

Brent Hecht's Handy Dandy Presentation Tips

Last updated in early 2018

- If something is important, it should be both said and seen (i.e. both the spoken and visual channels should be used as redundant indicators)
 - Information should be presented such that its importance corresponds to: (1) the amount of time spent presenting the information and (2) the visual/spoken emphasis it is given.
- Animation can be a useful tool for emphasis (and thus signaling importance of the animated information), but should usually only be used for that purpose.
- One useful general heuristic: design your presentation so as to minimize cognitive effort by the audience
- If you show a graph, you must explain slowly what's on the x-axis and what is on the y-axis, and then explain the trend you want the audience to see
 - Corollary: if you show a non-trivial table, explain what the rows are, then the columns, then discuss the trend
- Humor is great and usually required, but should not take away from the message
 - In fact, it should support the message
- Grad students should never use self-detrimental humor
 - Try to think of alternatives, but worst comes to worst, make fun of your advisor instead. We're easy targets.
- Try to weave a single or small number of examples throughout the presentation
- If you present text more than a few words long as data, it should be read outloud verbatim
 - People can't read and listen at the same time
- Use low-fidelity prototyping
 - Prior to making a single slide, I generally put together a very detailed outline of the presentation – including what slides should look like – entirely in text.
 - As is typical in low-fidelity prototyping, this allows you to make large changes with very limited cost, which is not the case when you start by making slides.
- Do at least one practice talk, and expect to substantially alter your talk afterwards
- Practice like crazy
 - It is easy to distinguish a well-practiced presentation from a poorly-practiced one
 - Going through your full presentation more than 15 times is not unreasonable
 - Well-practiced presentations are much more fun to give: you get to walk around the stage, etc., instead of being glued to your slide notes
- Make back-up slides for questions
 - Try to think of tough questions you'll be asked and make slides to answer them
- Google Slides seems to result in more run-time errors than other presentation software, at least as of April 2018
 - And minor bugs like offset problems
- Never use any text color that remotely resembles yellow

- If you prefer to script out the talk, you need to be prepared in case you can't look at the script
- Try to make sure there's at least one graphic that communicates the basic idea of the presentation in a single slide. This is important for social media success during slide sharing and with the audience sharing info when they see it.

○ Examples:

■ Isaac's title slide



Dario Taraborelli @ReaderMeter · May 20
"The Substantial Interdependence of Wikipedia and Google" – @_isaacj
@bhecht #icwsm2017 drive.google.com/open?id=0B9n3j...

The Substantial Interdependence of Wikipedia and Google:
A Case Study on the Relationship Between Peer Production Communities and Intelligent Technologies

Connor McMahon, Isaac Johnson, Brent Hecht
GroupLens Research, University of Minnesota
People, Space, and Algorithms (PSA) Computing Group, Northwestern University

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- Only thing better would to have ICWSM2017 on it

■ Brent's slide from the CHI 2017 panel



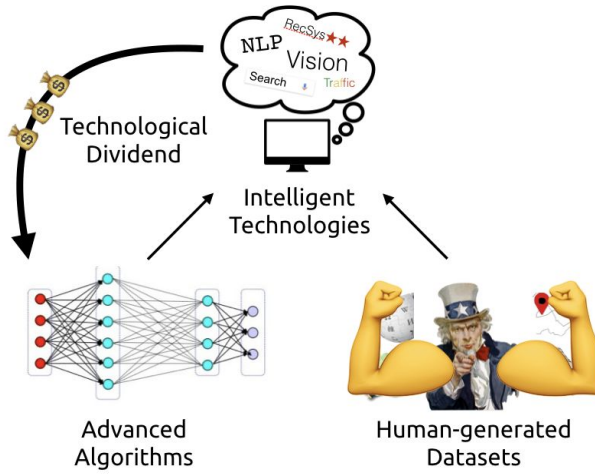
- This will be hard:**
- * Must define new, tractable problems
 - * Must consider highly complex social systems
 - * Must take risks



Computing-induced Income Inequality

<http://gurshoecomic.com/648>

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