

Perfecting your presentation skills: Small tweaks for big impact

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General guidelines

Rule of thumb: one slide per minute:

e.g. 30 min slot = 20 min talk + 10 min questions

20 slides including title and acknowledgements

Do NOT go over time.

Preferably ONE, maximum TWO figures on a slide.

Give an outline of the talk

1. How to structure your talk

- The problem
- The question
- The method
- The answer

2. Tips for making slides:

- Themes and logos
- Text
- Pictures
- Sweat the small stuff

3. Giving the talk:

- Talk off your slides
- Taking questions

1. How to structure your talk

The Problem

e.g.

- Hypertension prevalence is increasing in Africans.
- Antihypertensive medications mostly tested in Caucasians.
- Adverse drug reactions endanger patients, and are costly.

The Question

- Are there genetic variants in a South African population that predict adverse reactions to a commonly-prescribed antihypertensive medication?

The Aim

- The aim of a project relates directly to the question:
“To identify genetic variants in a South African population that may predict adverse reactions...etc”
- My experience is that presenters tend to focus their audience better with a simple-language question

The Method

- Case-control study design
- 200 cases: individuals on ACE inhibitors, adverse effects
- 400 controls: individuals on ACE inhibitors, no adverse effects
- Genomic DNA prep of buccal swabs
- Genotype on H3A chip

The Method

- Genome Wide Association Analysis
 - Genotype calling and QC with PLINK
 - Association testing using PLINK
 - Pathway analysis using KEGG, STRING and REACTOME
 - Functional prediction using ANNOVAR

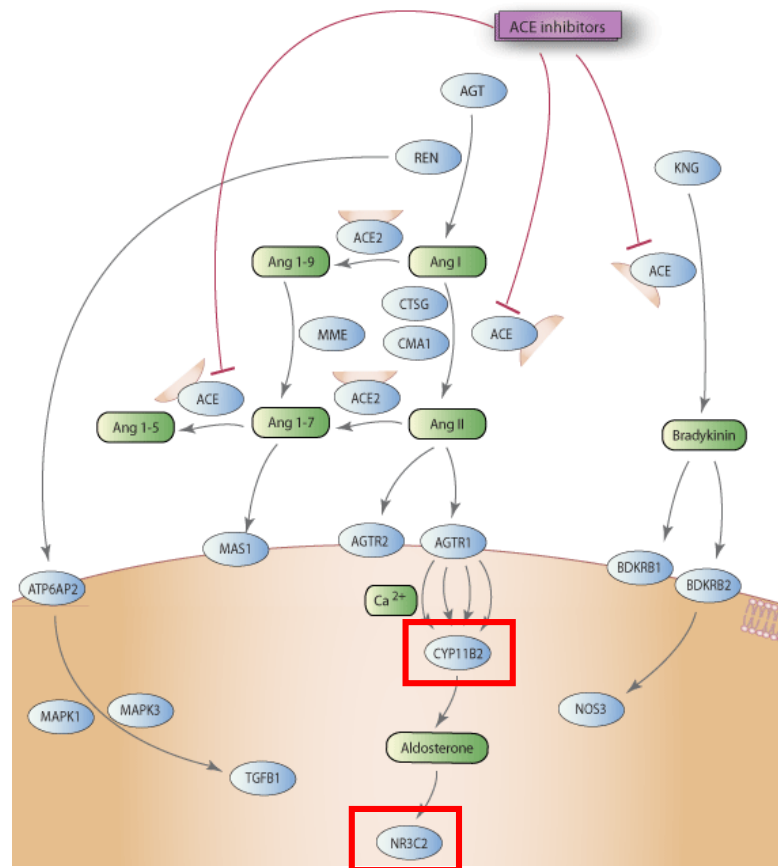
The Result

- 325 SNPs associated with the adverse reaction phenotype ($p < 10^{-8}$)
- 27 SNPs predicted to have a functional impact
- The 27 SNPs fall in 22 genes

- Top pathways implicated are:
 1. Ace Inhibitor Pathway
 2. Sympathetic Nerve Pathway

The Result

- 2 of the genes are involved in the ACE inhibitor pathway



From: www.pharmgkb.org

The Conclusion

- What is the answer to **The Question** (that you defined earlier on slide 6)
- “Conclusions” means audience and time-keeper heave a sigh of relief.... So keep it to one slide, absolute MAX = 2 slides
- Up to three key points. Limitations, qualifiers etc should be very brief. Can be discussed verbally, but try not to have pages of text here.
- Punchy take-home message to stick in the brains of audience. They want lunch and they don't want to think too hard.

