

A crash course in seminars, Power Point presentations & statistics

(all views reflect the author only and not the ANet Committee. . .)

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Overview

- Seminar presentations: what they are
- Power Point as a presentation tool
- Activities to be avoided while presenting
- Reporting statistical analyses
- Good news for all

Seminars

- know your own goals: information transfer
 - convince the audience of 1-3 simple points only
 - remember the 33% soap-opera rule
 - individuals, read, or listen, but not both
 - reiterate the main points at every stage
 - "Histogram of ant abundance in 2 sites" vs "Ant abundance is higher in logged sites"
 - statistical analysis is NOT (usually) your goal
- structure your seminar to achieve your goals
 - only include relevant information!
- know your audience
- be prepared (hardware, software etc)
- don't go overtime (audience time is valuable)

The curse or value of PowerPoint

- no contrast, no information
- 5% of people are red green colour blind
- spell hceck
- font size font size font size font size
- font type x□■◆ ◆☒□ℓ font type
- explain slides, especially graphs
- 1 slide per minute. It's true!!!!
- animations

fight
low
information-content
technology

The curse or value of PowerPoint

- dot points, versus long rambling sentences that drive audience insane.
- Slides should contain dot points that prompt the speaker, they should never include actual text that is actually read by the speaker which is guaranteed to put everyone to sleep, take up too much space and are incredibly annoying and inefficient.
- If you are going to read everything you might as well hand out written copies and save everyone from suffering miserably because they were forced to listen to you ramble on because you added nothing more than they could have received with a cold beer in their hands and they have been at this conference for too long and they really overdid it on the first night and they feel terrible but they have to put on a good show for the graduate students and where can they get a decent coffee anyway?
- Notes = mental crutch, but don't read
- Dot points = prompts. Edit edit edit . .

Fatal behaviours during seminars

- graphs without axis (explain each slide)
- being unfamiliar with your own talk
- “I haven’t done the stats yet but . . .
- “This is not significant but . . . “
- “I know you can’t see this but . . . “
- presentations on USB drives . . .
- passing out
- being inaudible . . .
- avoiding eye contact . . .

Fatal behaviours during seminars

- ridiculing the audience, especially those asking questions
- ridiculing the presenter
 - if you think an individual is rude, other people will too: be polite
 - Ask questions, don’t lecture
- refusing to hand over the microphone
 - fun for the audience, but slightly embarrassing)

Reporting statistical analyses

- statistical analysis is RARELY the goal of ecologists, taxonomists etc
- statistical analysis HELPS us convince people we have interesting things to say
- we demonstrate proficiency by clearly indicating exactly what we did
- every analysis should report
 - The name of the test, the test statistic, the value of the test statistic, the degrees of freedom, the probability value of the test statistic, YOUR interpretation (& discussion of assumptions if required)

Just remember

- you are the expert (unless you demonstrate otherwise . . .)
- practice practice practice
- enjoy having a captive friendly audience
- don’t worry if you forget something: you always do, it doesn’t matter . . .
- Thanks for your attention . . .