

TALLINNA TEHNIKAÜLIKOOL
TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Recipes for cooking an appealing presentation (for wide public)

Hints about using audio-visual aids
to deliver your research message

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Instead of Introduction

Communication and science

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Winds of change

- Hope in the recent past:
 - We shall enter into a new brave world of information
- Recognised now by many:
 - It turned out to be a world of noise
 - with possibly biased filters
- Search for reliable information
 - Many scientists do it
 - Others hope that at least scientists do so
 - Proper interpretation and wider context becoming increasingly important

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Science, publication, communication

- Science (*scientia* = knowledge) – a **systematic** enterprise that builds and **organizes** knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions (Wikipedia)
- Aristotle: the body of **reliable** knowledge, of the type that can be logically and rationally explained
- Modern use: a **way of pursuing** knowledge, not the knowledge itself.
- A scientific method seeks to explain the events of nature in a **reproducible way**
- Scientific journals **communicate and document** the results of research
- Presentations (both scientific and public): rapid way of **communication**

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Definition of science

[science has always been]

- obtaining new, essential knowledge
- AND communicating it to others
- by reliable, well-documented means
- research papers

What has added nowadays:

- communication to public, stakeholders, policymakers etc.
- in a form understandable to them

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A great motivation for this lecture - advice from Prof. Terry Healy:

Aim for the highest and don't accept anything less

Scientific Presentation with Visual Aids Conference Paper and Poster Presentations

Terry Healy (1944–2010)

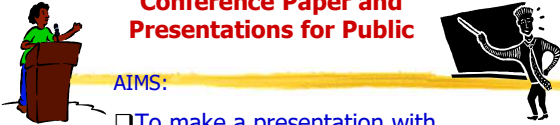
Coastal Marine Group, University of Waikato, NZ
Adjunct Professor, Nanjing University, China
Visiting Professor in Coastal Engineering,
Tallinn University of Technology

coastal marine group
University of Waikato

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Conference Paper and Presentations for Public



AIMS:

- ❑ To make a presentation with maximum impact
- ❑ To minimise avoidable errors

Main issues covered:

- General Points on Visual Aids
- Conference presentations
- Addressing wider public

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What you will NOT learn here

- How to perform your research
 - I assume that there exist enough **rich-in-content and attractive** material for a presentation of your research to wider public
- What exactly is important/hot/promising in your field
 - I assume you are good experts in what you are doing
- How to express yourself in the target language
 - I assume that you have a good command of the language
- Though, there will be hints about the use of commonly accepted styles of presentation

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What you might learn

- Common standards for scientific presentations
- Guidelines for creating (more) professional presentations
- Techniques that help in catching the eyes of public
- Recommendations about the (mis)use of text and illustrations
- BUT this all is just "technology"

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Visual aids

Supporting your message

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Introduction – Visual Aids: Some General Points

- Oral & poster presentations are an important requirement for many professional careers
- Crucial for dissemination of your results to interested public & third persons
- **People remember more of what they see**
 - Hearing & seeing together is most effective
 - Presentations are interactive, and
 - They provide a way to market yourself

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The most important points: shortly

- Ignored amazingly often in conference presentations

"Before I speak, I have something important to say." - Groucho Marx
- Ignored annoyingly often in presentations to public

What I speak has to reach the audience
- Ignored almost totally

It is the responsibility of the speaker that what he/she speaks actually reaches the audience

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The most important points: shortly

1. The content
(good science)
2. The content
(put into a wider context)
3. The content
(shown how it changes the world)

NB! The world of the audience – not your world!
Nobody in the audience cares about your world

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Corollary 1

- Good science is a necessary precondition of a good (science-conference) presentation
- But not sufficient for a good presentation to public
- You **MUST** have something more
 - a **message** changing the world
 - a **broad view** on things
 - ability **to deliver** the message

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Corollary 2 (frustrating statistics)