2. Making the slides

THEMES

- *Keep it clean and consistent*
- Use the same text style throughout
 - Arial, Calibri, Tahoma
- Standardise text size
 - Standardise indentation
- Use neutral colours with clear contrast

Logos

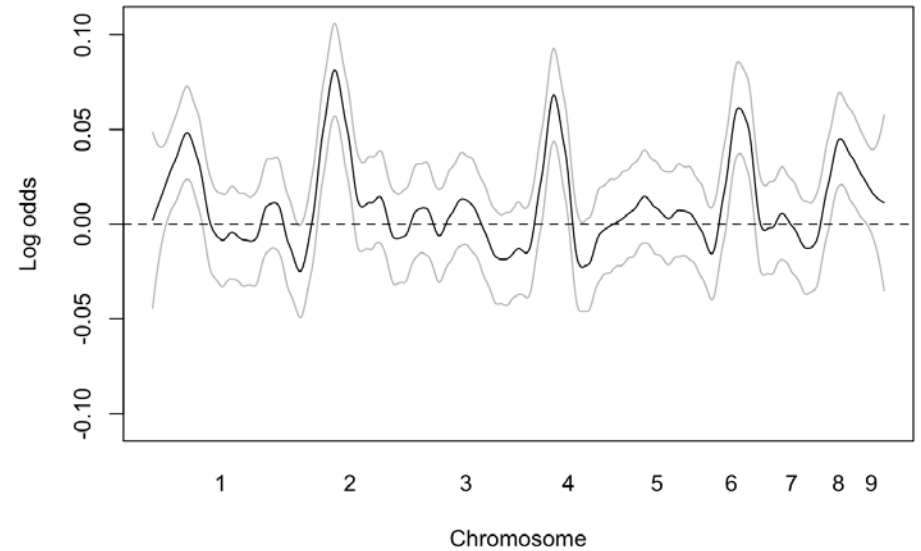
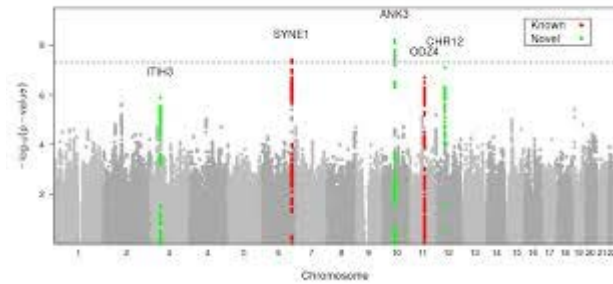
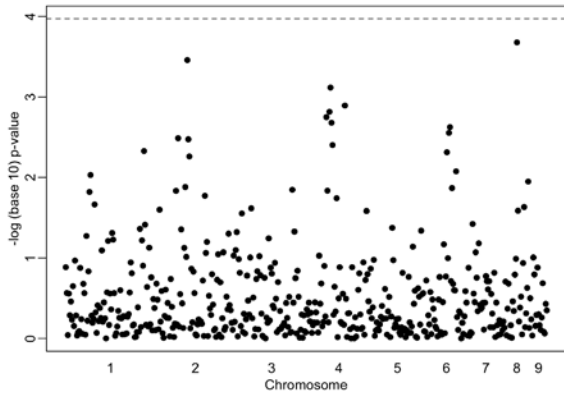
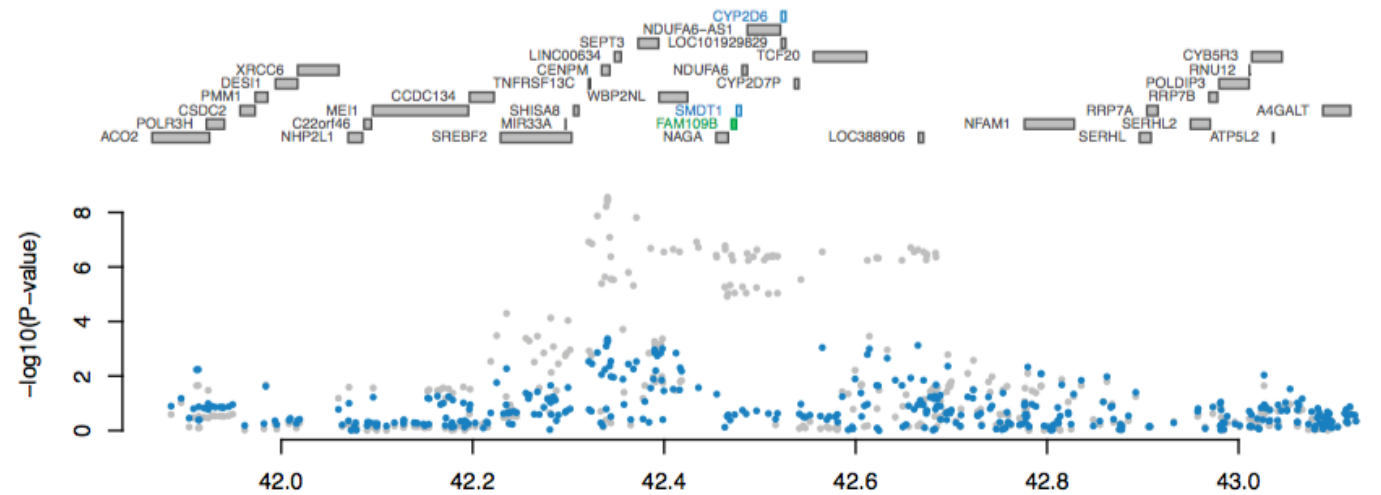
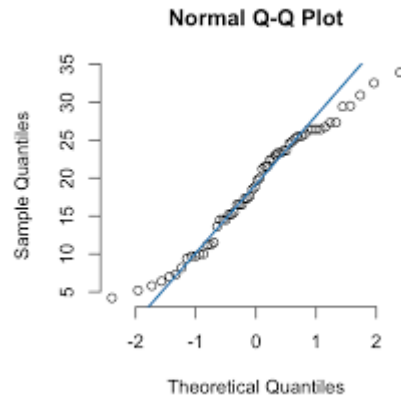
- Every slide: small logo for main funder or institution
- Final acknowledgement slide: all associated funders and institutions
- Get the CORRECT, COMPLETE logo
- Get a reasonable resolution image
- Check proportions



