

## How to prepare a literature presentation

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## From 'Who, me?' to questions

Before the presentation: Preparation  
During the talk: Presentation  
Afterwards: Questions  
Conclusions

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## Plan

### Today

- Discussion of how to prepare for and give a presentation

### Next week

- Practice
- To a video camera

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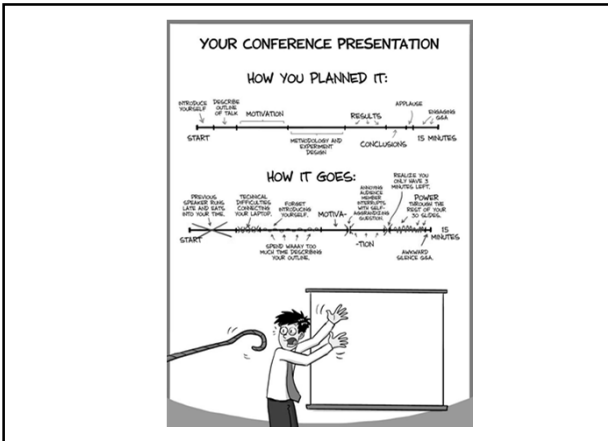
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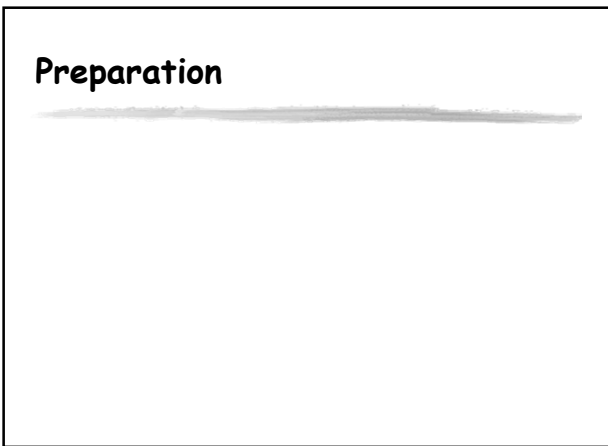
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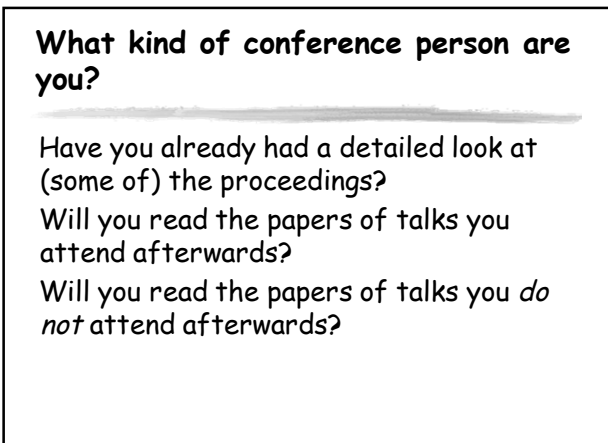
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**What kind of conference person are you?**

Will you look at some papers when you get home?

Will your copy of the proceedings remain unopened?

Will you offer the proceedings to your colleagues?

Are there other behaviours?

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**What is the purpose of the presentation?**

...remembering that time is limited

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**Content**

Extended, live abstract

- What most people do
- Does it encourage reading of the whole paper?

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### **Make people want to read your paper**

You should give them something they won't get in the paper

- Deeper presentation of one aspect
- Present something completely different
  - Peripheral to the topic of the paper
- You have an *interactive* opportunity

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### **What is your *message*?**

There is always a message

Are you 'selling' something?

Are you simply trying to inform?

Are you trying to entertain?

...or all of the above?

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### **Content: Structuring the talk**

Conventional advice:

- Say what you're going to say
- Say it
- Say what you've said

It can work, but it can be a bit laboured

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## **Tell the story**

There is a story in your paper  
There will be a story (a different one?) in  
your talk  
The narrative should hold it all together

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## **Donald Rumsfeld**

The known knowns  
    The literature review  
The known unknowns  
    The research proposal  
The unknown unknowns  
    The fun stuff that happens during the  
    research

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## **Your audience: literature review**

Your assessor  
    Knows the subject area  
    Doesn't know the details  
Your supervisor  
    Knows the subject area  
    Knows some of the details  
    Wants to be convinced that *you* know  
Everyone else  
    Should learn something

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## **Your audience: conference**

Know the subject area

Do not know the details

Different levels

- Don't go too high, too technical
- Don't speak down to them
- 'You probably all know this, but...'

