Welcome everyone at this workshop.
Part of my expertise is research communication: so I’m here to provide you some tips on maximizing the impact of your science activities by giving kick-ass presentations.

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Before I start I would like to acknowledge some people that have inspired my talk.
In my job I have learned to use Twitter as a research tool and I picked up a lot of information this way.
But that’s another workshop...
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As a researcher you really can’t escape presentations – not just listening to them but also giving them yourself.
If you want to submit your work to a conference, then you’ll need to be willing to present (poster or paper).
Most job interviews will ask you to deliver a presentation.
You’ll also quite often give less formal talks as part of daily life in a research group (project meetings, PhD training).
And of course lots of researchers also ‘present’ when they’re teaching. <CLICK>
So it’s important you develop and maintain skills in this area to add to your bag of tricks.

Presentations have become one of the most important communication forums for the scientific community.
More people will probably listen to your scientific talk than will read the paper you may write.
In many ways your research reputation will be enhanced (or diminished) by your scientific talk.
But although these research talks are abundant giving one yourself is not always an easy thing to do. <CLICK>
For some people it’s a real nightmare!
It’s not a skill we get a lot of explicit guidance on as researchers, and that often we’re
just doing the best we can in the time available.

And I know all advice is easier said than done – heck, even I don’t always follow my own recommendations!
The tips I’ll be giving you in the next half hour are meant to be helpful suggestions, and not a critique of anyone who does things differently.
Presentations by participants: first run

I had you all prepare or recycle a 3 minute presentation. That will be our starting position. Who’s willing to share theirs with us?
I want the others to offer some constructive feedback:
- Positive phrasing
- Specific and clear
- Offer it as a personal perception

We’ll be working on these during the workshop as the tips progress.
To make things easier I have clustered my advice into 10 tips – or in this case: 10 superheroes!
If you remember just half of these you’re on your way to become a kick-ass presenter.
Let’s start with number 1 <CLICK>
Presenting goes a lot easier when you talk about stuff you know. That’s why it’s important to use your expertise as the back-bone of your presentations – whether you’re a junior or senior researcher.

But when the spotlight is on you, it’s tempting to try to impress your audience with an avalanche of data and plenty of bells and whistles. Look how much work I’ve done! Nothing could be worse than this approach. In fact, this is a common error, and you risk confusing people if you overwhelm them with too much information.

Keep your talk short, simple, and to the point. It is not necessary to wow the audience by giving them a minute-by-minute account of your prowess in the lab. Your main message will just get lost in unnecessary details and digressions.

So remember:
• What is the overall aim of your presentation?
• Why have you been asked to present? What can you contribute to the event’s topic?
• What is the message people should take home?
• And how is this message tied in with your expertise?
Which brings us to number 2.

Before you make even one slide, take some time to sketch out on paper the basic structure of your presentation.
So, turn away from the computer and storyboard your talk.
That’s a great technique to make sure you have an appropriate framework for your talk and a logical reason for any information you wish to present.

At the same time, remember that talks are not a detective novel.
You don’t have to make the audience wait until the end to find out what the conclusion is.
(This is actually more true the shorter the presentation is. If you’ve only got 5 minutes, you need to give them the take home message really soon.)

Divide your content across your slides. It is not the slide count but the time you take to present that is important. (I’ve often heard people ask me to “contribute three slides” to their presentations, and I have no idea how to interpret this.)

<CLICK>
Another technique besides story-boarding that can really help you is **story-telling**.

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You must accept that science might not interest everyone. It even scares some people. Also remember that details important to you may not resonate with other people – even other researchers. Is there anything in your research which may though?

When considering this question, be honest with yourself, and try to embody someone else who hasn’t spent years toiling over your niche subject area.

