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
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 $N \times N$ matrix $A$
  - $A_{ij} = 0$ if page $j$ does not link to page $i$
  - $A_{ij} = 1/(\#\text{distinct links on page } j)$ otherwise
- Add “small” constant $\alpha$ to every entry, then divide by $(1 + N \alpha)$
- Pagerank of page $i$ = $i$-th component in principal right eigenvector of $A$
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."
My cubicle is surrounded by loud idiots who make it impossible for me to concentrate on my work.

Did you create a presentation on why you couldn't do the presentation you're supposed to be doing?

Yes.

Wouldn't it have been just as easy to create the actual presentation?

I'm hoping to use this one more than once.
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
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
That concludes my two-hour presentation. Any questions?

DID YOU INTEND THE PRESENTATION TO BE INCOMPREHENSIBLE, OR DO YOU HAVE SOME SORT OF RARE "POWER-POINT" DISABILITY?

ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONTENT?

THERE WAS CONTENT?

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Conference talk = teaser
Focus on key point(s) to be remembered
Legibility, simplicity, relevance
Being nervous is good
Practice, practice, practice

Thank you!
Pointers


• http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/people/simonpj/papers/giving-a-talk/giving-a-talk.htm


• MPII’s presentation skills seminar