Presentation 101

CHECKLIST, DOS AND DON'TS

PREPARED BY: VIKASH KUMAR, VIMALA S, AND V. KRISHNA NANDIVADA

WITH INPUTS FROM: GIRISH BALAKRISHNAN, SAURAV CHAKRABORTY, AKSHAY GUPTA, SARATHI K, JASH KHATRI, AND MANO KUMAR

PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

Slides related.
- ☐ **Title slide**: It has the full title and the complete author list.
- ☐ **Slide titles:** Each slide has an appropriate title.
- ☐ **Slide content:** Contents of each slide is coherent, clear, and concise.
- ☐ **Crisp points:** Long sentences are shortened into short and crisp bulleted points, to be elaborated in the presentation.
- ☐ **Text vs. figure:** Figures are used instead of using a wall of text, wherever possible.
- ☐ **Take-away:** The takeaway(s) in slides with charts/plots is (are) clearly mentioned.
- ☐ **Visibility:** During the full-screen presentation, images are not pixelated, and the text is readable from a distance.
- ☐ **Figures:** Important parts of the figures are highlighted to draw attention easily.
- ☐ **Examples:** Examples are used to illustrate, wherever necessary.
- ☐ **Spell-check:** Slides have been checked for typographical mistakes (using a spell checker).
- ☐ **Dead-links:** All media are appropriately linked (no dead-links) and show up as expected.
- ☐ **Navigation:** If it is required to navigate to non-consecutive slides, clickable links are provided in the slides to go back and forth.
- ☐ **Thank-you slide:** The talk ends with the conclusion slide, with a simple "Thank you" note, rather than a fancy standalone "Thank you" slide, which has no use.

Technical Content related.
- ☐ **Breadth vs Depth, Clarity Vs Content:** The slides have a good balance between breadth-wise and depth-wise content. It is better to convey a few points in a clear manner than to convey a lot of things in vagueness.
- ☐ **Technical content:** The presentation includes sufficient motivation, necessary background, relevant prior work and future work details.
- ☐ **Evaluation:** Evaluation criteria and methodology are conveyed clearly.
- ☐ **Pros and Cons:** The presentation covers both pros (advantages) and cons (limitations).

THE DOs WHEN GIVING A PRESENTATION

- **Welcome.** Briefly greet the crowd and introduce yourself before starting the presentation.
- **Start well.** Start the presentation fluently without fumbling for words.
- **Motivate.** Motivate the problem well to grab and hold the attention of the audience.
- **Use outline.** Use agenda/outline-slides for transitioning from one "section" to another.
- **Use correct language.** Use grammatically correct sentences during the talk.
- **Appropriately highlight.** Use pointers to highlight specific things on the screen.
- **Evaluate carefully.** Explain the various parameters mentioned in the tables, flowcharts, graphs, comparison of results, etc.
- **Be confident.** Maintain proper body language throughout the presentation.
- **Eye contact.** Keep eye contact with the audience.
- **Interact.** If possible, occasionally pause and engage the audience by asking questions.
- **Understand questions.** When anyone asks a question, make sure you understand the question before answering. There's no harm in requesting to repeat the question.
- **Carefully answer.** After answering, make sure you have clarified the questioner's concern. If cannot clarify, then it is okay to suggest taking the question offline.
- **Be humble.** If you don't know the answer, admit it. Try to answer, but don't makeup. Go to the next question.
- **Plan.** Plan your slides with the thumb rule that #total slides ≤ #allotted minutes.
- **Mock presentation.** Give multiple mock presentations till you are comfortable with the presentation, and the presentation finishes within the allotted time.

THE DON'Ts WHEN PREPARING/GIVING A PRESENTATION

Slides Related. DO NOT
- **copy-paste.** Avoid copy-pasting screenshots of images/text/code/algorithms as much as possible. If unavoidable, use high-resolution images with clear information about their credits.
- **miss labels.** Don't provide a graph without axes and labels defined.
- **blind with pointer.** Don't wave the pointer all over the screen / audience unnecessarily.
- **use childish fonts.** Don't use too many font sizes/colours in a single line. Avoid tiny/huge fonts.
- **missing Flow.** Don't arrange the slides in such a way that it breaks the flow of presentation.
- **pack slides.** Don't put too much information in a single slide.
- **keep dead slide.** Don't put a slide that you do not intend to explain.
- **use fancy acronyms.** Don't use un-expanded / unexplained acronyms in the slides.

Presentation related. DO NOT
- **read aloud.** Avoid reading text (verbatim) from the slides.
- **assume complex ideas.** Don't use complex formulas without providing an intuition.
- **long-pause.** Avoid taking long awkward pauses during the presentation.
- **forget time.** Don't talk too fast or too slow. Maintain a constant pace during the presentation.
- **hurry.** Don't try to interrupt when a question is being asked. Let the person finish the question before starting to answer.