

# Class Presentations

... or “How to give a bad talk”

# Class Presentations

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- ▶ **Don't get too stressed out about presenting!**
  - ▶ The objective of this course is for everyone to develop a better understanding of these topics
  - ▶ Some topics can be hard to digest, and different people will pick up on different things, so it helps to discuss them with a diverse group



# Class Presentations

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- ▶ **Use all available resources**
  - ▶ Feel free to work with other presentations that you might find
  - ▶ **BUT**, do not rely on other people's work
    - ▶ Enhance with your own thoughts and ideas
    - ▶ Make sure you understand everything on all of your slides



# How to give a bad presentation ...

Robin's 12+ Commandments  
(adapted from David Patterson's "How to give a bad talk" )

# How to Give a Bad Talk

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## I. Thou shalt not be prepared

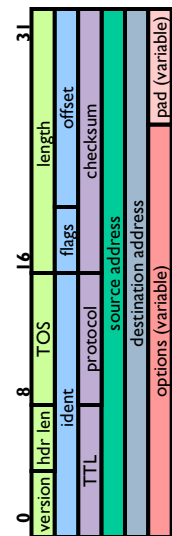
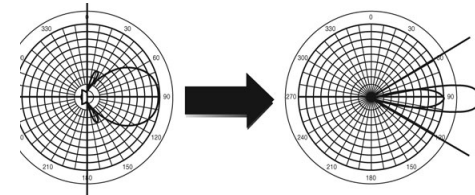
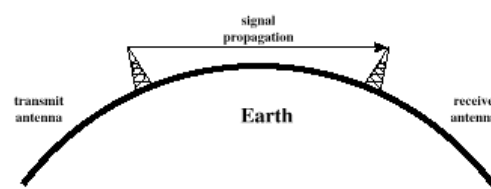
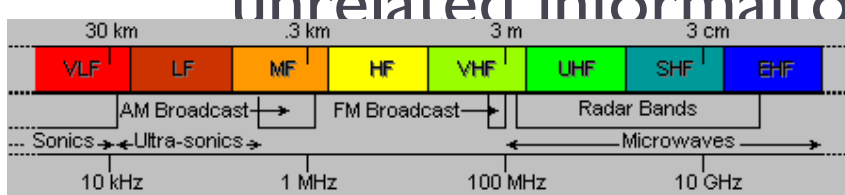
- ▶ Why waste research time preparing slides?
- ▶ There are billions of people in the world. Who cares what 20 people think?
- ▶ Caveat: Though shalt not be neat
  - ▶ Ignore spelling and grammar
  - ▶ **USE ILLEGIBLE FONTS**



