



Preparing Your Talk

CS 4993
Fall 2004



Talk Guidelines

- Must be done in PowerPoint
- 20 minutes of talk, 5 minutes of questions/comments
- Make talk from the point of view of the authors
 - You may add your point of view at the end
- Prepare for this audience (seniors in CS)
- Graded on clarity of the talk, whether the talk provokes discussion



Oral Presentation Advice

- Mark Hill
<http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~markhill/conference-talk.html>
- Oral communication is different from written
 - Listeners have one chance to hear your talk, can't "re-read" when they get confused
 - Two well-known ways to design your talk
 - K.I.S.S. (keep it simple stupid) - focus on getting one to three key points across
 - Repeat key insights - tell them what you're going to tell them (Forecast), tell them, and tell them what you told them (Summary)



Oral Presentation Advice

- Think about your audience
 - What terms do they know?
 - What will you have to define?
 - What do they care about?
- Think about your rhetorical goals
 - What do you want to get across?



Oral Presentation Advice

Key ideas:

1. Practice
2. Practice!!
3. PRACTICE!!!!



How to Give a Bad Talk The Ten Commandments

David A. Patterson, UC-Berkeley, Circa 1983

- I. Thou shalt not be neat.** Why waste time preparing slides? Ignore spelling, grammar and legibility. Who cares what 50 people think?
- II. Thou shalt not waste space.** Transparencies are expensive. If you can save five slides in each of four talks per year, you save \$7.00/year!
- III. Thou shalt not covet brevity.** Do you want to continue the stereotype that engineers can't write? Always use complete sentences, never just key words. If possible, use whole paragraphs and read every word.



How to Give a Bad Talk The Ten Commandments

- IV. Thou shalt cover thy naked slides.** You need the suspense! Overlays are too flashy.
- V. Thou shalt not write large.** Be humble -- use a small font. Important people sit in front. Who cares about the riff-raff?
- VI. Thou shalt not use color.** Flagrant use of color indicates uncareful research. It's also unfair to emphasize some words over others.
- VII. Thou shalt not illustrate.** Confucius says ``A picture = 10K words," but Dijkstra says ``Pictures are for weak minds." Who are you going to believe? Wisdom from the ages or the person who first counted goto's?



How to Give a Bad Talk The Ten Commandments

- VIII. Thou shalt not make eye contact.** You should avert eyes to show respect. Blocking screen can also add mystery.
- IX. Thou shalt not skip slides in a long talk.** You prepared the slides; people came for your whole talk: so just talk faster. Skip your summary and conclusions if necessary.
- X. Thou shalt not practice.** Why waste research time practicing a talk? It could take several hours out of your two years of research. How can you appear spontaneous if you practice? If you do practice, argue with any suggestions you get and make sure your talk is longer than the time you have to present it. Commandment X is most important. *Even if you break the other nine, this one can save you.*