**Resist the temptation of covering too much of your research. Don’t get bogged down in the details. Try to avoid unnecessary nuance.**

**Maybe the 8-point arc is too heavy-handed for you?**

**Start with at least finding that central image that people can connect with.**

Link: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2014/08/27/academicstorytelling-risk-reduction/
Rigorous researching and attention-grabbing storytelling are very different trades but that does not mean that they are mutually exclusive. By finding that point of connection in your research you’ll go a long way.

<CLICK>
Story-telling means touching the head and heart (in that order!): making them laugh or cry, inviting them to join you on your journey, challenging them to think. Making your research real and relatable.

So structure around meaning, and the big picture. Then support key ideas with details—but not too much.
You can always use Q&A or follow-up for more details if necessary.

This slide shows some sound advice from TED talks.
At the same time kick-ass presentations like the ones you see at TED events have been resetting expectations, even for scientific presentations.
And all this advice is great but what truly matters is finding something that you feel comfortable with.

<CLICK>
Presentations by participants: second run – using tips 1 and 2

What is too scientifically dense in your current presentation?
What central image might help explain your research?
Is there logic to the story you’re telling?
Presenting talks is an art even more so than writing papers is. Find your own style, by being inspired by those around you and representing who you are as a scientist. Be human. Be personable. Use anecdotes and stories. A talk is not a paper.

It’s alright to have a script but try not to read from it during the presentation itself. The trick to a relaxed delivery is to know your material well enough that you know what to say without the need for prompts. If you must have something to jog your memory, write some prompts on small index cards using one or two keywords only (remember to mark the cards with the appropriate slide number). Another trick is the presenter mode in Powerpoint.

Your personal demeanour, tone of your voice, passion… is also important. A presentation is only part of the message. There’s a whole field of research dedicated to this called ‘paralinguistics’. So think about ‘how’ you’re saying something and not just ‘what’ you’re saying.

Still nervous? Practice! Start small but move out of your comfort zone as well. Follow workshops. Look for Toast Masters in your area or local TEDx Events.
The whole point of good communication is not the transmission of information but the reception of it.

Greet the audience and tell them who you are. (Don't assume that everyone knows you, even in an informal setting.) These introductory remarks have the additional purpose of getting the audience to settle down and direct their attention toward you. By then stating in a sentence or two what you are going to talk about, you place your presentation into context.

Do not be afraid to give context or background information where necessary, or to explain the meaning of any techniques or acronyms—even if they seem obvious to you. There is nothing worse than sitting through an entire presentation in which a certain acronym is written on every slide and the presenter has neglected to tell the audience what it means.

Look at the audience throughout your talk. You will create a rapport with the audience by establishing eye contact with as many people as possible. At the same time, be aware of your facial expressions. If you look bored, the audience will be bored. If you are animated and alert, the audience will be interested in what you
have to say.

Be receptive to the audience. Pay attention to the audience's body language and nonverbal reactions to your remarks. Know when to stop and when to leave out part of your presentation if you begin to sense that people in the audience are losing their ability to pay attention.

In essence: the preparation, presentation, and content of your talk must be geared toward the needs of the audience. Here’s some things to keep in mind: <CLICK>
What is their knowledge level and degree of interest?
How well do they know the subject of your talk?
For each type of audience, you will have to vary your content and delivery. There is no one-size-fits-all, even if the message you are presenting is basically the same.

ANTICIPATE - Don’t however mess up the flow of your talk or take time away from more interesting parts just because you want to nervously pre-empt someone picking a hole in your methodology.

What might also help is keeping a specific listener in mind and present for that person.

Once you know who you will be speaking to, let’s go to number 5: <CLICK>
Avoid having a slide at the beginning of a presentation outlining the order of the presentation, explain the structure of your story instead.

Start strong.

End on a high note! Never a negative one. Be positive, make them smile/laugh, inspire the audience.

Here are some possibilities to get your audience hooked from the start (by @powerfulpoint)

<CLICK>
What is personal is universal. Truth & pain.

Examples!

Maybe break patterns.