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## **It *is* a performance**

There is no harm in being entertaining

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## **Marshall McLuhan**

'Anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn't know the first thing about either.'

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## **Are you dull and uninteresting?**

Be yourself

The audience will want to hear your story

Humour is good...

- but only if it works for you

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## **Showmanship**

If you start and finish with a 'bang' no one will remember what went on in between

- Though, of course, you might want them to remember!
- First and last impressions are important

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## **Do not start with an apology**

No matter what's gone wrong

It sets people up to expect the worst

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## Live demonstrations

...Just say 'no'

- Sod's Law: *Anything that can go wrong will go wrong*

If you really, really must...

- have an alternative ready
- a flash movie of the whole presentation?

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## Designing your slides

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## What is the purpose of slides?

It helps people concentrate and remember

Information on multiple channels

A picture can be worth a thousand words

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## 1000 words?



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## 1000 words?

Imagine someone in your audience is blind

- They might be!

Is it rude to point?

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## PowerPoint: The 'Hoover' of presentation software?

PowerPoint is not the only software

...but it is the most common

Netscape, emacs, Acrobat,...

There is good advice on the use of PowerPoint at:

<http://www.cultivate-int.org/issue3/presentations/>

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## The PowerPoint dilemma

It is easier to produce professional-looking slides than scrappy ones

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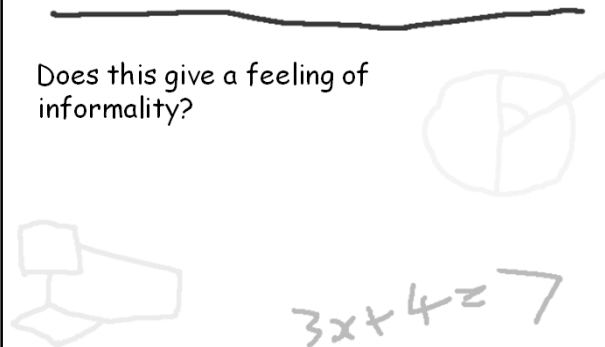
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## A 'scrappy' slide?

Does this give a feeling of informality?



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## Which do you prefer?

This?

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### **Do you like this?**

Some authors seem to prefer to maintain visual similarity with a printed paper

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### **What about this?**

10% of all males are colour-blind  
red-green is the most common form

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### **Or this?**

A 'busy' background can inhibit reading!  
Particularly if it has a lot of contrast  
It's impossible to choose the right colour  
for the text then.

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## **Melt into the background?**

Do you like this?

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## **Designing your slides: colours**

For projection, light on dark looks better

- Most authors prefer white backgrounds
  - hang-over from paper?
  - Causes glare

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## **Care with fonts**

Don't use an obscure font

- which may not be on the presentation computer

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**You wanted:**

*It was the best of times...*

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**You got:**

**It was the worst  
of times**

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### **Designing your slides: content**

Less is more

Brief summary points, in a large typeface

If you *must* put on a lot of content

- e.g. a quote
- read it out

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## A (deliberately) wordy slide

*It's not enough that we build products that function, that are understandable and usable, we also need to build products that bring joy and excitement, pleasure and fun, and yes, beauty to people's lives.*

Don Norman

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## Do you need an additional memory aid?

Your slides

Postcards

Notes

Script

- If you have to (see 'Nerves')

Other?

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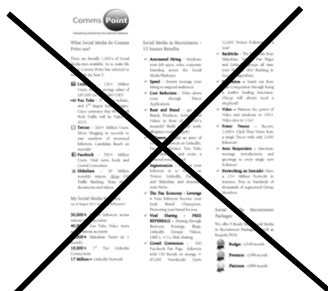
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**Not!**



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## Animation?

It will take you some time to read this,  
first, quite long point which might be  
quite complex and require your attention  
Can you ignore this  
...and this  
as they appear?

