

12 Presentation

Presentation is the way that you are going to sell your products. You might face with different situations. Some departments ask students to present the outcome of their projects in front of a panel of academic staff in a way that is expected for a viva in postgraduates. However, many departments are not asking for this kind of presentations. As this book aims to help postgraduates in their final project as well, I decided to dedicate a chapter to this activity. As undergraduate students, even if you are not requested to present your final year project, the guide can be useful in other situations when you have to do so.

Presentation is an activity, which takes place in a short period, usually between 10 to 20 minutes. Therefore, its structure, preparation, contents, and delivery should be very well designed and implemented. Presentation provides you with a unique opportunity within which you are able to introduce your capabilities on the subject, understanding of the chosen topics, and presenting the results and outcomes of your project. In this chapter, I will give some specific explanation on how you can prepare yourself for this important event. Do not forget that this activity must have been planned and scheduled in your project plan and you should be very careful on the timing of the event.

12.1 Presentation Structure

Presentation should be organized based on the allowed timing. Below I will provide two scenarios. In the first scenario, I assume that you have 20 minutes, which has been divided to three sections; 5 minutes for preparing the environment, 10 minutes for your presentation, and 5 minutes for question and answers. In the second scenario, I assume that you have 30 minutes of which 5 minutes are for preparation, 15 minutes for your presentation, and 10 minutes for questions and answers.

It is important to use presentation tools such Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple i-Work as they help to organize your presentation in an efficient manner. In addition, they can provide you with some predefined templates, which make your job easier to do. However, if your department requires you to prepare your presentation based on a departmental template then you are obliged to follow their template and structure.

Below you can find two proposed structures for the presentation. In these samples, presentation timing, its agenda, proposed title for each slide, and proposed timing of each section/slide have been shown. These suggestions should not be taken for granted. They are not rigid suggestions. Presentation is a very constructive activity and you should show your creativity in composing it. Therefore, take these samples as a guideline and be creative as much as you can.

The first structure has been proposed for 20 minutes as below:

Presentation Structure 1 (for 20 minutes)

Presentation time: 20 minutes as below:

Preparation: 5 minutes

Presentation: 10 minutes

Questions/Answers: 5 minutes

Number of slides: 12

Presentation Structure:

- Slide 1: Project information (15 seconds)
- Slide 2: Agenda/Topics (15 seconds)
- Slide 3: Problem Statement/Project Definition (30 seconds)
- Slide 4: Main Requirements (30 seconds)
- Slide 5: Background/Literature Review (1.5 minute)
- Slide 6: Methodology (30 seconds)
- Slide 7: Analysis (1 minute)
- Slide 8: Design (2 minute)
- Slide 9: Implementation (1 minute)
- Slide 10: Findings and Evaluation/ Links to live system or other documents (1.5 minute)
- Slide 11: Conclusion and Future Works (1 minute)
- Slide 12: Thank you and Q/A

The second presentation structure has been proposed for 30 minutes as below:

Presentation Structure 2 (for 30 minutes)

Presentation time: 30 minutes as below:

- Preparation: 5 minutes
- Presentation: 15 minutes
- Questions/Answers: 10 minutes

Number of slides: 12

Presentation Structure:

- Slide 1: Project information (15 seconds)
- Slide 2: Agenda/Topics (15 seconds)
- Slide 3: Problem Statement/Project Definition (1 minute)
- Slide 4: Main Requirements (1 minute)
- Slide 5: Background/Literature Review (1.5 minute)
- Slide 6: Methodology (1 minute)
- Slide 7: Analysis (1.5 minute)
- Slide 8: Design (2.5 minute)
- Slide 9: Implementation (3 minutes)
- Slide 10: Findings and Evaluation/ Links to live system or other documents (2 minute)
- Slide 11: Conclusion and Future Works (1 minute)
- Slide 12: Thank you and Q/A

12.2 Preparation

Preparation has two stages. The main stage should be finished at least several days before the actual presentation. Below you can find some useful tips that you can consider with regard to the presentation preparation.

