

How to Do a Presentation

Lawrence Paulson
Computer Laboratory, University of Cambridge

Main Issues

- * What do you want to cover?
- * Who are the audience?
- * How much time do you have?
- * What technology should you use?

What Will You Cover?

- * Organise your main points.
- * Avoid confusing digressions.
- * Omit boring details (even they caused you endless aggravation).

Who Are the Audience?

- * Do they care about your subject? If not, **motivate** them.
- * Do they have the necessary background knowledge? If not, **inform** them.
- * Once lost, they are lost for good!
- * They can read, so **don't read your slides** to them! **Discuss** the slides instead.

How Much Time?

- * Don't ruin your talk by **taking too long**.
- * Use common sense: if you have 20 minutes, don't have 30 overheads!
- * Practice your talk (jokes included).
- * During delivery, watch the time and **adjust** your speaking to finish promptly.

Using What Technology?

- * MS PowerPoint and Apple KeyNote are fine, but don't overdo the silly tricks.
- * Use LaTeX for mathematics, with either packages like "beamer" or a good "insert formula" tool.
- * Don't include more maths than you must. Indicate proofs but omit the details.

Use Graphics

- *... to keep your audience awake.
- * Once bored, they are bored for good!



Short and Sweet

Avoid overcrowded, busy overheads!

This is the sort of slide that people hate because it's way too crowded and it goes on and on and they get lost trying to read it. It shows that the presenter couldn't be bothered to break concepts down into their fundamental parts. Also the type size is too small and there's way too much too much being covered at once. It's practically impossible to read. So the presenter reads it all aloud and everybody goes to sleep. Follow the advice given on the other overheads and never make overheads like this one. If you have too much material, remove some! If you must keep it, use enough overheads to cover it without overcrowding!