Tips for Public Speaking

Presentations are mostly practiced by students and professionals, and they are a great way to convey ideas as well as educate and convince people. Giving a presentation is not an easy task; it requires substantial research, organization, public speaking skills, and self-confidence. A good presenter has the ability to engage his or her listeners from beginning to end and compel them to take action (in some cases the action is giving a high grade in CS179!). Here are some useful tips and tricks for effective presentations, as well as links to related websites.

Organizing Your Presentation

- Choose an appropriate presentation structure: topical, chronological, classification by categories, problem and solution, or cause and effect.
- Divide the body of your presentation into three to five main points.
- The conclusion should include a summary of the main points of the presentation and leave the audience with something that is worth remembering and pondering.
- Include questions in your presentation, which should be asked once every 10 minutes to engage the audience.
- The final slide should contain a message thanking the audience, your contact details, and information about the availability of speaker notes, materials, and feedback tools.

Public Speaking Tips

- Avoid slang and jargon. Exception, if you are sure all the audience knows the jargon, such as a technical conference.
- Use anecdotes and practical examples to make complicated concepts more comprehensible.
- Speak in varying tones and pitches to give emphasis to certain words and ideas.
- Deliver your speech slowly and clearly.
- Make sure that the people sitting at the back of the hall can hear you clearly, but do not speak so loud that it appears as if you are shouting.
- Leave your arms on the podium or by your sides when you are not using them to make gestures.
  When gesturing, make sure that it is natural and spontaneous.
- Maintain eye contact with the audience.
- Wear clothes with simple cuts and neutral tones, and make sure that they are comfortable.

Presentation Design

- Do not overload slides with a lot of text. (busy slides)
- Use the PowerPoint Notes (or similar) to remind yourself what to say when a certain slide is being shown.
- Prepare a Table of Contents slide with the “Summary Slide” feature.
- Include a slide that shows your team/company logo.
- Try to make the length of text lines similar throughout the slide.
- Recommended font for slide title is San Serif, and font size should be 44.
  Font size for subtitles should be 28 to 34, with bold font.
- Use dark font over light background and light font over dark background to enhance clarity.
- Use graphics when appropriate, but avoid complex animations unless you really need them.
  (PowerPoint only) You can press “W” or “B” to clear the screen temporarily during your presentation, and resume the presentation by pressing “Enter”.

Charts, Facts, and Statistics

- Use as few numbers as possible during your presentation, preferably, no more than 12 numbers, because they can cause confusion.
- Try not to use more than one number in a sentence.
- Round numbers up to the nearest whole number.
• Use a smaller font to cite sources for statistics.
• Label all your charts clearly.
• Numbers in charts can be difficult to view and understand. Try to find ways other than columns and rows to present your data.