Giving a Research Talk

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Preparing a talk

Always label images & elements of figures
Key ideas in the narration should also be as text in the slide
Make pauses between sections. Put rhythm in your talk
Don't be afraid of repetition when it's an important idea.
Use simple sentence. No more than one idea per sentence
Start with a useless sentence to get people used to your voice.

Start preparing early. A good talk takes between two and four weeks full time.

Practice in front of an audience. Ask for feedback.
You'll get conflicting feedback. Try to take all of it into account, your talk will appeal to a broader audience.

Don't use small fonts. In PPT, anything under 24 is advised against.

Avoid text that appears line by line. It's OK if it's for something progressive like an equation that you're deriving, but not for text.

Make sure that if people stop watching your talk for 2 seconds, they can still follow. View it as checksums and error code correction.

Make sure to recap at the end of important section. Provide reset points where people who have been lost for five minutes can catch up with your talk.

Avoid math and complex equations as much as you can.

You won't be able to convey all the ideas in the paper in your talk. It's a fact of life. Get over it.

Make the talk layered. Most of the audience should be able to get most of the ideas. At the end of sections, you can add more advanced stuff that only 5% of the audience will get. But make sure you then reset so that everybody else catches up.

do not waste time saying you don't have time.

For advanced stuff, refer people to the paper.
Do not overclaim.
Sometimes, showing a preview
Be consistent (case, citation).
Be aware that your audience does not have as much background as you do in your sub-domain. E.g. restating something like the convolution theorem is not a bad idea.

In general, change is hard to detect. Warn people that change will happen. Maybe highlight what has changed.

This is an iterative process. You'll go through local minima. You'll work long on slides that you will delete,, etc. In particular the intro part typically goes through many operations.

Questions

Questions tend to be random.
People try to relate what you said to what they do. Problem: you don't know what they do.
Don't hesitate to ask them to repeat a question.
It's a good idea oto repeat the question as you have understood it.
If you don't know, way so.
If the discussion gets out of control (too technical, too aggressive), propose to take it offline.

Who presents?

By default, the first author presents the full talk. It does not mean that the first author did everything (otherwise there would be only one author).
When the contributions of other authors are substantial, and when they so desire, it can make sense to split the talk. The split is usually decided by an artistic combination of convenience and who did what.