- PhD students & post-docs
 - Have to extensively train for each conference presentation
 - normally no chance to deliver a good talk to the public
 - unless severely trained & the presentation polished by the seniors
 - and not every PhD student has such a senior around
- Senior scientists
 - Usually provide perfect conference presentations
 - Not trained for public presentations
 - Annoyingly often think they can speak to the public
 - But only ~1/4 of them have at least limited success

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A detour

Skeleton of scientific communication

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The importance of the message

- A scientific publication ~ presentation = making public something important and new
- This means: the authors understand what they do; and
 - are able to express it properly
- A paper = proof that the story is true

Formulating THE MESSAGE for a paper

- Make sure that the material has (some) impact
- Formulate clearly WHY you write this paper
 - Maximally 3-4 lines
 - Oversimplify if necessary – but make the point very clear
 - **Hint: Think of one sentence to describe this paper after 10 years**
- Estimate where the impact could be
 - (is there at least one potential reader in the world?)

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Example of a good message

While the subject is not new (transfer of offshore wave information to a more coastal location),

we have done a keen analysis of the accuracy involved in the process, **focused** on the transfer of information at the border.

The analysis **shows** that the commonly used practice of [...] is **prone to lead to a non negligible underestimate of the conditions at the coast.**

The use of 2D spectra as boundary information is highly recommended. At a lower rate, also using 1D spectra may lead to underestimate. This is also true if the offshore information is provided by a model different by the one locally used.

L.Bertotti and L.Cavaleri, Journal of Marine Systems

You have to know what you are doing

The key outcome: why do you write

Why this is important? How it can be used?

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The appearance of the message may vary

We develop a modified measure of compressibility of sea surface
 reflecting clustering of tracers
 and calculate compressibility maps for the Gulf of Finland in a systematic manner
 Kalda et al., Journal of Marine Systems, on-line

A new measure to quantify something what we can commonly observe

The key outcome: maps of this measure calculated

A new measure is always important

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The eternal problem of egg & hen solved

- A good & clear message exists before a good presentation
- The presentation == a story you tell
- with an important point about which the audience cares
 - Not a report of your work
 - Nobody cares about your thesis or paper
 - Nobody cares how hardly you worked
 - Nobody is interested in details
 - Everybody only wants to know how this story may change, enrich or destroy his/her life

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The importance of planning or the difference between a human and monkey?

- No field of research is superior to other fields
 - Forget the eternal fight between basic and applied research
- There is only good research and poor research
- A good research has a good plan
 - A premise (=an assumption that something is true)
 - Developing a theory
 - Designing of experiments (field/device/computer)
 - To prove or disprove the premise
 - in a reproducible way
- This completes a STORY: a printed paper is a good story you tell to your remote friends and colleagues
- A story has an essence or message or moral
- A good presentation: expresses a good & valuable message

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Convert the message to a story

- Start from the 3-4 line message
- Make a roadmap
 - write down a list of topics/themes/points
 - to be presented or proved consecutively
 - These themes/points will serve as starting points of sub-sections
- Separate
 - what other experts probably know
 - what is, technically, new but easy-to-reproduce or learn
 - e.g. wind speed or temperature tomorrow
 - where is the key development

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House of Lords or House of Commons?

The role of organisation

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Catching the audience == organising the material properly

<p>Inductive pattern</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General sense/main topic 2. Specific instances, examples, evidence 3. leading to the conclusion (not easy to follow, used if you need to specifically convince the audience) 	<p>Deductive pattern</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bottom line (conclusion or solution) at the onset 2. Background & information that led you this 3. conclusion (helps the audience to follow the speaker)
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Both versions: big picture first

If you cannot present this in attractive and understandable (for the audience!!) way, the presentation is useless


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The role of motivation in Big Picture

- Extends the "bottom line"
- Explains why you give this presentation
- What the audience may learn from it
- Which gap in knowledge it fills
- Which new aspect it introduces
- Which problem (of the audience) is solved

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An example of motivation of a presentation about coastal processes



Akmenrags (Stone Cape) lighthouse (Latvia) built in 1921 on the top of dunes

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An example of motivation of a presentation about coastal processes II




