

Giving Talks

EC Mentoring Workshop, 2024

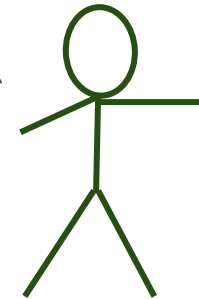
Speaker: Bo Waggoner, University of Colorado

Outline

- How to approach giving talks
- General principles
- Planning the talk
- Nuts and bolts
- Delivery

How to approach giving talks

“Every act of communication is a Trojan horse. You hide what you want to say inside what the audience wants or expects to hear.”



Bo

How to approach giving talks

Context, Constraints, and Expectations

- Where, when, and how? Venue? Length? Q&A? Screen size? Before lunch?
- Who is the audience? Background knowledge? Interest level?
- Logistics? Computer, adapter, clicker, access to slides
 - Show up early
 - Suggestion: have PDF slides available at a memorized URL

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- Assume they are **very smart, very busy** ... and **very lazy**
- Don't "dumb things down", but do **make life easy on the audience**

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Guide audience attention

- Introduce and focus on **one thing at a time**
- Look at the audience or at something they can see (not your own screen)

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Build and refine an outline.

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- Should **not be comprehensive**
- Need **not even be fully correct** (tell the audience why)
- **Should advertise and inspire** as well as inform

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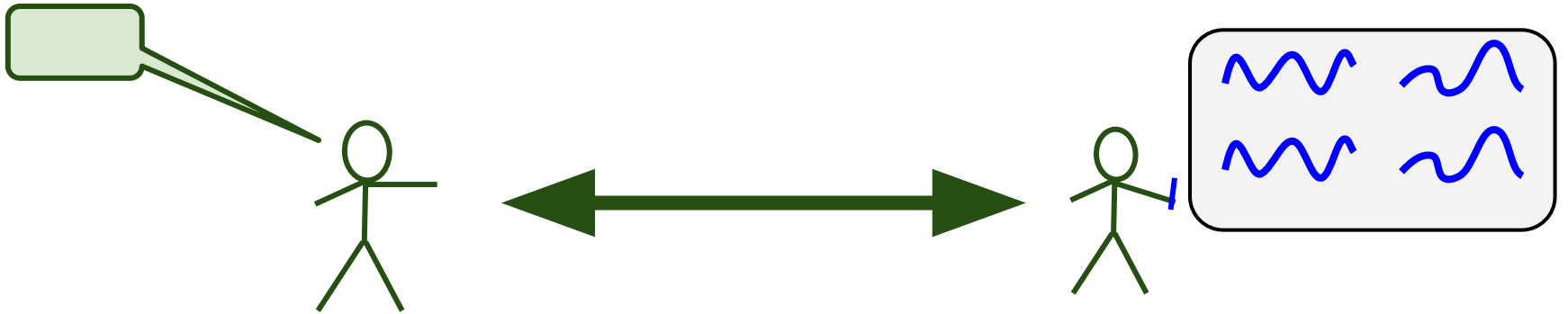
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Plan audio and visual together



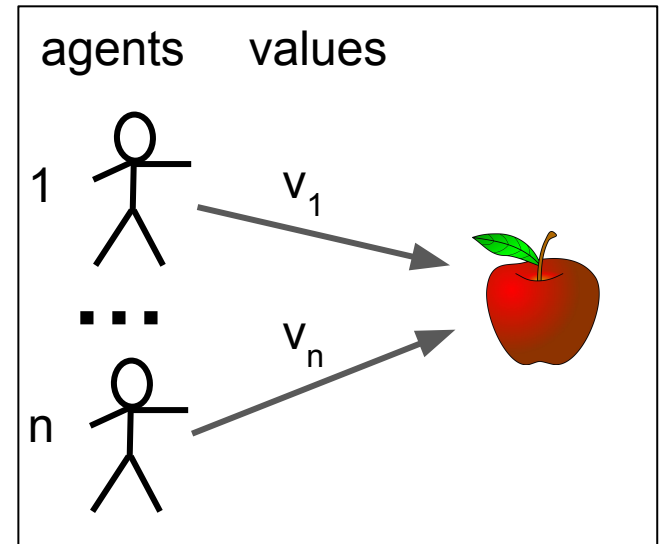
Nuts and bolts

Plan audio and visual together

Minimize notation; replace text with images

There is a set N of agents with $|N| = n$.