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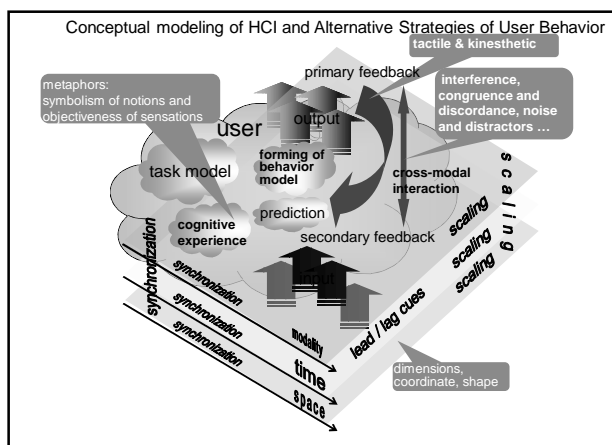
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## Animations

47 different animated items  
some timed, some mouse-contingent

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## Appropriate use of animation

Animations can assist with timing  
Can draw the audience's attention  
• but should not distract it  
Animate truly dynamic diagrams

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## Getting paid

THE UNIVERSITY of York

PAYMENT PROFORMA

PAYEE: *Dr Edward Edwards*  
ADDRESS: *212 North Road*  
Date: *York YO11 5DD*

Details of Payments

	£	p
1 hour for demonstrating @ £11.56	23	12
3 hours marking	34	68

Get the lecturer to sign

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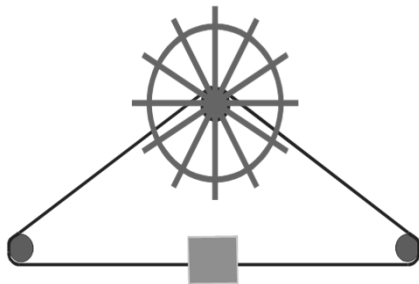
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## Ship's wheel



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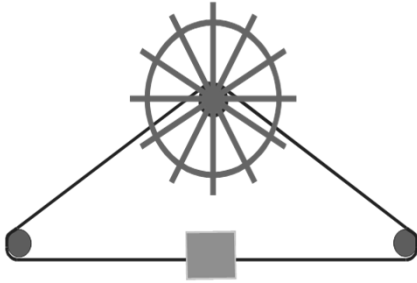
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### Ship's wheel



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### Slides: keep to the point

Cartoons may be amusing - but  
distracting

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### How many slides?

~2 minutes per slide

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## Practise

Preferably with an audience

- any audience

Do it for real for timing

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## What to take with you

Aides memoire

A/V materials

What to wear?

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## Sod's (Murphy's) Law

*Anything that can go wrong will go wrong*

Check *everything* before you start

Even if it's not your fault, it will reflect on you

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### Take redundant A/V material

PowerPoint (or other electronic) slides

- available on multiple routes?

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### Take redundant A/V material

PowerPoint (or other electronic) slides

- available on multiple routes?

Overhead projector  
slides (OHPs)?



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### Take redundant A/V material

PowerPoint (or other electronic) slides

- available on multiple routes?

Overhead projector  
slides (OHPs)?  
35mm slides?



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### **Assume your baggage *will* be lost**

Carry everything you need for the presentation in your hand luggage

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### **What to wear?**

Dress as you expect your audience to dress  
...unless you're trying to make a point  
Harder if you are a woman?

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### **Presentation**

Preparation (again)  
Nerves  
Presentation

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## **Get there early**

Meet the Chair

Check

- room
- equipment
- presentation
- audibility

Go to the toilet

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## **Check the colours on your projector**

*You can change them*

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## **What is the most stupid question to start with?**

'Can you hear me?'

- Not necessary if you have checked in advance

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## Can you see me?



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## Amplification

Why are we shy of amplification?

If it's there, use it

- Deaf members of the audience may be reliant on it

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## Be aware of an open mike

Whispered asides

Coughs

Know where the off/mute switch is

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## Nerves

You have practiced

- 'I *know* I can do this'

Think nice thoughts

Take a deep breath - out

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## ...Nerves

Smile

Drink water

Pause

- Silence is okay

Audiences are not hostile

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## ...Nerves

If all else fails, read your talk

- but not your paper

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## **The secret is**

...timing

Do not over-run

- Impolite
- Unprofessional

Can be overcome with practice

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## **Timing**

Use a watch / alarm clock / calendar

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## **Talk to your audience**

not the screen

not the projector

not the floor

Share eye contact

- Don't stare

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## Speak your audience's language

In an international conference, avoid colloquialisms

- 'Preaching to the converted.'
- 'Flogging a dead horse.'
- 'Not a leg to stand on.'
- 'Thinking on my feet.'
- ...

