Creating an interesting and effective slide presentation on your research

Katie D. Cadwell
February 27, 2008
Too Much Text

• Don’t put a lot of text on your slides.
• Lots of text causes your audience to either quit listening to you in favor of reading or quit paying attention altogether.
• Also, it can make it difficult for your audience to discern what the most important points of the slide are if there’s too much information.
• Whatever you do, DON’T JUST READ TEXT! If you have a slide, such as “Conclusions” that necessitates a text-based list, make sure you paraphrase each point instead of reading verbatim.
• This doesn’t mean that you can’t have any writing, just that you should keep it at a minimum.
• Use key words and phrases to help remind yourself what you wanted to say about a slide.
Slide too busy, unreadable

- 3 figures is a bit much - could be combined?
- Graphs/text may not be legible.
- Pertinent information missing.
- Also, avoid fancy graphics, animations, text animations unless really add to content.
- Too crowded - white space is important!
• Keep slides simple…
  – Minimize text
  – 1 or 2 points per slide
  – Visual simplicity
• …but still readable.
  – All necessary notations
  – Text size, line width, color choices
• Don’t force titles
Storylines

• No “Outline” page
• Basic story format
  – Motivation
  – Background
  – Results
  – Conclusions
  – Future work
  – Acknowledgements
Storylines - message & focus

- What’s the main point?
  - Overall
  - Each slide

- Who is your audience?
  - Sufficient background
  - Jargon
Storylines - transitions

• Transitions between slides
  – “After we discovered A, we knew we had to run experiment B”
  – “This phenomenon was unusual, and so we decided to do C”

• Transition words
  – Because, in contrast, similarly, if…then, additionally, recall from earlier, etc.
• Keep slides simple!
• Develop a storyline

• Giving your talk
  – Show interest & enthusiasm
  – Eye contact
  – PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!