



University of Pittsburgh

Giving a Research Presentation

A tale of two talks...

School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Computer Science



Announcement



Next weeks: Student technical presentations

Logistics:

- Different groups
- Presentations split up over both days
- Each group will receive reviews from:
 - ↖ All classmates (“anonymous”)
 - ↖ Me (not anonymous)

All talks must be emailed to me by **NOON** on Thursday September 25th!



Giving a talk isn't easy the first time around...

Talk 1: Less than stellar talk

Discussion: Knee-jerk reactions

- What made that talk bad?
- What could be improved?
- Structural elements of a good talk

Talk 2: A (hopefully) improved talk

Discussion: Presentation elements

- Style and delivery
- Slide layout and effects



Brace yourselves for mediocrity...

(first draft of a 15 minute conference talk,
degraded further by me)



Discuss: What was wrong with that talk?

Issues with content:

- Why should we care about the problem?
- What are illustrations and graphs?
- Had no idea where talk was going!
- No citations of literature
- Missing context to understand experimental setup
- ...

Issues with delivery:

- Lack of eye contact
- Lecturing to the board/laptop, not the audience
- Too much information in figures/tables/algorithms
- ...

Structure your talk based on your audience and the time that you have



Your audience: Generally smart individuals

- Computer Scientists? **Yes**
- In your area? **Maybe**
- Knowledgeable about your problem? **Probably not**

Time is usually limited

- Conference talk: 20 minutes or so
- Job talk: < 1 hour

This is not a lot of time...



Bottom line: *Your talk should be an advertisement for your paper(s)*

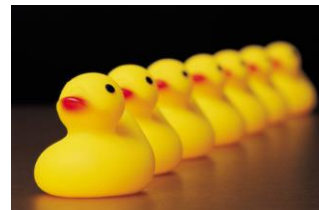
That's not a lot of time, how should I structure my talk to relate to these people?



This is a **hard** problem...



... with **interesting** applications...



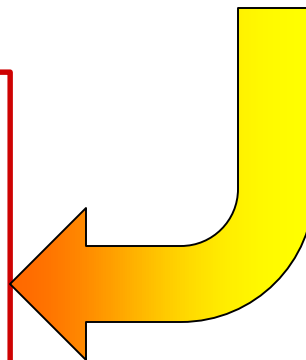
... that builds on prior work...



... in a verifiable way

Two sub-parts:

- You do something that has not been done
- You use neat technological advancements to do this



Hint: Try to give audience one good take-home point

It's not just *what* you say, but *how* you say it



Body language says a lot

- Make eye contact with your audience
 - ↳ *Corollary:* Face your audience
- Some movement is good
- Don't speak too fast (or too slow!)



Make useful slides

- Provide a topic outline to structure your talk
- **One** primary idea per slide
- Use slide titles to convey take-away message
- **Do not** read your slides!
- A picture is worth a thousand words...





Let's try to put some of this into practice...

Discuss: Why was this talk (hopefully) better than the first run through?

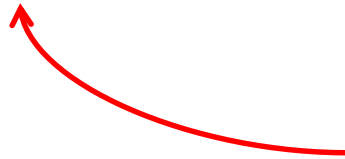


General tips and tricks...



Practice makes better

- *Alone*: Work on your “script,” smooth out transitions
- *Research group*: Get used to other people being around
- *Broader population*: Assess comprehensibility to outsiders



**e.g., other grad student friends,
department seminars, etc...**

Do you *really* want that laser pointer?

“Flash” is good, but too much flash is distracting

- *Good*: Animations to progressively build large diagrams or equations
- *Bad*: Animating every slide transition and every line of text...

Get out of your head and into your talk 😊