Umeå University
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Computing Science**

Conference presentations

Student Conference Course

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http://www8.cs.umu.se/kurser/5DV144/HT14/

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

- 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

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!

Be brief!

- Simplify – sacrifice accuracy for comprehensibility
- Be selective – focus on the main points only
- Not too many slides
  - Keep extra material as hidden slides

- 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?
  - What are the conclusions?
- 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
- Chunks of text copied directly from the paper
- Long sentences (PRUNE!)
- 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

- Pictures and graphs are usually good to include
  - Watch out for too small letters, digits, and lines
  - Mathematics and graphics can be easily incorporated as screen shots from the pdf file
- Checklist for bullet lists
  - Are all items really related?
  - Which bullets belong together?
  - Which order is most logical?
- Number your slides

- Learn your material so you can speak freely
- Add something that is not written on the slide
  - Explain or exemplify
  - If needed, make notes for each slide
- Prepare the start extra carefully
  - Powerful sentences
  - Rehearse it several times
- Rehearse the whole talk several times
- Time your talk – remove slides if necessary
  (try not to cut down on introduction or earlier work

When you are standing there

- Be there in time
- Prepare and check the equipment before
- Switch off your 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
- Very many people are nervous, but it hardly ever shows (and **you** are not an exception!)

Good luck!