Make sure that you have scheduled this activity in your project plan. In addition, it is a good practice if you ask your supervisor to review your presentation before you go live. You might be asked to present a quick show on your product, if the product is software. In this case, you have to check with your supervisor to arrange the presentation venue to be ready for you in terms of required hardware and software.

Presentation Preparation Tips

- Schedule your presentation as an compound activity in your project plan as below:
 - Presentation
 - Composition
 - Rehearse
 - Checked with supervisor (as milestone)
 - Check presentation venue and environment (as milestone)
 - Actual presentation (as milestone)
- Set the dates for the latter two tasks at least 3 days (preferably one week) before the actual presentation.
- Rehearse in front of your family/classmates/friends/previous graduates.
- Make at least two backups of your presentation.
- Have one of your friends/classmates laptop ready to use for your presentation in case of any failure.
- Be ready on campus at least 30 minutes before your presentation.



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12.3 Rehearsal

Presentation is a skill. You have to practice it in order to become a skillful presenter. I assume that many of you have had at least one presentation. Presentation is similar to a play, and therefore, you have to rehearse it. There are different ways of rehearsal. The best method can be in front of some similar audience and in the same venue that the presentation is expected to be performed. However, this is not something that is always possible. Consequently, you have to rehearse it at home alone or in front of your family, possibly your siblings, or in dormitory in front of your roommates, in campus in front your classmates, or in front of your supervisor. If none of these is the case, then try it in front of a mirror! Have a clock in front of you; look at your gestures; or if you are using presentation software utilize its automatic slide movement.

12.4 Presenting

This is the time when your show is going live. Below you can find some tips about it.

Presenting Tips

- Take a deep breath and relax
- Say good morning/afternoon/evening
- Introduce yourself
- Introduce your project
- Introduce your supervisor
- Talk in a loud, but calm voice
- Have an eye contact with all audience
- If there is a question while you are presenting, if you have a short answer then answer it otherwise excuse yourself and kindly ask the person to postpone her/his question to the end of the presentation
- In any situation do not get irritated
- Have a gentle smile on your face during the presentation!

12.5 Summary

Presentation is the time that you sell your product. A good presentation requires some specific skills, which, hopefully, you have gained and practiced during your study. Some good rules of thumb help you to provide an attractive presentation. Moreover, you can find useful resources in the bibliography section at the end of this book. In addition, there are many helpful resources easily available on the Internet that can guide you in this regard. However, an important step is to rehearse your presentation in front some audience, your classmates and university fellows for example. This rehearse step can give you more confidence while when you are going to provide your real show. Moreover, it can reveal some flaws and problems in your presentation.



The image shows the BI Norwegian Business School logo, which consists of a central blue square with the letters 'BI' in white. Surrounding this central square are numerous colorful, 3D-style rectangular bars of various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) that radiate outwards, creating a sunburst effect. Each bar has a label for a different business program, including 'Business', 'Strategic Marketing Management', 'International Business', 'Leadership & Organisational Psychology', 'Shipping Management', and 'Financial Economics'.

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Last Word

Well, that was it, for the time being. I hope this brief can help you, as students in computing, to plan and conduct your final year project smoother and easier. However, I would like to warn you about a serious case that I have seen as a proof of Murphy's Law in this context. I have seen some anxious and worried students who have come to my office or have sent me an email showing an unimaginably disastrous situation. They have wanted to know that if I, by any chance, have saved their reports, documents, models, and so on, which they had sent me the other time, somewhere! I do not ask them the reason for this, actually, I can tell them immediately that they have lost their documents and they could not have recovered it. That is why they are asking this. If these are my students, probably in software engineering, or database, or programming, then, I am about to telling them "my friend, did not I tell you in the class to take practical hints, seriously? Did not I repeat several times that taking the backups is not just a piece of advice to give it to our users? Did not I tell you that rather it is much more important for us?" But, then I think loudly, "does it help to give a lecture about what should not have happened, aftermath?"

Folks, I hope that you take the backup issue, especially in your final year project case, as seriously as it deserves. I do not talk any more to this. Take it as the last word.