



Umeå University
**Department of
Computing Science**

Conference presentations

Student Conference Course

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<http://www8.cs.umu.se/kurser/5DV144/HT13/>



Conference presentations

- At a conference each paper is presented by one of the authors
- The time limit is typically 25 minutes with 5 minutes reserved for questions
- The time limit is usually very HARD
 - The chairman often shows a sign when 1 minute remains, and interrupts when time is out



Overview of the lecture

- How to write a presentation
 - General suggestions
 - Structure
 - Layout
- Preparation for the talk
- When you are standing there...

This is not an exact science – people present in many different and sometimes personal ways



Presenting presentation techniques...

Matthew 23:2-3

"The teachers ... So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.



Or

"Do as I say, not as I do"





General suggestions

You are advertising your paper!

- Not too many slides
- Be selective – focus on the main points only
- Keep extra material as hidden slides
- Simplify – sacrifice accuracy for comprehensibility
- Use examples – as simple as possible
- Using the white board for some parts gives extra attention

- Consider following the structure of your well written abstract
 - Motivation
 - Research question or task
 - Earlier work
 - What did you do?
 - How did you do it?
 - What were the results?
- Do not necessarily use the same structure as the paper
 - Readers can go back and forth
 - Listeners cannot
- If you have interesting results, mention them as soon as possible

Less is more! Avoid:

- Too much on each slide, ONE topic per slide
- Long sentences
- Small font sizes
- Background graphics
- Colors with bad contrast such as **light green** and **yellow**
- Animations (unless they serve a clear purpose)
- Unmotivated and complex PowerPoint templates
- Slide transition effects

- Never copy chunks of text directly from the paper
- Use graphics, pictures, graphs, etc.
 - Watch out for too small letters, digits, and lines
 - Mathematics and graphics can be easily incorporated as screen shots from the pdf file
- Number your slides



Preparation

- Learn your material so you can speak freely
- If you feel you need it, make notes for each slide
- Rehearse several times
- Time your talk – remove slides if necessary (try not to cut down on introduction or earlier work)
- Prepare the start extra carefully
 - Powerful sentences
 - Rehearse it several times



When you are standing there

- Be there in time
- Prepare and check the equipment before
- Switch off the WiFi



- Face the audience, not the screen
- Look at the whole audience, each person at least once during the presentation
- Do not speak too fast
- Do not just read from the slides (or your notes...)



When you are standing there

- Questions from the audience
 - Be humble and thank for remarks
 - It is ok not knowing the answers to everything
 - Avoid long discussions



When you are standing there

- Preparing and rehearsing well is one of the best medicine against stage fright
- Look at someone who looks friendly to get calm
- Remember that most people are busy being nervous for their own presentation
- It is a fact that very many people are nervous when presenting, but it almost never shows (and you are not an exception...)

Good luck!