Originally within the dunes, stripped by the end of 1990s

The dunes protecting it from the sea are gradually losing sand

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An example of motivation of a presentation about coastal processes III



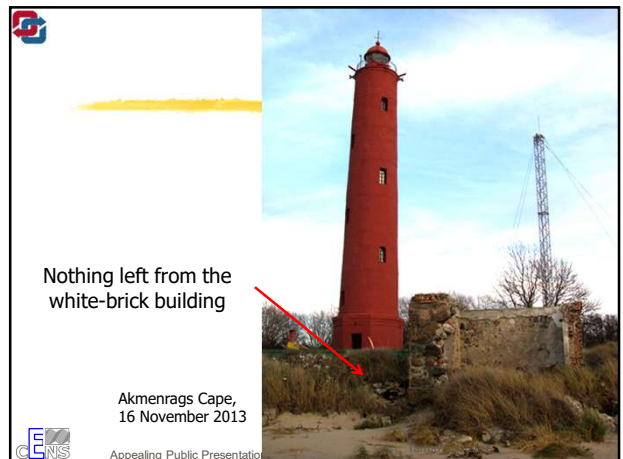
The loss of sand led to collapse of a part of the building in 2005

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Not much is left from the structure today

Akmenrags Cape, 16 November 2013



Nothing left from the white-brick building

Akmenrags Cape, 16 November 2013

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A good motivation

- Intriguing
 - A little bit shocking or provocative
- Personally relevant to many
- Scientifically correct
 - albeit severely oversimplified
 - or the used example over-generalised
- Visually attractive
 - **NO DETAILS; JUST THE CONCEPT/EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATED**
- Short
 - (max 90 seconds for 15-min presentation)
 - People do recognise a photo & 5-7 words in 10-15 seconds
- Concentrates the attention
- A suitable platform for the formulation of the main topic, question or message of the presentation

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Structuring

- Similar to dividing the paper into sections
- Gives time for the audience
- Gets back to the track those who have been lost
- (Serves as aid for the speaker)
- Relaxes the atmosphere; prepares for new ideas
- Use massively suitable & attractive photo art

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Part I


Waves on our sea



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Part IV

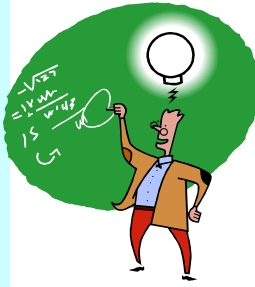
Pollution at the coast



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Presentation Content

- Define purpose, topic & appropriate depth/scope of information
- Keep narrow focus & avoid excessive detail
- "Equations" slow down a presentation
 - Require more definition & explanation
 - Well placed in local seminar presentations
 - **NEVER use for wider public**
- Hallmark of successful presentations is **clarity**



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Scientific and public presentation

- Classical style, careful choice of words
- Table of contents
- Motivation for research
- Presentation (short) of material, methods
- A few complicated graphs or images possible
- Several conclusions
- Future research
- Based on 1/2 research papers

- A bit of provocativeness
- Strong motivation for wider audience
- Only referring to very basic concepts (if at all)
- No details
- **ONLY** self-explaining graphs
- You explain their meaning
- Max 1-2 points: unexpected, counter-intuitive, provocative
- Based on many (5-10) research papers

Imperative for both: scientific correctness

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Visual aids

Extensively used in both scientific / conference and public presentations

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Why use Visual Aids?

They help you to deliver your MESSAGE

“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler”
- Albert Einstein

The point of using presentation // visual aids

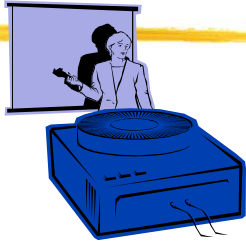
- Visual aids should enhance, support, exemplify and/or facilitate understanding of material covered
 - Will it add to your presentation?
 - Does it relate to material covered?
 - Is graphic quality acceptable?
- The Answer must be **YES** to all 3 questions!

