/more-information.html

Abstract

- Write a thoughtful abstract. It will help advertise the talk (tell people why they want to come and listen to you) and help you remember what you are about (to try) to say.

- Add time needed + estimated Q&A
  - By default, estimate 1 slide for every 2 minutes
- Hide this slide

Opening slide

- Tell people why they should bother listen to you
  - What useful and interesting stuff will they learn?
  - A picture (or two) would be good
    - Think outside the box ("if in doubt use a Martian")

Be sure to

- Set the context of the work
  - General problems, approaches, principles, results
- Give at least one example in significant technical detail
  - To demonstrate that you know what you are talking about
  - That'll take several slides
    - Examples, data, details

Basic rule of communication

- Have something to say

• Say it

- Say it clearly
  - Don't beat about the bush

- The purpose of a talk is to get an idea into people's heads
  - The listeners are not like you
  - Present in a way that they can appreciate
  - People differ

Basic rule of presentation

- Say what you are going to say

•Say it

- Say what you just said

- If necessary, apply recursively

Keep your slides simple*

- Don't use fancy backgrounds or transitions
  - You'll look like a salesman
- Don't crowd a slide with too much information
  - But remember that someone will read the slides without listening to you
  - "seven points ± 1" is a good rule of thumb
- Don't make several non-related points on one slide
- Keep a consistent style
 - Graphical
  - Amounts of information per slide

*This slide may have too much stuff on it

Keep your slides simple

- Don't read your slides
  - Say things that are not on the slides
  - Don't repeat every details on the slides

  - This is hard
    - Practice

Keep your slides simple

- Consider the room and projection
  - Use a suitable font
    - 18point is usually the minimum (this is 18p)
  - Have sufficient resolution of pictures
    - 800 * 600 is usually the minimum (this photo is 800*600)
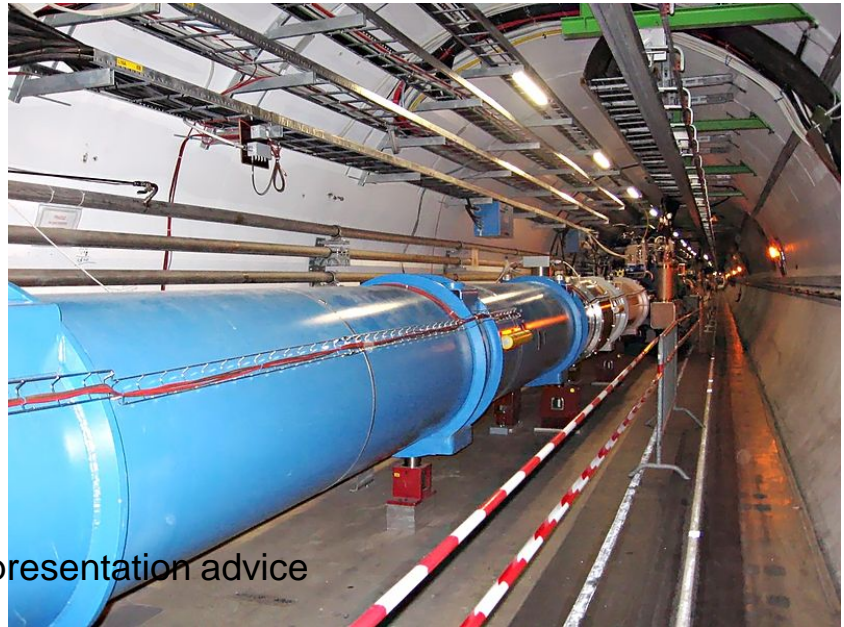
Illustrations

- Photos are good
- Figures are good
- Graphs are good (label your axises)
- Moderate use of color is good
- Short movies are good
- Don't rely on a good web connection
- "Live demonstrations" are tricky
  - Often goes wrong
  - Often take far more time than expected
  - Rehearse
    - repeatedly

Contents

- Make sure your main points are articulated on the slides
  - Not just in what you say

- To get a major point across takes
  - A general rule/principle **and** an example
    - never give a principle without and example or an example without the principle it illustrates

- Keep it simple
  - Except for at least one example "to blind them with science"

- Don't "start with Adam and Eve"
  - i.e. don't start from the very beginning and put people to sleep before you get to the point

  - But this may be a good strategy for some "in depth" sub-topic

- Start with something that will arouse interest
  - Preferably with something that will give them an idea why it is worth their while to stay for the talk and to say awake

Tell a story

- One of the best ways to get a point across is to present it as a story/anecdote
  - Present the point as a sequence of actions
    - Be concrete
  - Ask questions
    - Rhetorical
    - Maybe for real (i.e. elicit answers from the audience)
  - Reflect
    - What's the point
    - What's the implication

Humor

- Is good
  - But keep it understated
- Avoid
  - Elaborate, sexist, and ethnic jokes
- Beware
  - Humor doesn't travel/translate well
    - "the distinguished speaker made a joke, please laugh"

Prepare

- Test run the talk
  - Repeatedly, if necessary

- Be really sure you don't have bugs on the slides

Etc.

- Number your slides
- Label your slides
- Don't forget simple clear examples.
- Vary the kind of slides as you go along
  - E.g., don't have all the pictures first and then all the code
- Finish on time
  - Know your speed (minutes/slide)
    - I can do 10 slides in 15 minutes
    - I schedule 2 minutes per slide in a 1-hour presentation
    - I schedule 3 minutes per slide for a 1-day presentation

Acknowledgements

- Never forget acknowledgements
  - Beware of the danger of not getting to acknowledgements placed on a last slide
- If in doubt, be generous

Contribution

- Clearly state your individual contribution
  - Neither overstate nor understate
  - Especially if applying for a job, position, funding, etc.

Final slide

- Future directions
- References to more information
  - URL
  - email
- If you have space, add an upbeat picture