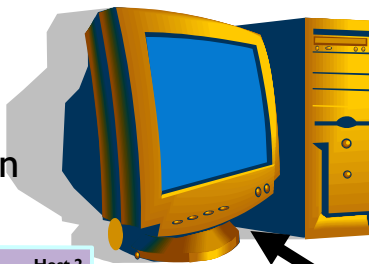
# How to Give a Bad Talk

## II. Thou shalt not waste space

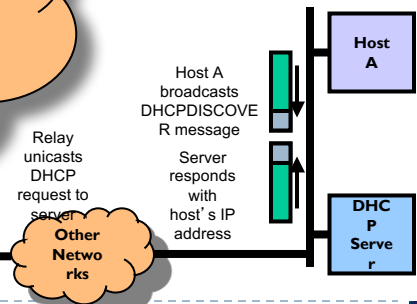
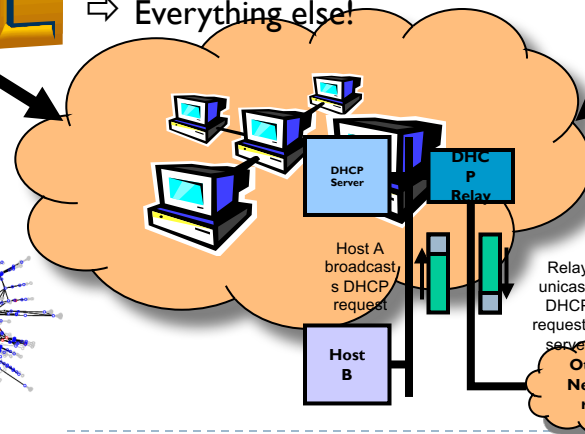
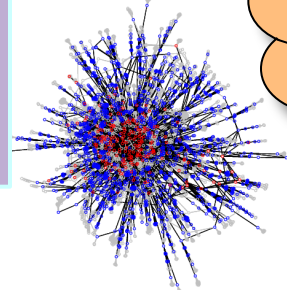
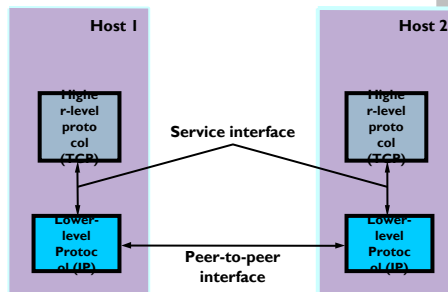
- ▶ No one likes white space
- ▶ Fill in any extra space you may have on a slide with unrelated information



Physical  
Data Link  
Network  
Transport  
Session  
Presentation  
Application



- ▶ How to transmit bits
- ▶ How to transmit frames
- ▶ How to route packets
- ▶ How to send packets
- ▶ How to group data
- ▶ How to format data
- ▶ Everything else!



# How to Give a Bad Talk

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## III. Thou shalt not covet brevity

- ▶ Read every word on your slide
- ▶ Always use complete sentences, never just key words
  - ▶ Sentence fragments make you look illiterate
- ▶ Caveat: Avoid moving content to “backup slides”
  - ▶ You probably won’t get a chance to show them

# How to Give a Bad Talk

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## IV. Thou shalt cover thy naked slides

- ▶ You need the suspense!
- ▶ If they know the point before you make it
  - ▶ May think they could have figured it out themselves
- ▶ Caveat: Thou shalt use annoying animations



Powerpoint is cool

Use it to its full potential!



- ▶ Caveat: Thou shalt blind and nauseate your audience with a laser pointer



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## V. Thou shalt not write large

- ▶ Be humble -- use a small font
- ▶ Important people sit in front
- ▶ Who cares about the riff-raff?



# How to Give a Bad Talk

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## VI. Thou shalt not use color

- ▶ Flagrant use of color indicates uncareful research
- ▶ It's also unfair to emphasize some words over others

## VII. Thou shalt not use a good color scheme

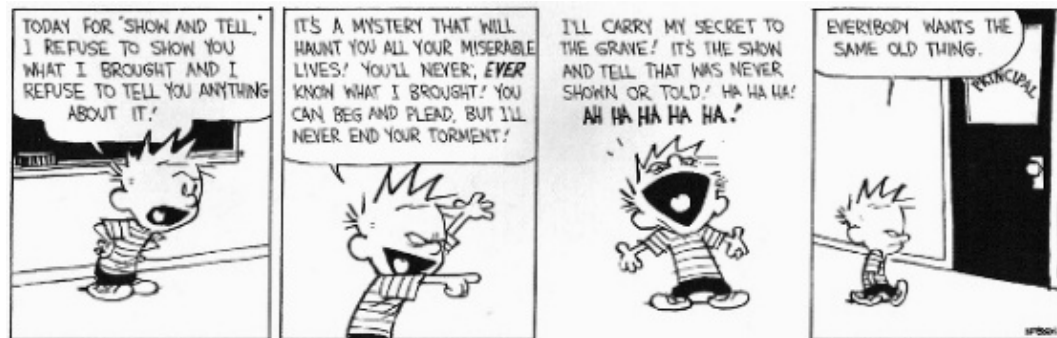
- ▶ Make every word a different color
- ▶ Use colors that can't be seen on the screen



# How to Give a Bad Talk

## VIII. Thou shalt not illustrate

- ▶ Confucius says “A picture = 10K words,”
- ▶ Dijkstra says “Pictures are a crutch for weak minds.”
- ▶ If you must use illustrations, don’t explain them.