Text

- If you have more than one text box, line them all up exactly
- Keep your text boxes in the same place on each slide
- Use consistent font size
- You should always try and be very brief and extremely simple in your text. If you can avoid using a lot of text it is going to be much easier for your audience to pick up the key points. You don't want to read every sentence off the slides... the less words on the slide, the better!
- Be concise

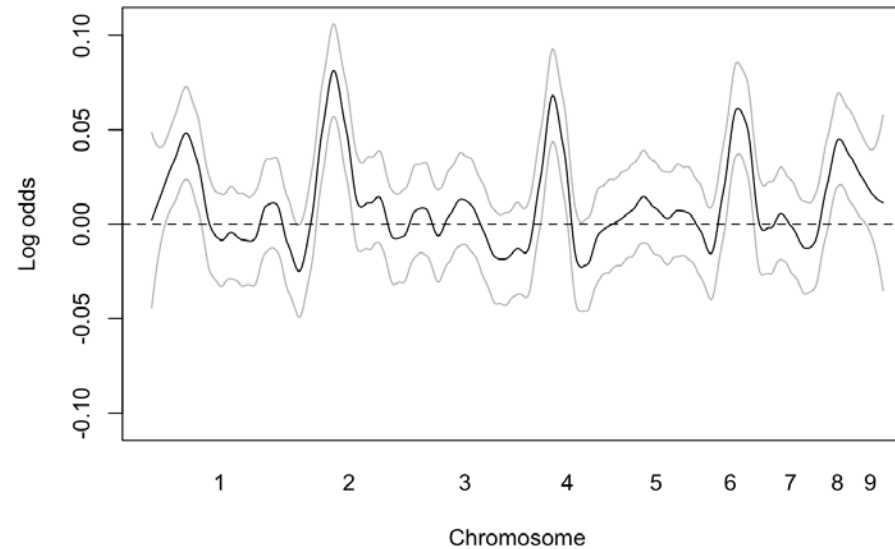
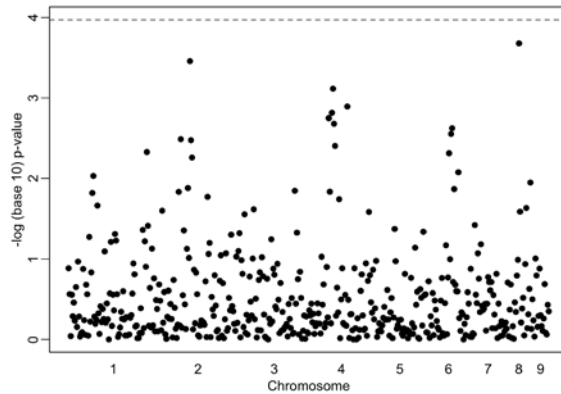
Figures



