GIVING CONFERENCE

TALK s

Rainer Gemulla

Oct 3, 2012
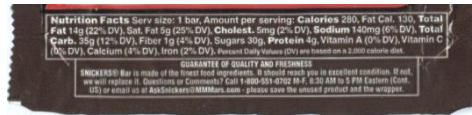
Teaser
Talk

Content
Paper

Details
Tech Report

The purpose of a conference talk is to whet appetite.

The purpose of a talk…

Is not

- To flood the audience with every detail of your paper
- To convince the audience to not read your paper
- To be as incomprehensible as possible hoping to impress people
- To embarrass or punish you
- To get over with it

Is

- To whet appetite
- To demonstrate that your work is interesting and significant and that your paper is worth reading
- To be noticed by the community
- To discuss problems
- To practice giving talks

DILBERT Scott Adams

Panel 1: AS REQUESTED, I FIT MY PRESENTATION ON ONE POWERPOINT SLIDE.

Panel 2: I HAD TO USE ALL OF THE WHITE SPACE, BUT I THINK IT WAS WORTH IT TO FIT EVERYTHING ON ONE PAGE.

Panel 3: IT'S ACTUALLY ONLY ONE BULLET POINT, BUT IT'S A LONG ONE.
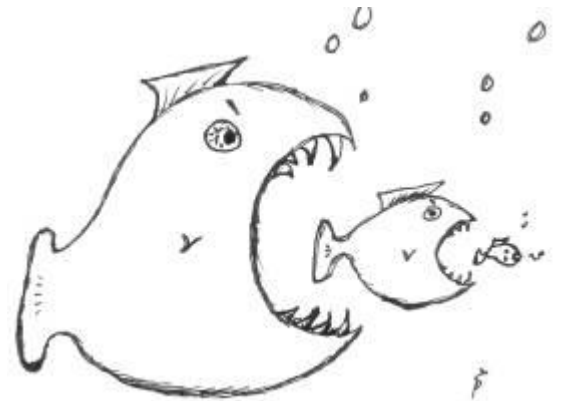
PURPOSE

PREPARATION

DELIVERY

SUMMARY

Assembly of material

- Cannot present everything
- What should the audience remember?
  - Gather potential ideas
  - Select important point(s)
  - Drop the rest
- Create a script, tell a story
  - Context of your problem
  - Minimum of details necessary for understanding
  - Key points and results
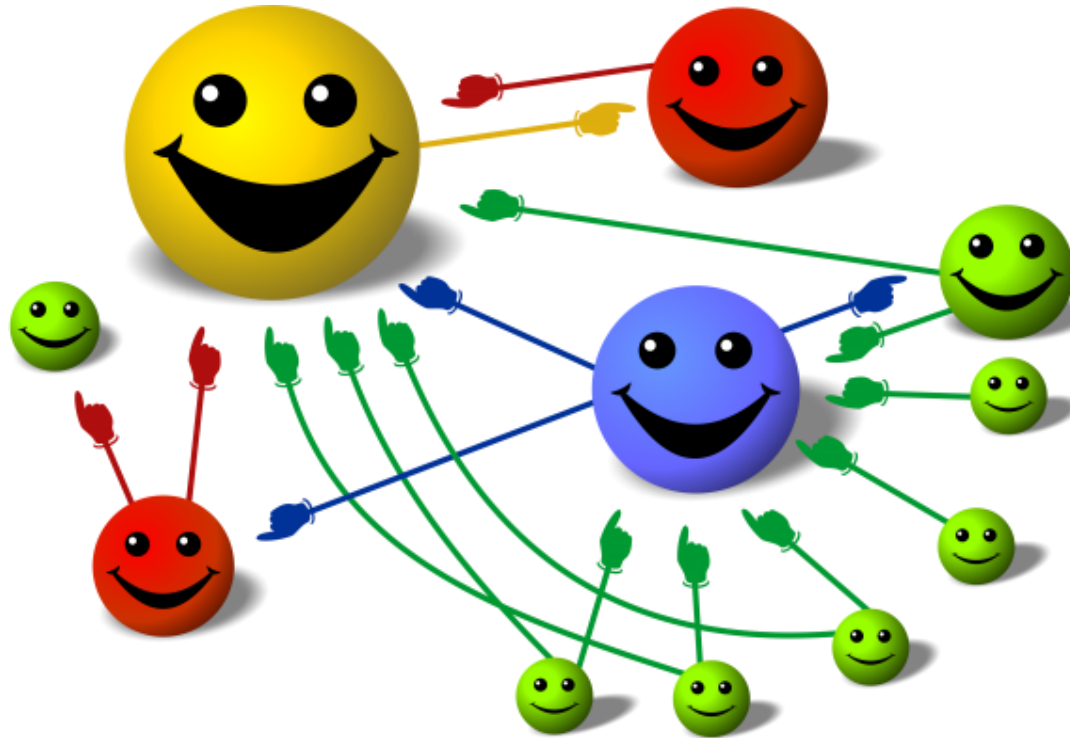 - Conclusions and outlook

Why is each part included?
Why at this position?