Each agent $i \in N$ has a valuation $v_i \in \mathbf{R}$.



Nuts and bolts

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Minimize notation; replace text with images

Ensure the audience knows what is happening and why

- Give an outline; return to it with enough time to read

Nuts and bolts

Plan audio and visual together

Minimize notation; replace text with images

Ensure the audience knows what is happening and why

Everything should have a specific purpose

- e.g. what *about* the related work is important to the talk?
- slide content should be useful, not distracting

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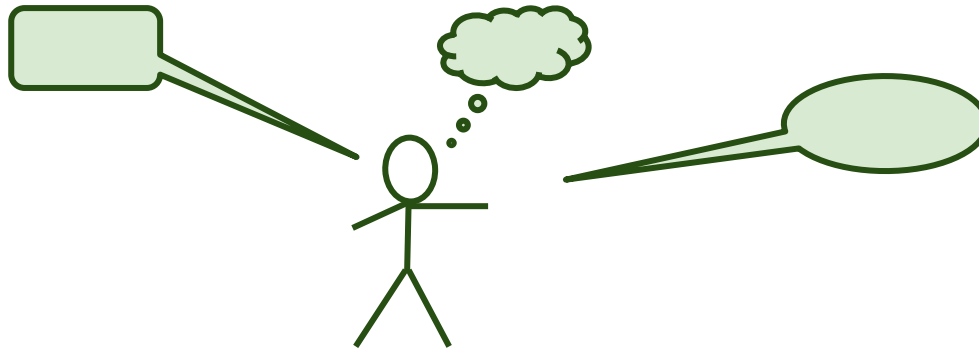
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Use a simple, consistent design; prioritize visibility

- Consistent: capitalization, grammar, colors, layout, bullet points, ...
- Give colors meaning, e.g. **definitions** versus **theorems**

Delivery

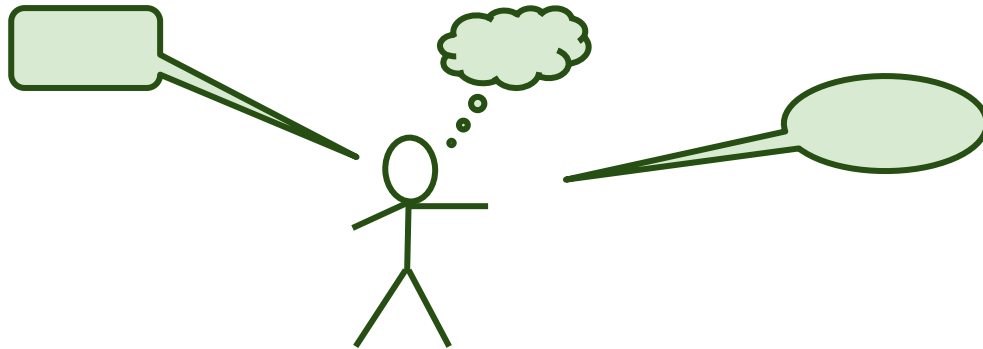
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- **Practice** hesitation at transitions or explanations ⇒ need to re-think



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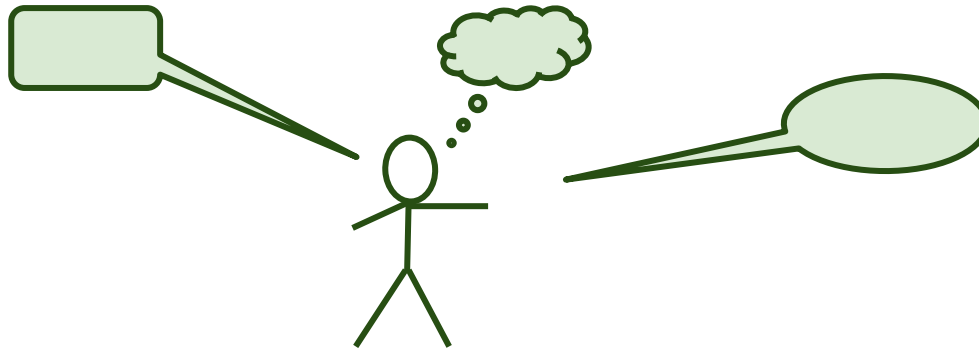


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- **Variation!** Vary your tone, volume, speed, where you look



Final tip

Tell the audience when you're done.

Questions?

Reach me: Bo Waggoner <bwag@colorado.edu>