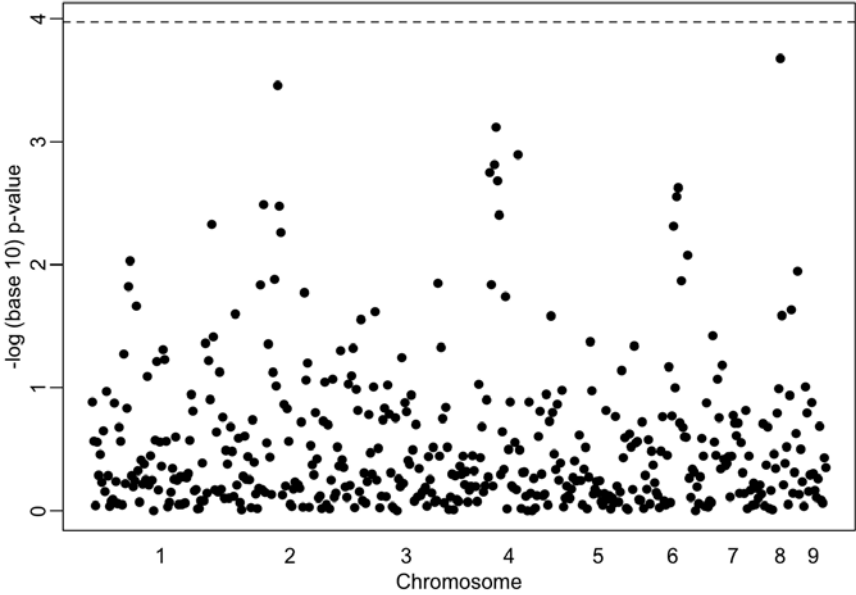
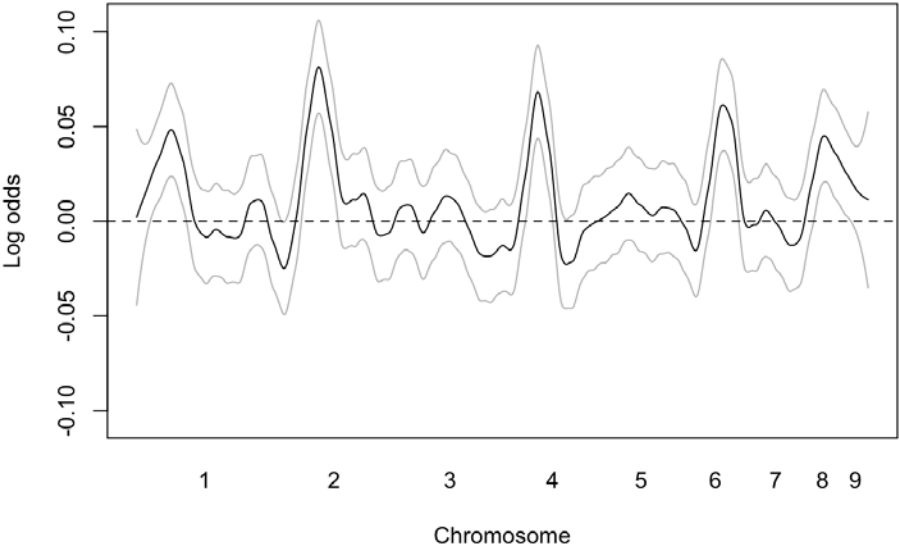
- Only show the key figure