Explaining pagerank to your grandmother (V1)

- *N* pages + hyperlinks
- Create *N*x*N* matrix **A**
- A_{ij}=0 if page *j* does not link to page *i*
- A_{ij}=1/(#distinct links
- Add "small" constan
  divide by (1+*Nα*)
- Pagerank of page *i* =
  principal right eigen

Explaining pagerank to your grandmother (V2)

Text provides structure.
Figures and examples help grasping ideas.
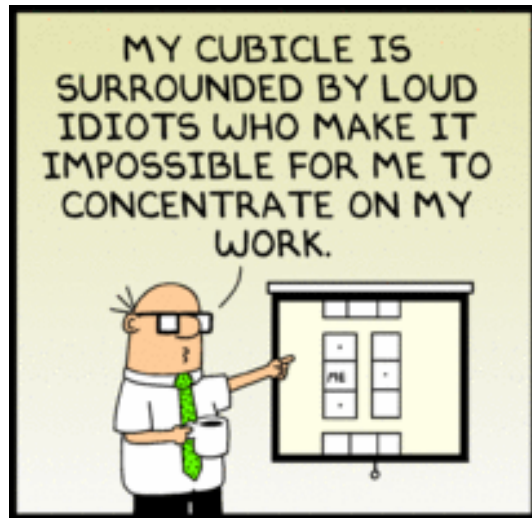
Legibility, simplicity, relevance

- Small fonts are hard to read

- Minimize *Font* variations

- Animated entry is fun… for kids

- Unnecessary animations distract

- Ornaments don't add to your talk

- White background, black text is just fine

Practice, practice, practice

- Prepare thoroughly (think early, slides later)
- Don't write out, don't memorize
- Rehearse alone
  - Take timings (after 5, 10, 15, … minutes)
  - Stand (no mirror, maybe tape/video)
- Rehearse before people
  - Big favor → prepare
  - Encourage, take and work in feedback

"Thanks for letting me rehearse my presentation."

PURPOSE
PREPARATION
DELIVERY
SUMMARY

Be you

- You are nervous? That's good!
  - Shows you care
  - Adrenaline helps
- No need to be funny
  - Need to be certain that your joke is actually funny
  - Don't laugh at your own jokes

Style

- Slow down (but do not go over time)
- Preview-do-review
- Do not diminish or suggest unimportance
  - "I'm so nervous"
  - "This is *just* another of our results"
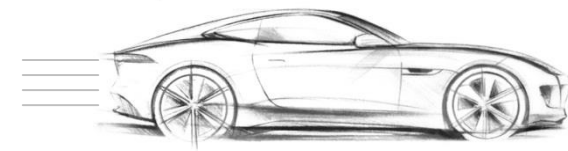- Do not show off
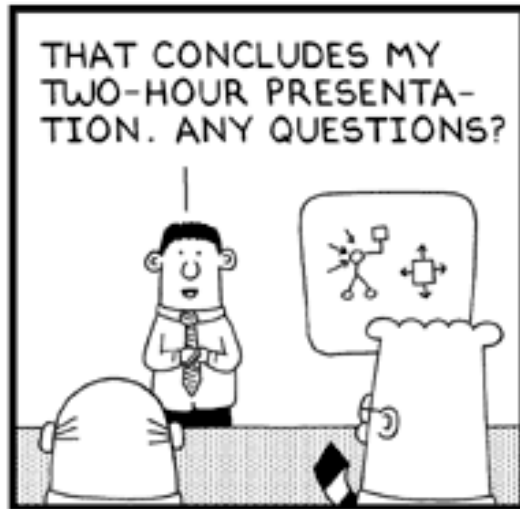
Your algorithms

My algorithm

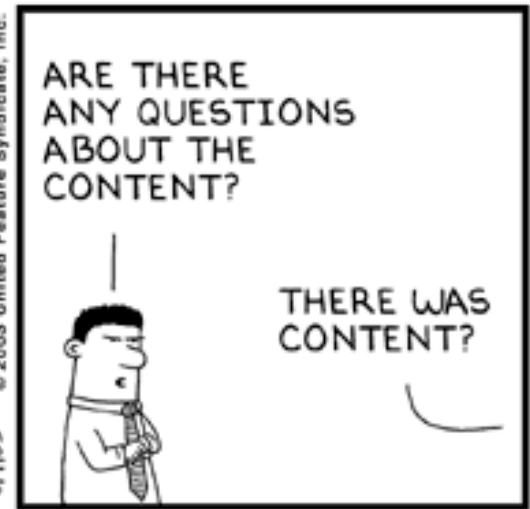Incredibly large gap

Questions are good

1. Acknowledge (every) question
2. Repeat or clarify the question
3. Answer the question
   - To the audience
   - *Do not bluff, be honest*
   - Take questions offline
4. Check back whether question has been answered

© 2003 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

PURPOSE

PREPARATION

DELIVERY

SUMMARY

Conference talk = teaser

Focus on key point(s) to be remembered

Legibility, simplicity, relevance

Being nervous is good

Practice, practice, practice

Thank you!

Pointers

- Justin Zobel, *Writing for Computer Science: The Art of Effective Communication*, Springer 2004.
- http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/people/simonpj/papers/giving-a-talk/giving-a-talk.htm
- Garr Reynolds, *Presentation Zen*, New Riders, 2008
- MPII's presentation skills seminar