- ▶ Caveat: Thou shalt not draw on your slides
  - ▶ Slides are a work of art, do not deface them!

# How to Give a Bad Talk

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## IX. Thou shalt not make eye contact

- ▶ You should avert eyes to show respect
  - ▶ Blocking screen can also add mystery
  - ▶ You should read from your computer
  - ▶ You should turn your back on the audience
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- ▶ Caveat: Thou shalt point to your computer
    - ▶ Everyone knows what you are pointing to



# How to Give a Bad Talk

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- ✗. **Thou shalt not skip slides in a long talk**
  - ▶ You prepared the slides; people came for your whole talk; so just talk faster
  - ▶ Skip summary and conclusions if necessary
  
- ▶ **Caveat: Thou shalt not plan for Q&A**
  - ▶ Don't repeat questions
  - ▶ Start talking quickly
  - ▶ Don't cut discussion short
  - ▶ When in doubt, bluff
  - ▶ Universal answer
    - Dismiss question as irrelevant/naïve



# How to Give a Bad Talk

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## XI. Thou shalt speak neither clearly nor loudly

- ▶ Important people sit in front
- ▶ Don't use a microphone
- ▶ Let the people in the back read the slides
- ▶ Caveat: Thou shalt not distract your audience
  - ▶ Do not distract with motion
  - ▶ Keep voice level
  - ▶ Do not ask rhetorical questions
  - ▶ Do not use humor



# How to Give a Bad Talk

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## XII. Thou shalt not practice

- ▶ Why waste research time practicing a talk?
- ▶ It could take several hours out of your semester
- ▶ How can you appear spontaneous if you practice?
- ▶ If you do practice, argue with any suggestions you get and make sure your talk is longer than the time you have to present it



# How to Give a Presentation: Structure

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## Bad Talk

- ▶ Launch into the material without stating goals or purpose
- ▶ End abruptly after your last point
- ▶ Throughout, keep your audience clueless about what you are doing and why

## Good Talk

- ▶ Give your talk a beginning, a middle, and an end
- ▶ Summarize scope and goals
- ▶ Main concepts and conclusions
- ▶ Summarize points you would like to see the audience go away with
- ▶ Provide pointers to additional information





# How to Give a Presentation: Scope

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## Bad Talk

- ▶ Attempt to cover far more material than is practical
- ▶ End the talk abruptly halfway through your material
- ▶ Be really, really speedy to make sure every detail is covered

## Good Talk

- ▶ Carefully scope what you can cover
- ▶ Allocate time for questions and discussion.
- ▶ One concept every 5 minutes is a reasonable rule of thumb.
- ▶ Motivate the audience to learn more about the topic on their own
  - ▶ Rather than attempting to teach them everything in the talk itself



# How to Give a Presentation: Audience

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## Bad Talk

- ▶ **Ignore your audience**
  - ▶ Target the talk to your knowledge, sophistication and interests, and ignore that of the audience
  - ▶ Either bore the audience to death, or impress them with a snow job
  - ▶ Don't be concerned whether the audience comes away with new knowledge or renewed interest or enthusiasm about anything you have said

## Good Talk

- ▶ **Know your audience**
  - ▶ How much do they already know about the subject?
  - ▶ How much background do they have to understand the subject?
  - ▶ From their perspective, what are they likely to find interesting and exciting?
  - ▶ How much diversity is there in the audience?
  - ▶ Can you provide something of value for both the well-informed and the clueless?



# How to Give a Presentation: Visual Aides

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## Bad Talk

- ▶ Bombard your audience with lots of text on slides, so as to force them to choose between listening to you or reading
- ▶ Don't waste your time on pictures and figures

## Good Talk

- ▶ The written word and the spoken word clash
  - ▶ Rely primarily on the spoken word (this is a talk, after all)
- ▶ The spoken word and images and pictures reinforce each other
  - ▶ Come up with a visual representation of your concepts to work your words around