Figures

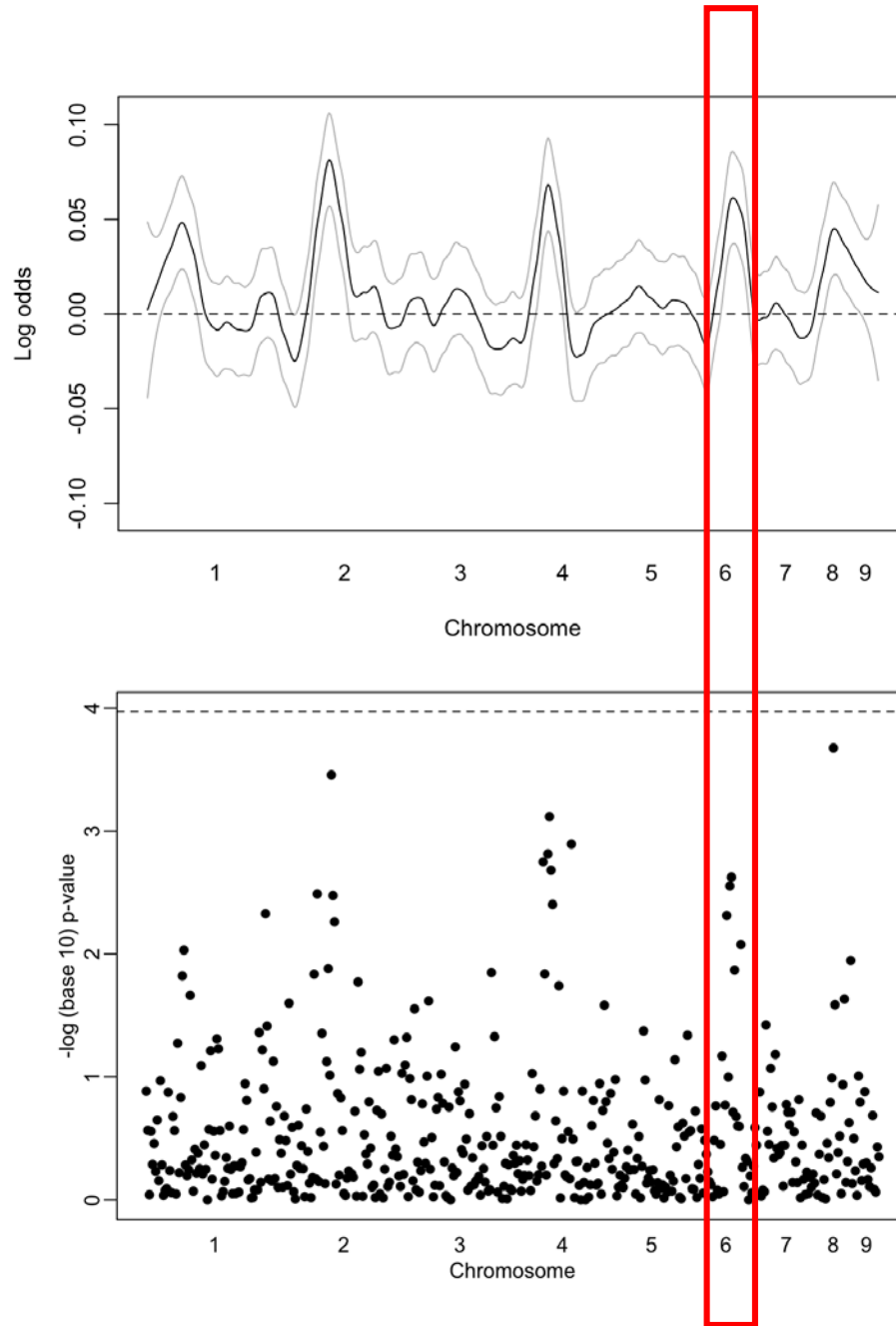
- Keep it tidy: line up figures with each other and text
- match sizes.



