

Research Methods

comp4809/7809

Week 8

Presentation Skills

Agenda

- In-class exercise - D6 Elevator pitch
- How to give a seminar

D6 Elevator pitch

- An elevator pitch starts with a big picture problem, and shows how it can be addressed:

Security is a major issue for file transfer. The problem is not just the security of files themselves, but also a lack of understanding of the problem in the community. I'm developing software for doing XYZ so that the problem can be taught better. In particular ...

D6 Elevator pitch

- After listening to a pitch, ask yourself
 - Why is this work important? (80% of the msg)
 - What is the person going to do? (20% of the msg)
- A pitch should first engage the listener (the hook), and then sell them the solution.
 - If a pitch starts with “My project is to do X” it misses the engagement
 - If a pitch doesn’t say what you will do, it misses the solution

D6 Elevator pitch

- Form into groups with ~5 people in each group. In each group
 - Choose one person to time the pitches
 - Target is 30 secs (max 3 minutes) per person
 - Each person in the group says their elevator pitch to the group
- After listening to a pitch, ask yourself
 - Why is this work important? (80% of the msg)
 - What is the person going to do? (20% of the msg)
- A pitch should first engage the listener (the hook), and then sell them the solution.
 - If a pitch starts with “My project is to do X” it misses the engagement
 - If a pitch doesn’t say what you will do, it misses the solution

How to give a Seminar

- Preparation
- Purpose
- Structure
- Presentation
- Questions

Seminar preparation

- Logistics
 - Date
 - Time allowed
 - Does that include questions?
 - Room
 - Equipment
 - Laptop, Powerpoint, software demos
 - Audience
- Reference: “How to give a good research talk”
<http://research.microsoft.com/~simonpj/papers/giving-a-talk/giving-a-talk.htm>

Think about

Purpose

Why are you giving this talk

Structure

What to say?

Presentation

How to deliver it?

Purpose

Why are you giving this talk?

Audience

What do they know?

Effect

What response do you want?

Message

What to tell them?

Informal working presentation

Audience

Colleagues

Share lots of context

Effect

Validation of approach

Get suggestions

Message

What problem have I got?

How am I solving it?

Formal Seminar

Audience

Department

Share some context

Effect

Accept PhD proposal

Message

Why is this problem interesting?

How am I going to solve it?

What novelty?

