

Tips for preparing a clear talk

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Disclaimer



I don't always prepare a clear talk...

Some guidelines

1. Consider the audience & event
2. Don't bury the lead
3. Be concise
4. Give credit
5. Q&A: the unknown unknowns
6. Delivery tips
7. Clear slides

Consider the audience & event

- Your group meeting?
- CVPR?
- Job talk to entire CS department?
- Interdisciplinary?
- K-12?
- Formal? Casual?
- Degree of detail
- Degree of jargon
- Depth vs. breadth
- Latest vs. arc of progress

Don't bury the lead

Problem

Our idea

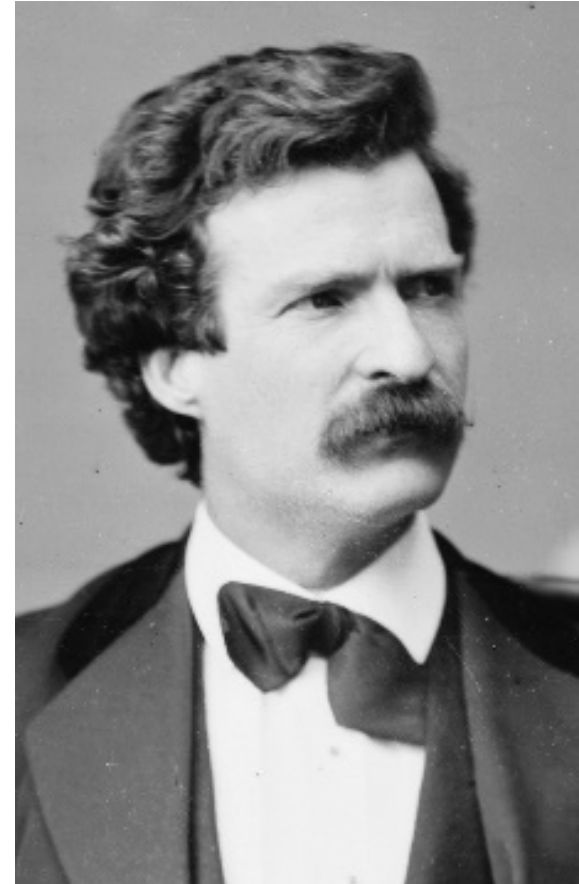
- Don't leave contribution implicit
- Reiterate and rephrase message throughout
- Verbally: give salient markers; "Important"..."stress that"...
- "Punchlines" for results

Be concise

“I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.”