Figures

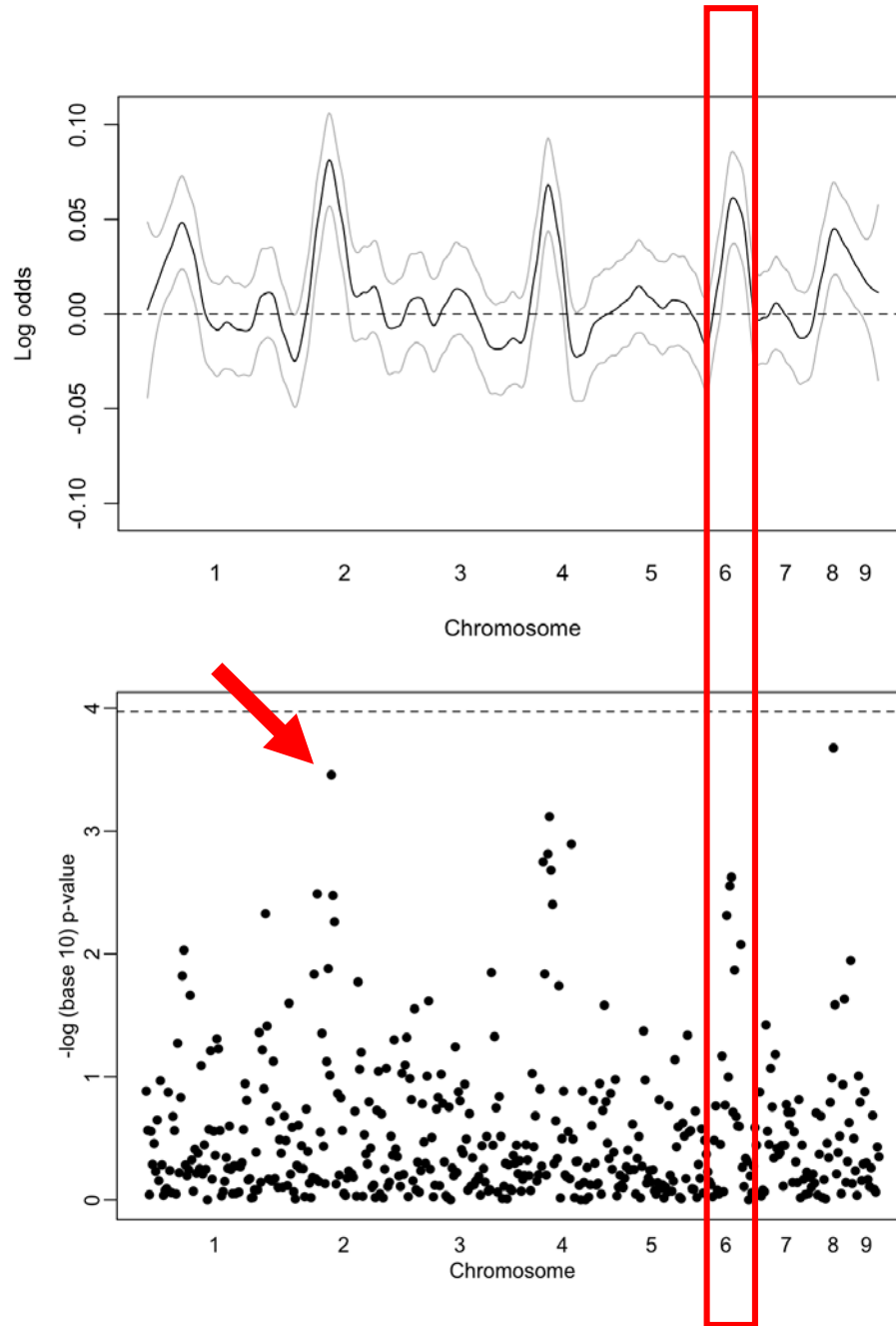


Figures



- Highlight the interesting bits to talk around

Figures



- Highlight the interesting bits to talk around

Acknowledgements

- Name your Supervisors/PI, as well as all the colleagues who have contributed to your project
- Name the main funder/s, or display all their logos

Sweat the small stuff

- Details count
- Make it easy on the eye so the slides do not distract from the message
- Line up boxes, show consistency, even between slides: effortless flicking between slides without 'text jumping' effect
- Check font style and font sizes for consistency
- Line up pictures and make them the same size

“Jumping titles...”

“Jumping titles...are an unnecessary distraction”

“Jumping titles...are an unnecessary distraction”

- So is “jumping text”
- Take the time to line up text and titles
- Also means you can ‘build’ a slide without having embarrassing tech fails.

3. Giving your talk

Giving your talk

- Upload your slides early
- Check slides on the presentation machine.
- Mac <-> PC can mangle slides.
- Have a pdf file as well as the ppt.
- Backup to a flash drive
- Backup to a cloud resource (e.g. Google drive, Dropbox).

Giving your talk

- Practice with a friendly audience (e.g. your Mum).
- Get a friend to pick up on your ‘like’, ‘sort of’, ‘basically’, ‘actually’, ‘um’ habits (we all have them 😊).
- Have an ‘unfriendly’ practice run with your research group pretending to be your nightmare audience who ask nightmare questions at the end.
- Decide to talk off the slides directly, or from notes
(I prefer directly off slides).
- **Be confident:** you are giving a talk about work with which you are familiar.

Taking questions

- Don't panic: no-one is out to trip you up.
- Listen carefully; and if needed, politely ask for the question to be repeated.
- It's OK if you are not 100% sure of your answer:
“I am not completely sure. It could be that...., but I will look into this further to find out”
- It's OK if you don't know the answer.
“That's a great question, and I don't know the answer; but let me find out and get back to you”

Thank you.

Comments?
Questions?



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