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## Dealing with questions

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## Dealing with questions

Know your topic  
Leave something out(?)  
Plant a question  
Take notes

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**Should you ask a Question during Seminar?**

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graph TD
    Q1[Do you actually HAVE a question?] -- No --> Q2[Are you trying to show off?]
    Q1 -- Yes --> Q3[Are you sure it's not a dumb question or that the speaker already answered it?]
    Q2 -- No --> Q4[Go for it!]
    Q2 -- Yes --> Q5[Are you trying to show off?]
    Q3 -- No --> Q6[Do you really need to ask the question in public or could you follow up with him/her later?]
    Q3 -- Yes --> Q7[Proceed with caution]
    Q4 --> Q8[Are you the Seminar organizer asking a question because no one else is and the awkward silence is making everyone uncomfortable?]
    Q6 -- No --> Q8
    Q6 -- Yes --> Q9[Thank God, please ask the question and let's get out of here!]
    Q8 -- No --> Q10[OK, you have a legitimate question. Do you actually care about the answer?]
    Q8 -- Yes --> Q11[Not really, I just want to show off.]
    Q10 -- No --> Q12[FINE, ASK YOUR QUESTION.]
    Q10 -- Yes --> Q11
    
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Think of this from the viewpoint of the speaker

How might you respond to each type of question?

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### If you don't know the answer?

Play the politician

- Answer a different question

Be honest

- Mark Twain:  
*I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, I said "I don't know".*

Be positive

- Offer an answer off-line?

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### If you don't know the answer?

#### Elements of an Effective Public Education Toolkit

- It's all right to say 'I don't know'
- even if your instincts are otherwise

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## Exercise

Five-minute talk, two-minutes' questions

It will be videoed

- for your eyes only

Listen to your colleagues' talks

- think of questions

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## Video

O wad some Power  
the giftie gie us

To see oursels as  
ithers see us!

It wad frae mony a  
blunder free us,

Would that some  
Power would give us  
the gift

To see ourselves as  
others see us!

It would free us  
from many errors

Robert Burns, *To a louse*

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## Exercise

Five-minute talk, two-minutes' questions

It will be videoed

- for your eyes only

Listen to your colleagues' talks

- think of questions

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## Evaluation

### Preparation

- Design of slides

### Structure of the talk

- What was the story?

### Presentation

- What kind of personality did the speaker have?

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## ...Evaluation

### Timing

- Did they keep to time?

### Response to questions

- Everybody must have one question ready
- Was yours answered satisfactorily?

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## Further resources...

### *What's Happened To My Slides: Giving Presentations at Conferences*

- <http://www.cultivate-int.org/issue3/presentations/>

### *How to give a good research talk*

*Sigplan Notices* 28(11), 1993

Jones, S. L. P., J. Hughes and J. Launchbury

- <http://www.cs.york.ac.uk/%7Ecolin/giving-a-talk.ps.gz>

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## ...Resources

### Giving presentations with accessibility in mind

- Edwards, A. D. N.
- Cultivate Interactive, issue 8, October 2002
- <http://www.cultivate-int.org/issue8/accessibility/>

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## ...Resources

### Preparing For An Oral Presentation

- Ian Benest

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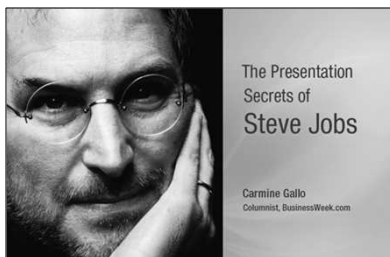
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## ...Resources



<http://www-users.cs.york.ac.uk/~alistair/presentations/Jobs.pdf>

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## **Conclusions**

Preparation is the key  
You are an interesting person with  
interesting things to say  
Be honest  
And remember that preparation is the  
key

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## **I-Spy at the conference**

I-Spy books

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