Giving a Talk made Easy

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Giving a Talk

• Giving a talk is often perceived as very difficult.

• But it is “just” one form of scientific communication. Most of the guidelines for writing articles apply as well. Here, I will outline the talk-specific things.

• A good talk presents a “Take Home Message” (THM). It presents exactly what is needed to support that message.
Talk Outline
(this talk)

• General properties of a talk
• Content and organization
• Introduction and conclusion
• The making of slides
• Talk preparation and delivery
# Talk vs. Article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>targeted to the audience</td>
<td>startling sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take home message</td>
<td>correctness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some inaccuracies</td>
<td>fully detailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less (hardly any) detail</td>
<td>page limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time limit</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Content: What to cover in a Talk?

A talk is an extract of an article:

- A talk has “less” detail
  - to fit into the time limit
  - to match the audience (prior knowledge):
    talk to the non-expert in your field,
    but also include hints for the experts
Content: Support the Take-Home Message

Your talk presents the single THM. This is one idea or result.

Question: “What does the audience need to know for the THM?”

Build an information tree. Prune it!
Organization

• A talk is “linear”:
  The presenter gives the speed for the audience.
  No stepping back to previous pages, as reader could do.

  Structure: subject: “the problem”
  (relevance must be obvious)
  talk outline
  necessary background
  solution / results
  conclusions / implications

• The talk structure must be present and obvious!
The Introduction

“Begin well”:

• The audience judges by the first impression.
• Say why the talk will be interesting.
• Begin with the problem statement.
  (And give a hint that you have a solution.)
• **Then** give the talk outline.
• Start with a personal statement to make a link to the audience.
The Conclusion

• End the talk clearly.

• Have a “conclusions” slide with your THM and its implications for the audience.

• Prepare the last sentence word-by-word (and learn it by heart).

• Example: . . . Thank you. Are there any questions?
Making Slides

- Slides are a “visual guide” to the talk.
- Match your slides with the talking (use the same terms).
- Matching slides amplify the learning of the audience.
- Slides need to be self-contained.

Good slides are in Landscape rather than in Portrait.
Text Slides

- Text gives structure and context.
- Go through every point on your slides!
- Do not “read” your slides!
- Do not show material that you cannot explain, in the given time!
  (Be careful with formulae and the like!)
- Slides should not be crowded (5–7 lines of text).
Figure Slides

• A figure says more than 1000 words!

• A figure will be easily remembered by the audience.

• Figures need to be as simple as possible. No excess details!
  (like in images from clip-art databases.)

• As far as possible, prefer figures over text!
Talk Preparation

- Do **NOT** learn your text by heart. Free speach is much better to follow.

- Maybe have some sheets with keywords (what to say) in **LARGE** font with you.

- Rehearse your talk.

- **Time your talk:**
  One slide takes 1–2 minutes.
  But you better try out how long your explanation takes.
Talk Delivery

• Speak clearly
  ★ “loud and clear”
  ★ speak lively, not monotonous

• Keep eye contact with the audience (all of them)
  Hint: look into the last rows.

• Be yourself, act normally.

• Put your watch in front of you: \(\rightarrow\) control timing.
Conclusion

Plan your talk to support your **Take Home Message**.

Target your talk to the audience.

Plan and time your talk.