

▼ Writing

▼ Flow chart

- *Topic -> Content -> (Timing <-> Slides <-> Practice) -> Speak*

▼ Step 1: Picking a Topic

- You don't need to be an "expert" to speak at a conference.
- You are sure to have *some* experience that people can learn from.

▼ There are many types of talk:

- Technical howtos
- Experience reports
- Human side of things
- If you help the audience feel smarter in some way, you will succeed!

▼ When picking a topic / writing a talk, remember:

- Who are your audience?
- What take-home-points do you want to have?

▼ Step 1: Writing the content

▼ Write your content first and your slides second:

- Plan top-down.
- It's difficult to think hierarchically when writing slides.
- It's easier using a word document, an outlining tool, or org mode in Emacs.

▼ Plan top-down:

▼ Consider the invariants:

- The audience.
- What you want them to take away.
- How long you have.

▼ The variables:

- How much you're going to say.
- What order you're going to say it in.

- ▼ Add/remove points to get the right length:
 - Up to 3 major points per talk (it's all people can remember).
 - Those 3 points can have sub-points.
 - Longer talks have deeper trees.
- ▼ Think about narrative:
 - ▼ Narrative arc:
 - Position -> Complication -> Climax -> Resolution
 - ▼ There are many options for achieving this. Choose one or more that you like:
 - Introduce increasingly complex problems
 - Introduce increasingly elegant solutions
 - Tell a story (even make one up)
 - Use some form of recurring motif (in your talk or in your slides)
- ▼ Final points when writing content:
 - ▼ Keep it on-topic
 - Basically, talk about what you wrote about in your abstract
 - Don't worry about slight deviations -- just keep it 80% the same
 - ▼ Keep it rough for now:
 - You're going to change things when you start thinking about timing.

▼ Step 2: Getting the timing

- ▼ How long should a talk be? As long as the slot!
 - It's impossible to judge without practicing.
 - However, there are a few guidelines...
- ▼ Talks have a beginning, a middle, and an end:
 - Beginning: Say what you're going to say.
 - Middle: Say it.
 - End: Say it again.
 - You can use this structure for the talk as a whole, and as a microstructure for each part.
- ▼ Typically allocate:

- 5 minutes to the intro/outro
- 5 to 10 minutes for questions/changeover
- The rest to your actual talk
- ▼ The only *real* way to judge length is to practice!
 - Talk to the wall!
 - Talk to friends!
 - Be aware -- you'll speed up a bit on the day due to nerves!
- ▼ Be agile -- write/practice one section first, rinse and repeat:
 - Use the length of one section as a yard-stick.
 - Don't forget the beginning/end parts.
 - Be wary of spending too much time on the beginning -- it's easy to do!
- ▼ Build in contingencies:
 - ▼ Include one or two "lap times" into your plan, e.g. for each major part:
 - They give you confidence on the day
 - They help you adjust timings on the fly
 - ▼ If you're feeling advanced, pre-plan skippable sections:
 - Skip them if you're running behind (according to your timings)
 - BUT make sure your talk makes sense without them
(don't have later sections that depend on the bits you skipped)

▼ Step 3: Writing the slides

- ▼ There are two types of slides:
 - 1. Slides to help people understand your talk (required)
 - 2. Slides that you put online for people to read afterwards (not required)
- ▼ Slides for afterwards:
 - Text- and link-heavy
 - Often not necessary these days with talks getting recorded and published
 - Github repos / READMEs / blog posts / outline files (like this one) are great as alternatives:
point people to them at the end of your talk
- ▼ Slides for your talk:

- ▼ Should support what you're saying:
 - Diagrams to illustrate tricky concepts
 - Bullets to highlight important points
 - Keep code snippets small if you can
- ▼ Should do nothing more:
 - Don't read from slides — it's boring.
- ▼ Don't overload with content:
 - If people are reading, they're not listening
 - Particularly true of code snippets
 - If you have lots of you have to walk people through it
- ▼ Avoid content that draws attention away from you:
 - Ongoing animations
 - "Controversial" images
 - Lots of code / console output
 - If you want to include fun visual stuff (after all, it can be fun), change away from it when you want people to pay attention to you
- ▼ Slide layout:
 - ▼ Title slide:
 - Talk title
 - Your name (and possibly company)
 - Your contact details (twitter, email, or whatever)
 - ▼ Final slide
 - Your name (and possibly company)
 - Your contact details (twitter, email, or whatever)
 - ▼ Other slides
 - People may tweet as you're talking. This is good promotion for your talk.
 - Put your Twitter handle on there.
- ▼ How many slides?
 - 1 slide per minute is a good rule of thumb...
 - ...except when it isn't!

- “Builds”, in particular, can make the count way higher...

- ...or you may equally end up with very few slides

▼ Diagrams:

- Keep them simple -- they're just there to illustrate your point.
- Don't bother including loads of detail -- everyone will try to read it, and nobody will follow it.

▼ Step 4: Preparation

▼ Aim for a complete beginning-to-end practice run before your talk:

- Have everything nailed down (minor tweaks only).
- Practice it the night before to refresh your memory.

▼ Get familiar with your setup

- When practicing, use the tools you plan to use on the day

▼ Multi-monitor setups are great to show speaker notes etc...

