COMP30170
Final Year Project

Research Talks

How to write them – How to give them

School of Computer Science
University College Dublin

Less is More

- One slide per 1-5 minutes

- At most one slide of squiggles or Greek: '$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m}\frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} + V\psi = E\psi$'

- Do not use pathfinder slides

- Conclusions are for turkeys

- Stay under six bullets and fifty words

- Have extra slides available to answer expected technical questions

Slides are Poetry

- Maintain consistent tone

- Use as few words as possible

- Make positive statements of fact avoid passive voice

- Eliminate redundancy

- Use beautiful but not flowery language

Make Beautiful Slides

- Bullet items are not sentences

- Ensure consistent style and typography

- Use large, consistent, familiar fonts
  - $\rightarrow$ they are easier to read
  - $\rightarrow$ you will not be tempted to write too much

- Do not overly mix images and text

- Custom slides are memorable

Consider Your Audience

- Do not treat the audience like children

- Be prepared to just-in-time update given the proceeding talks in the session

- Give the audience just enough context to follow, but not predict, the talk

Tell a Story

- Use classic storytelling techniques
  - build an arc
  - introduce characters and scenes

- Lead your audience to their own conclusions
  - each bullet is a way-point
  - help your audience feel brilliant

Make One Point?

- So not overwhelm the audience with ideas

- It is better to make one great idea well than to make many great ideas poorly

Illustrations

- Illustrations can help tell a story
  - □ use them to show the results of research involving rendering or visualisation
  - □ depict temporal or causal scenarios

- illustrations must be large, clear, properly labeled, fully defined, and useful

Show Enthusiasm

- Have a good attitude and smile

- Let your personality show

- Your audience is more likely to remember your personal style than your content

- An enthusiastic speaker can make an average talk good, and a good talk great

Speaking Habits

- Watch and listen to other speakers. What drives you nuts?

- Look at and connect with your audience

- Feel free to move, but do not roam

- Get feedback from your friends ... the ones who are sensitive and honest

Be Considerate

- Do not abuse the speaker behind you
  - ▢ stay on time
  - ▢ do not overly-criticise other contributions

- Be sure to thank
  - ▢ the people who helped
  - ▢ the audience for listening
  - ▢ every person that asks a good question

Finish On Time

- Everyone hates a speaker that is late
  - it distracts your audience
  - it is unfair to other speakers

- Save time for questions
  - an active audience will need more time
  - judge the audience while giving the talk