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Presenting visual aids

- Don't read visual aids
- Rehearse with your visual aids
- Use visual aids that are appropriate for technology available & speaking environment
- Today most common is Powerpoint



“The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public” - George Jessel

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Oral delivery

- Studies have shown that for interpersonal communication
 - 55% due to facial expressions & body language
 - 38% due to vocal quality or tone of voice
 - 7% due to actual meaning of words
- So it's mostly **how** you say it, not what you say
- Avoid distracting mannerisms




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Brevity

- Information presented should be brief & concise.
- Use comprehensible format & mould phrases to minimum number of words
 - No more than 36 words per slide (6 lines of 6 words)
 - Pie charts for percentages
 - Histograms for comparisons and rankings
 - Line graphs for changes over time
 - Scatter plots for correlation




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Legibility

If a visual aid isn't visible and legible, it isn't an aid!

- Visual aids must be legible & clearly visible
 - Left justify text (makes it easier to distinguish lines)
 - Use a uniform, bold typeface
 - A combination of upper and lowercase is easier to read (Don't use all UPPERCASE)



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The machinery

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Conference Papers - Preparation

- Public speaking is Number One fear
 - Good preparation can reduce stress & stop you looking foolish
- Key elements – relate to:
 - Audience type
 - Content
 - Draft talk?
 - Timing
 - Special requirements
 - Practice, practice, practice, ...
 - Dress & appearance

“I’m rather like a mosquito in a nudist camp: I know what I ought to do, but I don’t know where to begin.” - Stephen Bayne

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Creating a Powerpoint Presentation

www.dilbert.com scottadam@aol.com

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

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Creating a classic Powerpoint Presentation

- Presentation should include:
 - Explicit title – include institution logo
 - Introduction – aims, scope of the presentation
 - Body of paper (methods, results)
 - Conclusions
 - Acknowledgements
 - (sponsors)

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Remember:


- Make every word count
- Use simple, direct, active words
- Keep language as straightforward as possible
- Simplify phrases, use summary form
- If you can delete a word without changing meaning, do it
- Use “equations” carefully
- No ‘autosave’ function on Power Point – so save your work regularly

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Keep to time

- Conference time usually 15-20 minutes for presentation
- It is **EXTREMELY RUDE** to exceed your allotted time
 - This is even worse if you speak to wider public
- Speaking fast does not compensate for including too much material
- Plan to talk for less than allotted time
 - Never finish with "OK, I think I'll stop here."



"Be sincere; be brief; be seated." - Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Common Errors in PPT slides

- Too much information in space available
- Diagrams overly documented
- Lettering too small to read
- Too much details to absorb
- Spelling mistakes
- Reading each line "verbatim"

Whatever it says
in whatever language
it is not readable


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Laineenergia potentsiaal
Laineenergia teoreetiline koguvõimsus Läänemere idaosas ~1500 MW

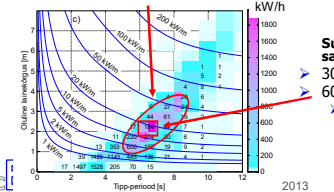
- Eesti (läänerrannik) 400 MW
- Soome laht 200 MW
- Varieerub tugevasti piki rannikut:
 - Suurimad keskmised väärtused Saaremaa & Hiiumaa lähistel: ~2,5 kW/m

Parim laineenergia ressurss & konverteerite valik

- Suurema osa aastasesst koguenegiast transportivad randa lained:
 - kõrgusega ~2-4 m, periood 6-8 s



Keskmine võimsus: varieerub kuni 5x



Suur hulk aastasesst laineenergiast saabub mõne tormiga:

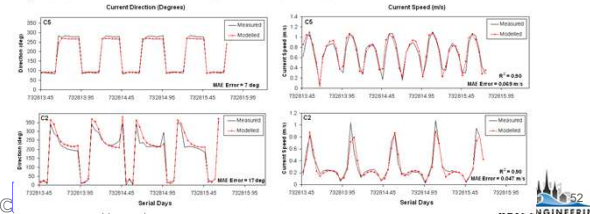
- 30% aastasesst enegiast 3-4 päevaga
- 60% aastasesst enegiast ~20 päevaga
- Seetõttu praktiline kasutamine raskendatud

