

Giving a Talk

tips on how to make a good presentation

- ✓ Why giving a good talk is important?
- ✓ Preparing for a presentation
- ✓ What is important in a talk?
- ✓ Rules for making good slides
- ✓ Giving a talk (delivery)

Why giving a good talk is important?

- Helps you critically assess your results and their place in the larger picture
- An opportunity for your results to have immediate impact even before the publication
- For a young researcher: a quick entry into research mainstream, the best way to get people to know your results and ideas
- It can impress a thesis committee, supervisors, collaborators, colleagues, potential employers

Preparing for a presentation

- Let the talk *grow* over several days or even weeks rather than throwing it together in half an hour.
- Take notes, collect ideas, information, plots, sketch a plan before you start working on slides
- Collect and learn far more information than you are going to use.
- Think of possible questions. Think of who your audience will be: general level, individuals.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

- A well- practiced talk is 9/10 delivered
- Practice the talk aloud just the way you are going to give it, at least once.
- The best is to give it to a friend who can give comments. Alternative is to do it in front of the mirror.
- At the very least, practice the first and last few slides (opening and finish).

What is important in a talk?

(who, how, and what)

- Good opening is highly important
- A clear, coherent, and enthusiastic presentation which is well tailored to your audience.
- Give credit when the credit is due
- Clear conclusions. At least one main point hammered home.
- Do not run overtime - aim to finish *before* the allotted time.

Making slides

- Transparencies: still used, but increasingly rare
- PowerPoint: most common now
Windows, Mac
- OpenOffice
Linux, Windows, Mac OSX, Free BSD
- MagicPoint
Linux, X11
- LaTeX, PDF
Linux, Windows, Mac

Rules for making good slides

- ❑ Make slides after you thought the talk through
- ❑ Concentrate on content, not on fancy bells and whistles (but don't make it ugly either).
- ❑ Keep content super- simple. Do not include information you will not use.
- ❑ Use simple slide templates and background/text colors easily viewable under all conditions
Avoid brown, orange, yellow, pink, light green, cyan - note that some of these will not be shown by projector AT ALL.

Rules for making good slides (continued)

- Prominent, informative, short, and catchy headings
- One major concept per slide. Only two content levels: major and minor points
- Have <5 major points per slide
- Use no more than 2 fonts: clean sans- serif for the title, times or serif for body. If you need more room:
 - Reduce space between lines*
 - Make fonts smaller*
 - The best is often to use another slide*

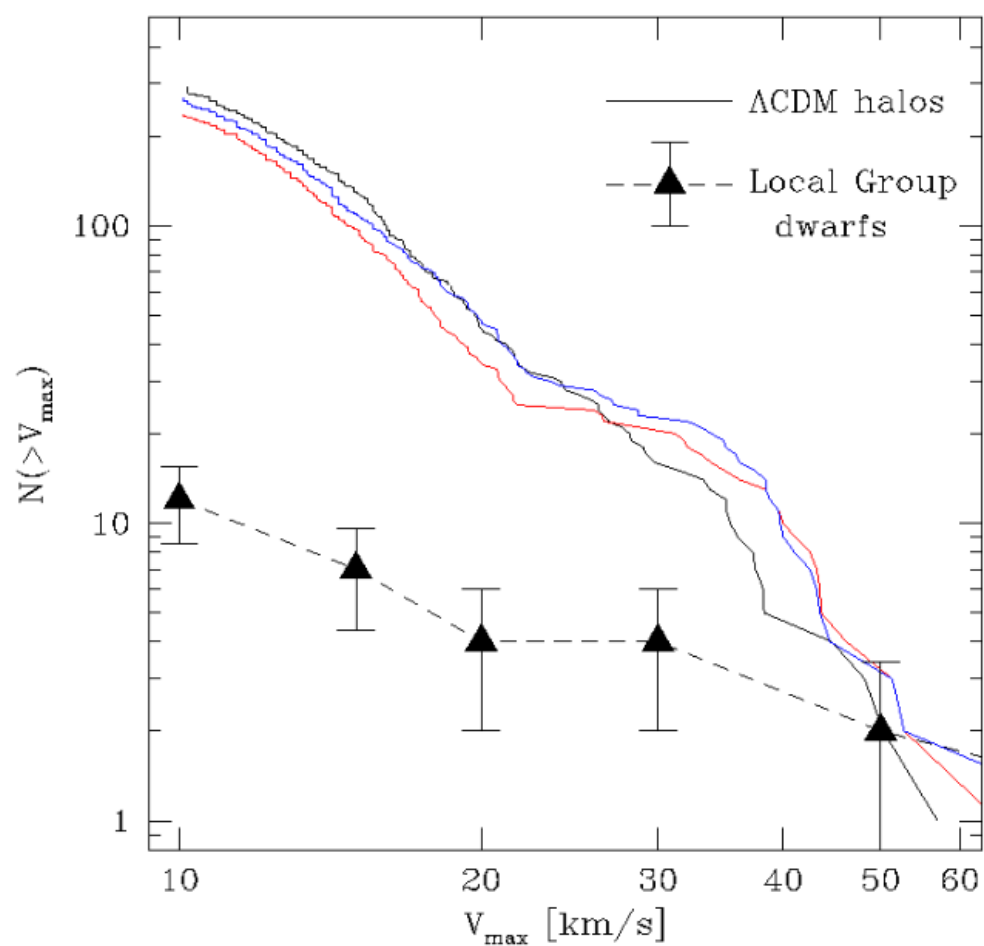
Rules for making good slides

(continued)

- Use good plots/pictures to make a point.
Make plots clear (put clear labels for axis, lines, points)
- Use equations when needed, but sparingly.
Explain variables or, at least the structure and significance of each equation
- Define unfamiliar terms both on slide and verbally during presentation
don't be afraid to repeat definitions in other slides

cumulative
circular
velocity
function
(CVF)

of objects
> Vmax



maximum circular velocity $V_{\max} = (GM/r)^{1/2}$

Giving a talk

*Tell'em what you're gonna tell'em, then tell them,
then tell'em what you've told'em.*

- ❑ On average, 2 min per slide, > 5 min per point
- ❑ Open strongly. Interest the audience.
(Try to) motivate their staying awake.
- ❑ State the problem. Place it in the bigger picture.
State your main conclusion(s).
For example, David Hogg's talk two weeks ago
- ❑ Speak clearly, confidently, and with enthusiasm,
facing the audience

Giving a talk

- Use examples, be specific. Give insight into problem or solution, details are often not necessary.
- Once in while, use humor or grab attention with other tricks if you can. Ask (rhetorical) questions.
- Break your talk into modules, some of which you can be prepared to skip
- Spend a third to a half of the allotted time on your results and conclusions, focusing only on the main points.

Giving a talk

- After stating your results, discuss caveats, open problems, future work
- Finish strongly by reiterating your *main* conclusions
"This is all I wanted to say" - is NOT a strong finish
- Don't overload conclusions! Include one or two main points you want people to *remember*

If you remember only one rule it is this:

Practice, practice, practice, practice, practice,
practice, practice, practice, practice,
practice, practice, practice,
practice

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*How to Develop
Self-Confidence &
Influence People by
Public Speaking*

TIME-TESTED METHODS of PERSUASION
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