

final comments....

All talks are important

There are no unimportant talks.

There are no big or small audiences.

Prepare each talk with the same enthusiasm.

If you are giving the same talk multiple times, it is helpful to do minor changes. This way you engage with the content again.

Talking

Bad news first:

The more you work on a talk, the better it gets...

But the good news:

People usually forget bad talks (unless it is a job talk), and remember only the best talks...

How to give a talk

Delivering:

Stand up

Look at the audience! Try not to talk to your laptop or to the screen. Instead, look at the other humans in the room.

You have to believe in what you present, be confident... even if it only lasts for the time of your presentation.

Do not be afraid to acknowledge limitations of whatever you are presenting. Limitations are good. They leave job for the people to come. Trying to hide the problems in your work will make the preparation of the talk a lot harder and your self confidence will be hurt.

How to give a talk

Talk organization: here there are as many theories as there are talks. Here there are some extreme advices:

1. Go into details / only big picture
2. Go in depth on a single topic / cover as many things as you can
3. Be serious (never make jokes, maybe only one) / be funny (it is just another form of theater)

Corollary: ask people for advice, but at the end, it will be just you and the audience. Choose what fits best your style.

What everybody agrees on is that you have to practice in advance (the less your experience, the more you have to practice). Do it with an audience or without, but practice.

The best advice I got came from Yair Weiss while preparing my job talk:

“just give a good talk”

How to give the project class talk

Initial conditions:

- I started with a great idea
- It did not work
- The day before the presentation I found 40 papers that already did this work
- Then I also realized that the idea was not so great

How do I present?

- Just give a good talk

Knowing when things “work”

- In research “work” means something different depending on the context. For a well defined problem, does it work better than previous results? For a new problem, does it show promise?
- Do not get scared by failures in your method. Do not hide them. Failures can be interesting, fun, and pedagogical. Failures can help you to better explain what your method is really doing.