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Common Errors in PPT slides

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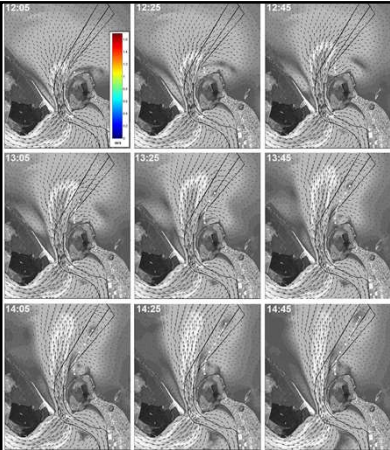
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Whatever it says
in whatever language
it is not readable

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Too much detail to absorb!



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Common Errors in PPT slides

- Too much information in space available
- Diagrams overly documented
- Lettering too small to read
- Too much details to absorb
- **Spelling mistakes**
- Reading each line "verbatim"

The substance was coal
The substance was cool
To asses [---].

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Common Errors in PPT slides

- Too much information in space available
- Diagrams overly documented
- Lettering too small to read
- Too much details to absorb
- Spelling mistakes
- Reading each line "verbatim"

Prepare, if necessary, a different text for each slide and read this!!

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Common Sense Tips for Slide Preparation - 1

- Keep the slide simple
- Only ~ 6 lines per slide
- Test your slides and presentation beforehand – e.g. in front of a mirror
- Check slides are in correct sequence
- Do not apologise for incomplete material (i.e. ensure it is complete!)
- Talk to the slides - Do not read your slides "verbatim"

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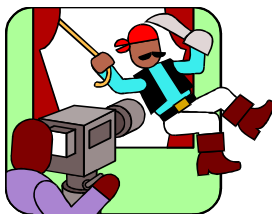
Common Sense Tips for Slide Presentation - 2

- Speak slowly and clearly - Avoid nervous "fast-speak"
- Avoid too many slides
- Stick to the time allowed
- Cast your voice to the back of the room
- Maintain eye contact with the audience
- Avoid distracting mannerisms ("ums" and "ahs", scratching, random movement of laser pointer)
- Avoid "Backsiders and Block'em" disease
- End the talk with carefully prepared conclusions

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Special requirements


- Check features of presentation room
 - Are there problems you need to rectify?
 - Do you require special equipment or assistance?
 - Try to practice your presentation in final room
 - Check visual aids ...



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Comprehensibility

- 2 or 3 facts per image is best
 - 6 is absolute maximum
- Don't use too much visual material
 - 5-8 images every 10 minutes is optimal



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Colour issues



- Use colour for emphasis, distinction & clarity
 - Yellow & bright blue are good background colours
 - Combine complementary colours
 - Blue with orange
 - Blue-violet with yellow-orange
 - Violet with yellow
 - Note: About 10% of males are colour-blind

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Most Important Final Points:

- **Be well prepared** with your presentation
- **Practise** your presentation
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Keep to your allotted time
- Do not include too much detailed material – summarise major points
- Do not read the slide “verbatim”
- Avoid distractions
- End with carefully prepared conclusions

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If you want to make at least something clear:
Basics of (wave) climate change

- The core signal **Change in (wind) direction**
- Character **Spatially extremely variable**
Decadal-scale variability!
- Time scale **Abrupt,**
Down to ~1 year

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At least structure your end points

Lessons from wave observations and simulations covering seven decades in the Baltic Sea

- Substantially different courses in wave properties in different (sub)basins
 - Single-point measurements may be deceptive
 - **Reversed ice-hockey-stick curve**
- Wind direction often plays a larger role than wind speed
 - Increase in extremes on the background of decrease in the average wave heights possible
- Radical changes (to wave climate) may be sharp and occur within just one year