Quick aside about humor: do not announce a joke. Be ad rem when it doesn’t work.
Powerpoint, Prezi, Slidedeck, props...: choose whatever works for you and you can make work!

Remember that your slides are meant to be an aid to your presentation. They are often not meant to be stand-alone documents. That’s why we have conference proceedings. So that’s an opportunity to make the presentation itself engaging.

How to deal with corporate style?
On the one hand it is a form of reputation management. At least make sure you use the correct affiliation. Some people go as far as to say that you should get rid of unnecessary, superfluous and redundant content. This includes logos, which can probably be moved to a separate slide shown at the end. You might even remove the date, conference name and slide number from your footer. If you must, include the first two on your title slide. But again, this all depends on the context of your presentation.

Acknowledgements as 2nd slide; get them done with early. Thank everyone important, especially those likely to be in the audience.

Give credits for art usage (we all need to be better about this) and other sources, but don’t cite papers much unless critical (no bibliography).
Some of the worst mistakes brought together in wonderful presentation (again by @powerfulpoint)

- Francken-deck: collage of slides
- The Blob: a slide without a point is a big shapeless blob
- Poison your audience with jargon monoxide: it might make you feel smart saying it but if your audience doesn’t get it, it kills your message
- Riddled with Bullets: no more than 3 on a slide please. Bullet points make information more difficult to remember, especially when the bullet point lists are accompanied with auditory information. This is not a conjecture; it is backed by credible research.
- Shock! Horror!: make your font big and legible over fun. While you can use a creative font for a slide title, avoid using it for body text. Wrong fonts are Tahoma, MS Sans Serif, Arial, Verdana, Courier New, Times New Roman, Trebuchet, Lucida Console, Comic Sans
- Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Label: turn the label into a headline
Your audience’s attention will vary. Some will listen to your words and not look at the slides, or vice versa, or they may come in late/space out for certain slides. So make your slides clear and simple enough that the audience can follow it, dipping in and out if they must. But don’t make them cluttered! Consider using slide numbers in bottom corner; then you and audience know how close you are to the end.

Use the available space on the slide, not just a tiny central part. Keep edges clear in case the projector cuts them off though.
Budget your time! (when designing and practicing your talk)

Good rule = ~1 slide/minute, roughly, depending on amount of words side/complexity of images used.
15 minute talk = ~3 mins introduction, 5 mins results, 4 mins discussion-conclusions, then ~3 mins for questions.
20 min talk really should be left for questions; understandable if 15min talk does not, but aim for it.

Take time to go through data slowly enough.

Adrenaline may mean that you present your talk faster than you expected...
But avoid going slowly at the beginning of the talk to carefully go over every fine point in the Intro, then having to rush through the key Conclusions.
Find a good, comfortable tempo that doesn’t lose your audience and stick with that.

Keeping time also shows respect for the organisers, the audience and other speakers.
Presentations by participants: run three – using tips 5 + 6

- How do you start and what’s your ending?
- Any bullets that can be deleted?
- What are your experiences with timing? How do you keep these in check?
The slides should not be your exact talk: there should be some kind of added value of coming to hear you speak.
It’s is the combination of speech and visuals that makes an audience retain more information.
On the other hand you must remember that from the moment people start reading they no longer pay attention to what you’re saying.

So put as little text on as possible – just the headlines if you can.
Avoid verbs. Seems weird but know that verbs make sentences, and you should really avoid full sentences. All you will tend to do with sentences is look at your slides and read from them.

You need a high level of contrast between your text and the background.
If your background image features a lot of variation, portions of your text may not be legible.
In that case, a stylish bar of color behind the text can bring the legibility back while adding visual interest.
Maybe use contrasting text colors to draw attention.
It can be hard in academic talks to go easy on the text, but you can try at least to split up the text heavy slides with a few images. Images help make your presentation more visual, but don’t get carried away with too many on one slide. It’s a presentation, not a photo album.

