

# CIS 879 Software Tools and Environments - Spring 2007

## University of Delaware

### Guide to Giving an Interesting, Useful Demo

## 1 The Process

1. Install and learn how the tool works, work through some examples on your own, and read the documentation enough to know what features are supported
2. Take notes on the following aspects:
  - What is the goal of the tool?
  - What is its intended uses?
  - What environments is the tool supported for?
  - Where would one go to learn how to install the tool?
  - How do you get started using the tool?
  - What features does the tool offer? What kinds of things can be done with the tool?
  - How does the tool compare with other similar tools?
  - What limitations does the tool have?
  - What do the developers see as future extensions?
3. AT LEAST 1 WEEK BEFORE CLASS MEETING: Create an outline for a 40 minute demo and overview of the tool, focusing on the items above, and email the outline to Lori about 1 week before the presentation day. The outline should be (1) a powerpoint with the titles at the top of each slide, and a quick statement of the contents on each slide for the overview part, and (2) a listing of which features you will demo, and (3) outline or paragraphs on how you will demo them.
4. Create slides and demo in the final form. See the instructions for slide formatting below for more details.
5. For a Tuesday class, set up to meet with Lori before Thursday of the prior week. For a Thursday class, set up to meet with Lori at least by Monday of the same week. You should come with your final slides and demo prepared, for review. Plan 45 minutes to a whole hour to review the slides with Lori.
6. Make the suggested changes to your slides and demo description, and email to Lori at least 2 days before your presentation.
7. Practice your demo aloud at least twice before presenting it on your scheduled presentation date.
8. If possible, spend 10-30 minutes going over your demo to yourself as close to your presentation time as possible to refamiliarize yourself with what you want to say. I always go over my talks and lectures within the hour of when I am going to do the presentation. It makes a world of difference.
9. Print out adequate copies of your slides, 6 to a page, for each person in the course. Be sure to staple together your handouts and xerox double-sided to save on trees. Bring your handouts to class the day of your presentation to hand out at the start of class.
10. Present your demo and lead the discussion.

## 2 Demo Content

The demo of a tool should be 40-50 minutes, depending on the tool complexity. The demo should be conducted much like the model used at a conference demo session. If you follow the guidelines in slide formatting for the overview, you should use about 5-8 slides for the overview. A typical organization of the overview part of a conference demo is:

1. Goals and Intended Use: A clear statement of the goal of the tool, its intended uses.
2. History: Any history of the development of the tool - Who offers the tool, who invented the tool, how long has it been around, what are its origins?
3. Environment: Context of the tool: What environments is the tool supported for? Where would one go to learn how to install the tool? How do you get started using the tool?
4. Features: What features does the tool offer? What kinds of things can be done with the tool?
5. Limitations and Related Tools: How does the tool compare with other similar tools? What limitations does the tool have?
6. Extensions: What do the developers see as future extensions?

The actual demo of the tool should:

1. Show how to get started using the tool - starting it up, setting things up,...
2. Show how to perform the main operations of the tool - This is most successful and interesting if done in a story manner. Pretend to be a person who wants to use the tool on an example situation and follow through the situation, rather than pointing and clicking on every button in sequence. So, set up a realistic situation and show how the tool would be used in that situation.
3. After the main story line, go on some tangents to show off other features that might be useful to know about that someone could explore later.
4. Be sure to practice the demo and go through all the parts you want to show with an example before you get to class so you know it will work correctly for your example. Be careful not to memorize your demo. That is a big mistake. Questions can throw you off if you do this, and it does not come off relaxed and confident.
5. Avoid distracting mannerisms. e.g. Don't put your hands in your pocket and fiddle with your keys. Don't clasp your hands together and start wringing them. It's distracting and makes you seem nervous. Instead, brings your hands out of your pockets and let them do whatever. Yes, you'll find yourself motioning and gesturing, but that's ok. In fact, it's probably better as it may make you seem more confident and may help you slow down in speaking.
6. Be prepared to answer questions on what certain buttons would do if someone asks about something they see on the screen.

## 3 Formatting of Slides

Slides should be prepared using a word processor or Powerpoint, and available online in a form that can be viewed through a web browser (e.g., pdf, postscript, html). As a rule, the font size should not be smaller than 18 point.

Begin each slide with a centered title that states in 1-4 words the contents of that slide. No two slides should have the same title, unless something is being continued. Different font sizes, boldness, italics, and underlining should be used to demonstrate the relative importance of different points. The formatting of different slides should be consistent in terms of fontsize, capitalization, italics, bold, color (if you use color), and grammar. Typically, we stay with 2-3 colors for a whole presentation text.

For a text slide, use outline style with short phrases as opposed to paragraphs of full sentences. Use keywords and short phrases. Put no more than 4-5 main points (bullets) on a single slide. Your slides should contain a significant amount of white space. If you are worried that you might forget to say something if you do not have it written on a slide, write it on a separate sheet of paper that you can use as backup, or in the notes section of Powerpoint. It is comforting to know that it is written down somewhere in front of you, but the audience does not have to see all of that writing. **DO NOT PUT WHOLE PARAGRAPHS ON A SLIDE.**

Break up your talk with pictures, figures and color whenever possible. Pictures should be relevant and helpful to the topic, not just random pictures for appearance. If you need to use a figure from the paper, scan it in and enlarge it to make it readable on an overhead. You may use existing figures from papers or other resouces as long as you cite where you got the figure. **YOU SHOULD NOT BE GIVING SOMEONE ELSE'S TALK ON A PAPER THAT YOU FOUND ON THE INTERNET.**

## 4 Presentation Style

The most enjoyable presentations are those in which the speaker appears to be confident and have a casual, conversation-like style, as opposed to a speaker who is reading from the slides, screen, or notes. This comes with practice!! If you only put phrases on the slides, and practice what you want to say about each phrase or figure, your presentation is most likely to be in this style. If you put full sentences on the slides, and do not practice, it is only natural to read from the slide, and lead the audience into naptime!

Take on the challenge of capturing the audience's attention with your introduction, keeping them interested through your slides and possibly some light humor, avoiding burial in a pile of details, and teaching them the most important points/issues about your topic. You can do this by examples and thoughtful planning to make your talk flow nicely from slide to slide and keep the audience always wondering what is coming next.

Spend some time thinking about how to make your presentation interactive, getting audience participation rather than feeding them all the information. You are teaching the class, not just presenting material. Leave some of your slides with holes to be filled in during class, examples to be finished in class, short quizzes, questions for discussion,.. Be creative in how to get them involved and make them active learners.

1. Eye contact: You should glance around the room, making eye contact with various people. The talk should not be directed to the ceiling, floor, the slide projector, or only a small portion of the class. If you do not want to look at anyone, just look over their heads.
2. Voice: Be sure to talk at a pace that the audience can follow. Most of us tend to talk very quickly when we are nervous. You need to consciously be aware of how fast you are talking. Be sure to talk loud and clear enough that people in the back of the room can hear and understand you. If you think people are going to have trouble understanding your English, talk slower than normal.

## 5 Evaluation of Presentations

Each student in the class will fill out an evaluation form for each presentation. These evaluations will be anonymous, and summarized and given to the students as feedback. The professor will independently grade each oral presentation. Both the student evaluation and the grade will be based on: the speaker's perceived understanding of the topic, organization of the material, presentation of the material, quality of visual aids, treatment of questions, interactive nature of getting the audience involved, and overall effectiveness of the presentation. These student evaluations will not affect your grade, but provide you with lots of feedback for improving your oral presentation skills.