

Finding Your Personal Style

A Quick Guide to Giving Good Tech Talks

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PyData Boston - May 27, 2021

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What makes a good tech talk

- A good tech talk is one where a presenter...
 - shares something they know
 - about an interesting topic
 - in a way that informs and engages the audience.
- What are the most common ways talks go wrong?
 - A mismatch between the presenter, the material, and the audience
 - The presenter is under-prepared, so the talk isn't as informative as it could be
 - The presenter is over-prepared, so the talk doesn't engage as well as it could
- When a talk goes well, it feels like you're "in the zone", and the words just seem to flow naturally
- How to get there: *finding the style of talk that works best for you*

Before the Talk

Step 1:

Pick a topic that you know well, and find an audience that will be interested in it.

Step 2:

*Use slides as a roadmap to keep you on track,
not a script for what you're going to say.*

Step 3:

Include images, charts, tables, etc., to show things that can't be conveyed as well in words, but don't try to cram too much into your slides.

Step 4:

Assume you won't have enough time to say everything you want to, and start cutting.

Step 5:

Practice what you're going to say, but don't over-rehearse or (even worse) memorize it.

During the Talk

Step 6:

Show the audience you're human, and try to have some fun with it.

Step 7:

Slow down, and watch how the audience responds to what you say.

After the Talk

Step 8:

Interact with the audience, and try to learn what they thought was most interesting.

Step 9:

Note the things that worked really well, and also what could be improved.

Step 10:

Give the same talk again, but a little better.

But wait! Where does finding my style come in?

- Unfortunately, there's no real formula for finding your style quickly
- The one thing all great presenters have in common: they've done it *a lot*
- If you follow the steps here, you'll be able to give good talks quickly, and get the practice you need to feel comfortable in front of an audience
- Once you reach that point, then you can start trying new things and seeing what kind of talk feels most natural for you (that is, *your style*)

Good luck, and remember: have fun!

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Slides are available at <https://github.com/therriault/slides>.