If you use other images than ClipArt be sure to mention the source. Read up on Creative Commons.
Be careful of cheesy stock photos.
Another approach is looking for images that enhance the spoken word (associations). Visuals can be used to provide context – which is often important when talking to a non-expert audience.

***example here: ‘model’ has a lot of different meanings...*** <5 CLICKS>

Or maybe even consider presenting without slides. Or by using attributes.
Gradually build up data and complex info, and turn them into something meaningful.

Label clearly. Be sure to explain your axes when your plots first appear on the screen, so people immediately understand what the data shown are.

Only include data and diagrams you will explain. This goes for both qualitative and quantitative.

Some inspiration: [http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_cognitive_surplus_will_change_the_world](http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_cognitive_surplus_will_change_the_world) and Hans Rosling
Many presenters read a script silently to themselves until they’ve got it down. But it’s much better to rehearse the presentation the way you’ll deliver it. You may surprise yourself to see how much better you come across with each rehearsal.

It will not make you look inauthentic. Just the opposite. Having a good grasp of what the content of your talk is will make you a more confident presenter. A confident presenter feels comfortable and comes across as natural. An audience picks up on these signals quickly.

Also, as you keep rehearsing you may learn that you’re presenting too much information.

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An outstanding 1 hour presentation can take 30 hours or more of prep time!

Of course preparation is more than just rehearsing. <CLICK>
Number 9: cancel out unwelcome surprise during the event!

Start by backing up your talk before you leave for the event: (1) main PC copy, (2) copy on USB drive in different bag, (3) copy in cloud storage like Dropbox, or (if small) your email; i.e. online.
If your presentation needs live internet connection, be sure this is available at the location.
By the way, make sure you know where you are going.
And remember adaptors and power cables/battery.
Once you’re on site <CLICK>
Try your presentation on the on site projector well in advance of your talk. Be proactive. Be pushy if you have to, to be able to do this.

Be prepared for your talk to crash, projector to die or otherwise for having to give up and wing the talk. Don’t walk away, forfeiting your talk slot. Deliver what you can of the talk, maybe while calling up a friend to help reboot your PC or something while you talk. Don’t struggle for too long. People will respect someone who thinks on their feet and recovers their talk’s message.
A lot of speakers fear that someone in the audience will make their life miserable during the Q&A.
But remember, most audiences are friendly. If people have turned up to your talk it’s mostly because they are genuinely interested in what you have to present.
Yes, they might ask hard questions, but because they really want to know the answer.

And it’s with number 10 that you can make a real difference and polish off an already great presentation. <CLICK>
Always be polite.
It might be a good idea to repeat a question to make sure everyone has heard it properly. That will also give you time to formulate an answer. Then go ahead and answer the question based on what you presented (and on what you know). If you’re confident, you can also put the question into a larger context by drawing upon data and information outside your own work.

If you don’t know an answer, say so but offer a speculative answer or offer to do your research and get back with an answer at another time. It’s better to be honest than try to bluff your way through.

If you are asked a question where the person has clearly misunderstood, or failed to hear something you said, simply answer the question as if it were perfectly acceptable.

If you get an off-beat question that is purely designed to trip you up, don’t engage with it too deeply. Thank the questioner for the question, explain that you need to look into it more fully and offer to email the person.

TOP TIP: Follow-up on social media conversations about your talk. + upload your presentation in institutional repository and share via Slideshare/other social (academic) platforms
Here are my ten superheroes in a row.

If you use these and just keep thinking: “You are a better speaker than you think you are, and no-one thinks you look nervous.” you will probably do alright! Besides, you’re the only one focussing on those bits of your presentation.

Also remember to have fun and show some creativity and personality! Academia is already boring enough 😊

Thank you for listening! I’ll be happy to answer any questions you might have or follow-up on them later on.
What really struck you as interesting or meaningful during this workshop?

What is one change that you can make?

What element of the workshop was most useful to your work?

What part of the workshop should be changed to improve learning?