Seminar und Praktikum, SoSe 2014

„Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten und Lehren”

Prof. Dr. Florian Alt
Daniel Buschek, M.Sc.
Presentation of Scientific Work
Presenting Yourself

- A conference talk is a chance to get your name and research in front of lots of people who would not otherwise read your paper.
- Among conference delegates or visitors you may find people who can help you with your research, PhD examiners, etc.; you want them to see you as professional, interesting and interested in the research of others.
- Be prepared to talk to people you don’t know, often without anyone introducing you.
- People who speak well are considered smart and vice versa.
- Don't need natural talent to be a good speaker.
Preparing the Presentation

- You will not be able to cover everything that is in your paper
- Focus on
  - the aspect you are particularly proud of
  - an argument you want to make
  - what the audience is likely to be most interested in
  - the area where you are seeking advice from the audience
- Spend enough time preparing
- Rehearse in front of a friendly audience
- Cut down to tell a tight story
- Memorize the key points you are trying to leave with the audience
Why do you present

• The purpose of a presentation is NOT
  • to convince the audience that you are the coolest guy ever
  • to tell everything you know about a topic
  • to present all technical details

• Rather you want to
  • present the audience your idea
  • make the audience keen about reading your work
  • engage, tease, provoke the audience
The audience you want…

- knows your work
- understands all details of your important theory of complex varieties of high dimensionality
- is keen on learning about the newest developments in your area
- pays attention, is constructive, and favourable
The audience you get...

- does not know you
- probably heard about your theory but damns it to hell
- just came back from lunch ("Schnitzelkoma")
- thinks their emails are much more important

Wake up the audience!

You have about 2 minutes to catch the audience before they nap away!

If you can convey only one message to the audience - which one should it be?
What to put on the Slides

- Don’t use too much text
- Put a picture on every slide
- Demos in your talk are awesome
- Honest charts
- Videos
- Subtle animation
Software Demonstrations

• Make sure that your software runs exactly as you expect on the machine designated for the demonstrations
  • software may require particular plugins or a particular version of a database
  • computer technicians may have upgraded the machine
• Have everything open and running before the audience arrives
• If your software malfunctions, do not swear - nor spend the next 10 minutes inspecting the source code for a bug
Doing the Presentation

- Speak energetically but clearly and slowly enough to articulate
- Do not read out the slides
- Neither look at your notes nor at the screen all the time
- Tell ’em what you are going to tell ’em, tell ’em, and tell ’em what you told ’em
- Ask for understanding at key points
- Project and emphasise
- Use your eyes, body and hands
- Show your passion
- Good posture and balance
- If you are one of the speakers in a session, stay for the whole session
What to Say

• Motivate problem with a practical scenario
• Before explaining the technology
  • Why is this an important problem? (Audience will be distracted by guessing otherwise.)
  • Why is your solution better?
• The technology
  • Goal is to convince you've got something great ...
  • ... not to teach them how to implement it
  • Success if you get them to read the paper for details
• Shorter is better
• Don't irritate your audience
• Stories get attention
How to Say it Well

• Practice your talk
  • More than once
  • Time yourself
• Compensate for distractions/inattention
  • Restate overall goals from time to time, e.g. "Remember that we're trying to compute these probabilities on the map."
  • Repetition is OK
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• Eye Contact: always face the audience
  • don't look or point at screen
  • glance at laptop, use the mouse
• Always be prepared to skip ahead (bridging slides!)
What you can skip

- **Agenda / Outline**
  - conveys almost no information at the outset of the talk
  - potentially *after* the motivation
  - maybe to sync during the presentation

- **Related Work**
  - are part of the paper
  - you should be aware of related work
  - talk about related work in a constructive way

- **Technical details / Formulas**
  - don't try to tell your story with equations
  - a few equations are ok, but not gratuitous
  - flash up some math just to show you have it
End of your presentation

- End on a memorable slide
  - people should remember the end of your talk
  - it should be worthwhile to remember
  - be short and concise
- Indicate when you're done, e. g., "That's the end. Thanks for listening."
- Let session chair ask for questions
Rude Q & A

• Repeat the question to buy time
• If multiple questions, answer the last one and ask what the first one was again
• Ask for clarification of the question
• Ask a question instead of answering
• If too long an answer… “that’s interesting - let’s talk offline”
• Be calm, humble - but prepared for anything