- ...but make sure know which screen you're looking at when you practice
- If you like clickers, bring your own.

▼ Have a backup plan:

- Charge your laptop before you speak (and bring a power supply just in case)

▼ Put a copy of your slides on a thumbstick

- The robust your-computer-fails / the-internet-fails fallback.
- Next best approach - put them somewhere on the Internet.

▼ Plan for live demos and wifi to fail!

- This is ok. It happens to us all.
- Have something to say if this happens.

▼ The night before:

- Run through your talk once to the wall.
- Put everything in your bag (charge your laptop).
- Do something else.

▼ Speaking

▼ Setting up on the day

▼ Get there early:

- Get there 5-10 minutes before the start of your session
- Find whoever's running the screen/setup
- Try out your laptop on the projector.

▼ Bring all your gear:

- Laptop
- Power supply
- Backup gear (thumbstick, etc)

▼ Dealing with nerves

▼ Nerves are normal:

- They're good. They sharpen you up.
- They'll disappear once you start speaking.

▼ Pro tip: Have your first sentence(s) completely memorised (and written down as a backup):

▼ Include:

- Your name
- Who you work for (if that's important)
- A one-liner describing what you're talking about
- A lead-in to the content you have planned and rehearsed.
- This will get you from nervous territory to speaking-and-not-worrying-about-it territory.

▼ Lots of people have rituals / habits to overcome pre-stage nerves:

- Drink a warm drink? (added benefit: loosens the vocal chords)

▼ On stage:

▼ How to speak:

- Speak slower than you would normally
- Speak clearly
- Pause for emphasis

- Pause and repeat for double emphasis

▼ Where to stand:

- Get in front of the audience. Don't stand in the corner.
- Move about if you can, but don't obscure the slides
- Open body language. Stand face on.
- If you can't remember where you are, walk over to you

▼ Where to look:

- Look at the audience. Make eye contact.

▼ Pro tip in case that's too nerve racking:

- Pick one or two friendly faces in the audience.
- One on the left, one on the right, and one further back.
- Shift your gaze between them.

▼ Where to point:

- Anywhere!
- Be larger than life. Move around a bit. Use your hands.
- You're far away from people, so dial everything up a little bit to compensate.

▼ What to say:

▼ Beginning of your talk:

- What's your name?
- Who do you work for or where might people recognise you from?

▼ (OPTIONAL) State your policy on questions:

- "I'll take questions as I go along, so wave if you want to ask something."
- "There's a fair bit to get through so I'll take questions at the end."
- Say the title of the talk, and segue into your intro.

▼ The middle of the talk:

- Run through your content.
- Emphasise / repeat main points.
- Don't be afraid to pause...
for emphasis or to remember what you wanted to say next :)

▼ The end of the talk:

- Summarise what you talked about
- Thank the audience

▼ Invite questions: (or say you'll take them offline if you've run over)

- "We've got some time, so does anyone have any questions?"
- "Do we have any time for questions?" (person running the session will help you out)
- "It looks like we're out of time, so I'll take questions AT LOCATION X at the end of the session."

▼ Handling questions:

▼ REPEAT QUESTIONS AS THEY ARE ASKED:

- Super important for several reasons:
- Unless the hosts are handing out microphones, they'll be inaudible on the video.
- People may not have understood the person asking the question.

▼ If you need time to think, repeating the question:

- Gives you a few seconds of free thought.
- Allows you to spin the question if you have to.

▼ Don't be afraid about being wrong:

- Nobody knows everything.

▼ If you're stuck, use one of these lines:

- "Great question. There's a lot to talk about there, so let's talk about it afterwards."
- "Great question. I hadn't thought about that before. Let's talk about it afterwards."
- etc...

▼ Coping with Disaster!

▼ Lose your train of thought?

- Perfectly acceptable.
- Stop or pause for a bit and continue.

- Walk over to your laptop, or glance at the slides, for prompts.
- If you're comfortable, you can even say "what's next" or "where was I"?

▼ Get heckled?

- "Great question -- see me afterwards."
- If they're uncooperative, keep being pleasant and keep trying to push it to the end of the talk.
- The audience will be on your side!

▼ No audience?

- Turn it into a social chat!
- Get them all down the front.
- Allow it to be more interactive.

▼ Massive audience?

- Don't be intimidated.
- Do everything exactly the same.
- They are on your side. They want to know what you have to say!

▼ Technical failure?

- It happens sometimes.
- Don't panic -- it's not your fault.
- If you have a backup, switch to that.
- If you don't, say you'll run the demo afterwards, and continue with your talk.

▼ Summary

▼ Remember your audience and take-home points:

- This really helps with the writing process.

▼ Practice makes perfect, especially with timing:

- There's no other way of estimating how long things will take.

▼ Being nervous is fine:

- Everyone gets nerves.

▼ Don't follow the rules!

- Everything above is a guideline, not a rule. Break them!
- No talk is perfect, anyway.
- Don't aim for perfection -- aim for improvement.
- The only golden rule is "Engage your audience!" -- if you do that you'll do great.

▼ Further Watching

▼ Great talk with lots of good tips (many of which I borrowed):

- Speaking Out: A workshop for public speaking in tech
<https://www.skillsmatter.com/skillscasts/5465-speaking-out-a-workshop-for-public-speaking-in-tech>