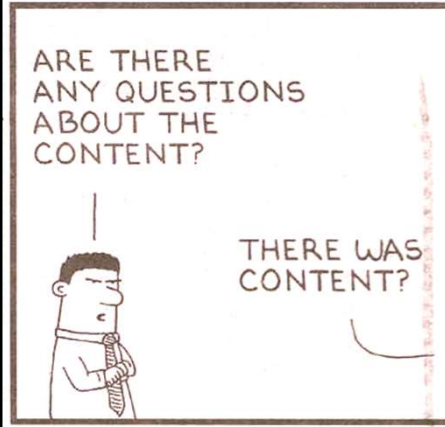
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Finish!? – Actually not yet

- Finish your slides with thanks’
- optionally with a nice (but relevant!) image
- **NEVER** say: “If there are some questions, I shall be happy to answer”

Why? – A couple of examples

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ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONTENT?

THERE WAS CONTENT?

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A question that is often relevant

"Did you skip over the interesting parts of your talk on purpose?"

Ted Goff. © 2002 Reprinted with permission.

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Finish!? – Actually not yet

- Finish your slides with thanks'
- optionally with a nice (but relevant!) image
- **NEVER** say: "If there are some questions, I shall be happy to answer"
- This will be said by the chairperson
- You are expected to take questions

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Question & Answer sessions

- Repeat or restate question
 - Not everyone may have heard it
 - Gives you time to think & plan the answer
- Respond simply & directly
- Don't bluff or get angry
- Respond even if material was covered in presentation
- For advanced speakers: The question you answer is not necessarily the question that was asked

"It takes three weeks to prepare a good ad-lib speech." - Mark Twain

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Poster Presentations

- Increasingly common at conferences
- Considered to be less formal & encourage interaction
- Facilitates transfer of complex material, especially across language barriers
- Harder to do well than oral presentations
 - Less affected by body language & vocal tone

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Planning a poster

- Consider your topic & list questions for yourself
 - What ...
 - How ...
 - Why ...
- Prioritise answers based on:
 - What are you trying to achieve with your poster?
 - Who will be attending the presentation

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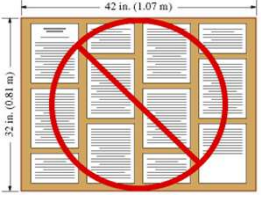
Poster contents

- Key components
 - Title - including author(s) & affiliation
 - Abstract or summary
 - Introduction
 - Methods
 - Results
 - Conclusions
 - Many people will read abstract & conclusions first
- Secondary components
 - Site description
 - References
 - Include key references on poster
 - Provide handout with all references
 - Acknowledgements
 - Photograph of presenter
 - So interested people can find you

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Poster design

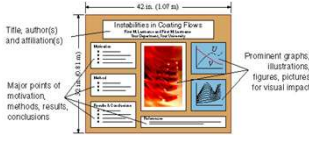
- Keep material simple
- Use colour carefully
- Do not use more than 2 font types
- Make all text legible from a distance of **2 m**
- Do not use all UPPER CASE type
- Use **bold**, *italics*, or underline to emphasise text



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Poster design continued

- Title must be eye-catching from a distance
- Use colour with care
- A picture is worth a 1000 words - if it is appropriate
- Check your spelling
- Arrange poster components in a smooth logical pattern
 - Can use arrows to show sequence around the poster



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Software

- Microsoft PowerPoint
 - Handles many design issues automatically
 - Stick to defaults
 - Includes a spelling checker
 - Does not 'autosave' so save your work frequently
 - Can be used to prepare both oral & poster presentations
 - Define a custom paper size to generate a large poster

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Hardware

- A0 printer
 - Posters can be assembled from A4 or A3 sheets attached to a backing, or pinned directly
 - Entire posters up to A0 can be printed & laminated
 - Expensive & cannot be rearranged easily

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Hardware

- Laptop
 - Check it connects before the presentation
- USB
- CD – becoming obsolete
- Floppy disk – virtually obsolete

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