

Basic Guide to Presentations

This is a short list of observations and suggestions for presenters of varying experience. Please feel free to adopt some of these points, or just 'do your own thing'.



Planning & Preparation

- It will take significantly longer to prepare a presentation than it will take to eventually give the presentation.
- Ideally, keep your presentation to a maximum of (say) 1 hour.
- If the presentation is longer than (say) 40 minutes, consider splitting it into two sessions with a break of 5 to 10 minutes between sessions.
- A practice run is probably essential. Consider doing at least one full practice run beforehand by yourself, to make sure that you are happy with the flow of the presentation.
- For online presentations, consider also doing a dummy run online with a 'one-person' audience to make sure the mechanics and links all work, and to check the timings.
- It is often helpful to the audience if you provide the organiser with a PDF (or other suitable format) of the slides you will use (suitably sized), for advance circulation to the audience.
- At the beginning of the presentation, it is useful to show a brief outline (or flowchart) of what the presentation will contain.

Slides

- Conventional displays and talks tend to use A4 display sheets mounted vertically (portrait). Computer screens are a horizontal rectangle, so online displays / talks use horizontal rectangular images.
- It is often better to keep the text on a slide to a minimum ('less is more!').
- If the key item on a slide occupies only a small portion of the slide (such as a postmark or stamp on an envelope), it is usually worth including an enlarged 'cut-out' of the key item somewhere on the slide.
- Colour is useful (some would say essential).

Presentation

- Aim to connect with the audience: face the audience/screen/camera as much as possible; smile from time to time etc.
- It is not uncommon for a presenter to be asked for his/her contact details by someone who wants to do 'follow ups' later.
- If there is a question & answer session, don't be worried about saying "I don't know".