Technical Talk Guidelines
A brief guide for novice speakers
12/9/96

Sample Talk Outline

Title

Background or Introduction
• This may also go after the outline.
• Clearly define what the subject of the work is, why it is important, what others have already done, and how you have contributed to the state of the art.

Outline
• One slide only - don’t spend too much time!

Body of Talk
• The whole audience should be able to follow the first item.
• The talk should progress to more detailed and higher level material.
• Many talks contain some material that only part of the audience will fully appreciate.
• Introduce new sections. Make it clear when a new section begins and how the new section relates to the previous section and to the rest of the talk.
• Lead into succeeding slides when talking. (Always know what your next slide is!)

Summary
• This is what you want the audience to remember.
• Should contain a small number of items.
• Sometimes called Conclusion.

Miscellaneous “Rules” for Good Talks

Talk Strategy
• The whole talk should have a well-defined purpose.
• It should tell a clear story.

Individual Slides
• Keep the amount of information on each slide small.
• Equation slides: Use a small number of equations, define all symbols, describe physical meaning.

Graphs
• Should have title, axes should be labeled (with units).
• Source should be referenced if not the speaker or co-authors!

Presentation
• For moderate size rooms, point to the screen, talk to the audience.