Structure

Outline

First you tell them what you're going to tell them

Body

Then you tell them

Summary

Then you tell them what you told them

Acknowledgements

Questions

Structuring a talk

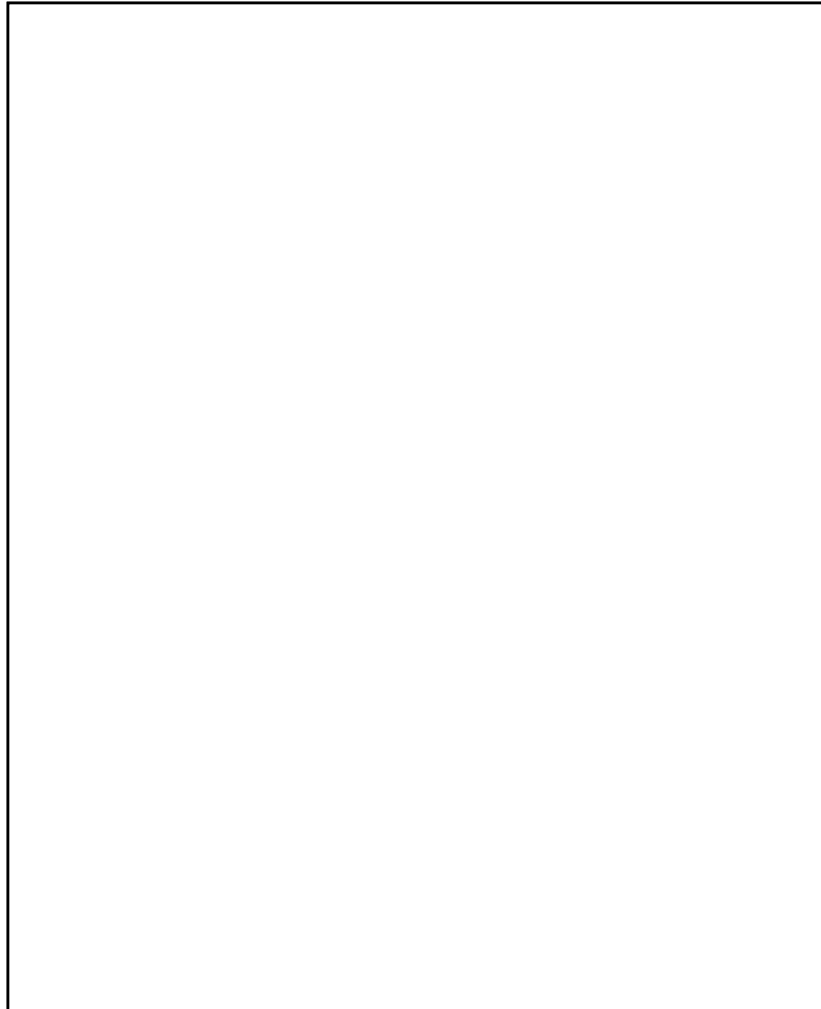
15 minutes

→ 5-10 slides

Divide an A4 sheet
into ~12 slides

Plan the structure

Fill in the details



Content

Make sure each element contributes to your message

Avoid tedious detail – use graphics, surprise

Avoid digressions

Focus Focus Focus

If in doubt, leave it out

Purpose
Structure
Presentation

Help
the
Audience
Navigate

Presentation

Plan length

Distance = rate x time

Visual aids

Overheads

Powerpoint

Graphics/Animations

Video

Tips

Purpose
Structure
Presentation

Formal seminar

Arial
44 Point

Audience

Arial 28 Point

Department

Arial 24 Point

Share some context

Effect

Accept PhD proposal

Message

This is 16 point Arial Bold

This 12 point plain font is really too small to see

Performance Tips

Check the room

Be aware of your position

Speak to the audience

Speak for the last row

Point to the screen (not overhead or laptop)

Don't uncover points

Tales of Seminar Questions

- Case A:
 - Silence
- Case B:
 - “There are so many things wrong with what you’ve said that I don’t know where to start”
 - (Your worst nightmare: Someone totally denounces your work as rubbish.)
 - What about paper X in 1953 in journal Y?

Case A

- Always plant a question in the audience
 - The neural network researcher and the first year arts student:
“but isn’t that just gradient descent in the tangent direction?”
- If you chair a session, have a question prepared
 - Where do you see this research going?
 - Could you explain XXXX further?
- If no one asks a question, have one prepared
 - The question you should be asking at this point is “...”

Case B

- Everyone needs a strategy for dealing with aggressive questioners (e.g., Peter B. at ACAL*03). What would you do?
 - A. as chair of the session?
 - B. as speaker?
- What can you say?
 - Thank you for that comment. But please, don't hold back. Say what you really think.

Case B

- Thank the questioner (no matter what they say):
 - Thank you for that question / comment. Does anyone else have a question?
 - I respect your opinion however in this matter it turns out that...
 - That's a very good question and one that has taxed the best brains in the field. If I had an answer to that you'd be reading about it in Science next week.
 - Thank you for that comment. I value your insights and would like the opportunity to hear more after the session and get the details of that reference.
 - Please say what you really think – don't hold back!

Case B

- If you're the chair of the session:
 - Thank you for your comments but I'd like to bring the questions back to the seminar we've just heard.
 - This would make a good discussion in the break.
 - Does anyone have any questions related to the seminar?
 - That question is outside the scope of this presentation.

Practice

Practice

Practice

What I told you

Purpose

Why are you giving this talk?

Structure

What to say?

Presentation

How to deliver it?

D7 Draft of seminar presentation

- Title of your seminar
- Take home message (20-50 words)
- Topic for each slide. Either
 - Power Point draft; or
 - List the contents of the slides in text form
- Write five questions that you would like the audience to ask you at the end of your seminar.