How to Prepare and Present a Good Talk
Advice for Conference Presenters

1 Preparing your slides

- A basic rule of thumb – one slide per minute. Think of good illustrations.

- Motivate the work, introduce key terms and only then cover the contribution.
  Even the few experts in the audience may need to understand your terms.
  Non-experts will be lost unless you make every effort to clarify the material.

- Do not overload slides (10 lines max). Refer to the paper for low-level details.
  Carefully animating the contents of the slide may help focus on the right bullets at the right time. However, the image or text appearing last should stay for long enough to be legible.

- Use large enough fonts and do not change font size from slide to slide.
  Text in figures should be consistent in size with regular text (this is a common problem when figures are scaled down).

- Avoid bullet points that are too verbose or redundant.
  Most bullet points should fit into one line. No bullet should be longer than two lines, otherwise the audience will not be able to process them.

- Avoid unusual fonts – they may not show up on the computer used to run your presentation.
  Most formulas can be typeset without Equation Editor if you use Greek characters, sub- and super-scripts, etc.

- Avoid very light colors – projectors sometimes make them unreadable.
  Make sure you are using a consistent palette from slide to slide.

- If you have a table with more than 9 cells, highlight some rows and columns in color (e.g., place borderless colored rectangles behind the table).

- Do not put anything on a slide that you are not going to explain during the talk. However, it is appropriate to explain things that are not on a slide.

- Keep it simple. No long sentences, statements or complicated formulas. Better, try to avoid mathematical text/formulas whenever possible.

2 Contents guidelines

- **First slide: Presentation title, name and affiliations of co-authors.**
  Highlight the presenter's name.
  Note: Company/institute name or logo is allowed only on the first slide.

- **Second slide: Outline** of the presentation
  Even this slide contains only the outline of the talk, begin its presentation (once more) with a simple explanation of what your talk is all about. Then describe the order in which it is presented.
  Try to introduce some suspense by promising unexpected results, interesting conclusions, etc.

- **Motivation** for your work
  What made you interested in this work and why should others look at your techniques and results? In other words, why should the audience listen to you?

- **Previous Work**
  What has been done by others in this field? (Some presenters tend to describe **Previous**

Work after their contributions, to make comparisons more articulate)
Have you found something new or arrived at important new conclusions?

- **Main contributions**

- **Empirical validation, if any**

- **Conclusions** or **Summary** slide (take note of the difference, and use the most appropriate)
  If space allows, remind the motivation for your work.
  Summarize your most important contributions and observations once again.

- **(optional) Future Work** / perspectives slide**:**
  Which challenges remain open? What further projects would you recommend?

3 Timing your presentation

- Make every effort to fit your presentation in the time slot allocated to it, but also do not finish too early. Accurate timing requires rehearsing the talk. With every run, a speaker becomes more fluent and confident.

- If you run out of time during the talk (due to questions etc.), skip slides in the middle part, keep the conclusion/summary. Never talk faster to catch up!

4 Presenting

- First thank the person (session chair) who introduced your talk. Introduce yourself to the audience if not done so by the session chair.

- Make eye contact with your audience.
  Very important: Throughout the presentation, talk to the audience, not the slide on the wall!

- Gain the interest of the audience from the beginning: Mention at the beginning the objective of your presentation. Why have you done this work? Most importantly: Why should the audience listen to your presentation?

- Instead of reading your bullet points, talk freely.
  This also requires rehearsing. With every run, a speaker remembers the material and the wording better. It helps to write down initially the first sentence(s) for each slide – and then use this exact wording during the slide transition.

- Carefully placed pauses make the presentation more professional and help the audience to follow the material better. Different parts may require different pace.

5 Questions and Answers

- Make sure everyone understood the question that has been asked. If not (e.g., the question came out of the audience without a microphone), repeat the question before answering it.

- If the question came from an expert – rephrase it to the general audience before answering.

- Always think before answering. Do not guess an answer.

- Keep answers short and concise.

- Do not get into a question-answer cycle with the same person. In this case, suggest a personal conversation afterwards: "We will discuss this offline / after the session, etc.".

- If you cannot answer a question, say it honestly. Refer to a personal conversation after the session: "I would like to discuss this interesting question with you afterwards."