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INRIA, Lorraine

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How to give a good talk
facets, and then to zoom in on what I believe is the real
answer.

In essence, this talk is an attempt to isolate a few of these
makes a talk good.

And it is even harder to stand back and pin down what it is that
Because I like giving good talks — but this isn’t always easy.

Because I like listening to good talks.

Because Raffaella Bernardi asked me to.

... Why I am giving this talk
How to Give a Good Talk. I give an answer which I believe works.

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is important to think about them. Nonetheless, it

questions is what ultimately leads to good talks. Nonetheless, it

questions, and I don’t even believe that finding answers to these

questions, and I don’t even believe that finding answers to these

don’t believe there are one-size-fits-all answers to these

• How to Give a Talk. A series of questions for you to ponder. I

The talk has two main parts:

• Where we are Going today...
Project appraisal?

Job talk?

Student session at ESSL?

To explain your work to a general audience?

To explain your work to an audience of specialists?

What is the talk for?
How should I present the talk?

- Beamer?
- Slides?
- Blackboard?
- Handout?
- Read a paper?
there special cases which reveal the key idea?

Do I really need to prove the theorem in full generality, or are clear?

make my point about long distance dependencies in old Adaptations so many detailed sequent-calculus proofs to structure?

Do I really need 15 slides containing very large feature?

Is my talk too detailed?
nothing but the bald assertion of generalities?

Am I really a good enough speaker to pull off a talk based upon

Is my talk detailed enough?
I start with the example? Should there be enough examples? Are there more concrete, to ensure ...

Isn’t there a way of making my talk more concrete? Isn’t there a way of making my talk more concrete?

basic ideas?

Have I really tried hard enough to make the audience feel the

Is my presentation vivid?
Have I linked forward, and linked back?

— Say that you've said it.
— Say it.
— Say what you're going to say.

Have I paid attention to the following slogan:

Does the audience know where I'm heading?
presence felt. if you’ve done your job properly.

— but the parts that you’ve had to leave out make their

story.

A good talk is like that: it’s a condensation of a much longer

Ishikawa: ninety percent of it was invisible.

E. Hemingway said that a good short story was like an

Do I have an iceberg?
Know when to stop.

Short talks are often the best ones.

Fundamental contract you have with the audience:

Most of the time at least, don’t overrun — it breaks the

Have I managed my time?
Do I feel comfortable here, and if not, what can I do about it?

Do you know your space?

Am I using my space?
Your presentation.
In your talk — and it handled right, this can lend spontaneity to
sometimes it's an indication that there's something unresolved
Try to learn to use it.

What if I get nervous?
that made you like (or dislike) a particular presentation.

Look at other speakers. Try and pin down exactly what it was.

Experiment.

Finally
Better to ask: where do good talks come from?

So: how do I give a good talk?

bad on. you give a good talk. At best they may stop you from giving a mistake. a wise choice from these options won't guarantee that these are just safety nets.

But we're only scratching at the surface
Let’s go back to basics

- We are all researchers here, some just starting out, others more experienced.
- Our job is to isolate interesting questions, find out what’s already known about them, and then try to contribute something original ourselves.
- Moreover, we have to communicate what we’re doing to fellow researchers.
- The basis of successful communication is honesty, and honesty comes into play at a number of levels.
is self-defeating, at both the personal and public levels. Ideas seem deeper and more complex than they really are. This requires honesty — it can be tempting to try and make your work — and get it across in the simplest form possible. This is a strength, as well as its weaknesses. Because good communicators talk about the weaknesses of their work, as well as providing answers, good talks generate questions, as well as providing answers.

Presenting ideas honestly
Likely to be...

...to a communicative act, the more interesting the results are
understand why it works — and the more we bring of ourselves
But we do know how to use language, even if we don’t fully
knows, the deeper workings of language remain a mystery.
It is not really clear why that happens. As everyone at ESSL
effective.
communicative union that is both serious and highly
A good talk brings the speaker and the audience into a
deep.

But honesty enters into communicatation at sti;
Honesty is about getting in touch with your iceberg.

Informing what you say, and enabling the audience to tune in.

Working on — and in a good talk, that iceberg is there, it adds up to a unique perspective on the problem you are studying. The researchers you have worked with, your background, your friends, your family — and your teachers, your everyone has their own iceberg. It made up of your cultural your talk. The iceberg is not simply the details you had to leave out of

Here comes that iceberg again...
A good talk packs up your previous experiences (in December) and transfers them to a wider audience.

A good department is an environment where communication happens more or less effortlessly.

A good department is an environment where communication maximizes the chances that these will occur.

Honest communication leads to truly new insights.

And this is what science is all about.
their own interests.

offers a real chance of conveying your ideas to busy people with

Most importantly, this approach is the only one I know that

shortcomings if they see this.

communicate, and will forgive/overlook presentation

They know when someone is making a genuine effort to

Audience like honesty.

And there's something in this for you
reaching your audience as honestly as you can.

At the end of the day, a good talk is all about

the trees. At the end of the day, a good talk is all about

math, and don’t miss the wood for

forget to experiment with them — but don’t miss the wood for

So by all means work on your presentation skills — and don’t

communicate.

A good talk should never stray too far from simple honest

Poetry should never stray too far from the spoken word (Pound)

Music should never stray too far from dance (Stravinsky).

Summing up