— Mark Twain

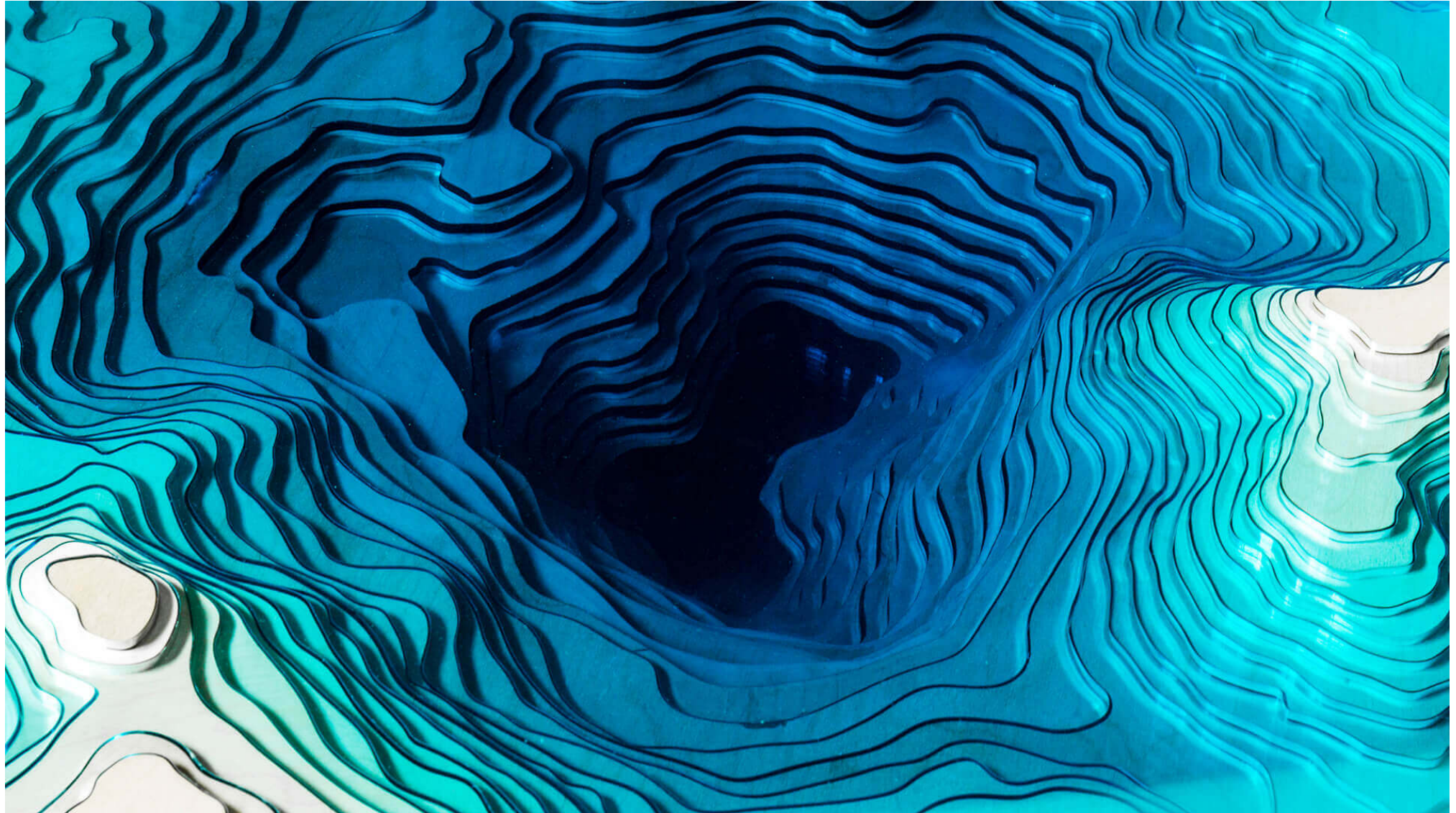
- Prep the “concept bullets”
- Breathe, and use fewer words
- Short text phrases (not sentences)
- Not every detail needs to surface



Give credit

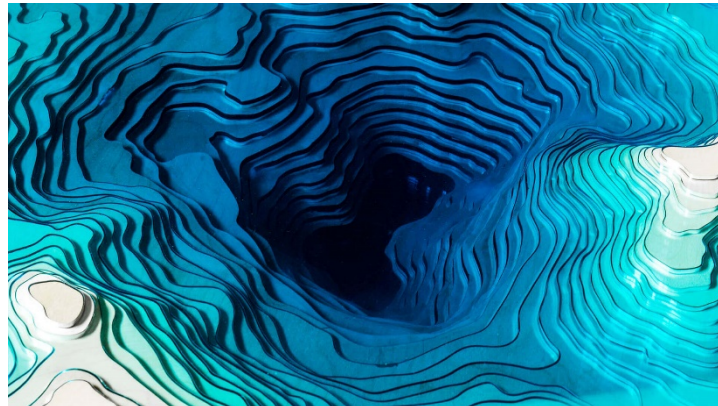
- Paint the big picture of literature for context
- (Clusters of) related work & key contrasts
- Give credit for borrowed slides, per slide

Q&A: The unknown unknowns



Q&A: The unknown unknowns

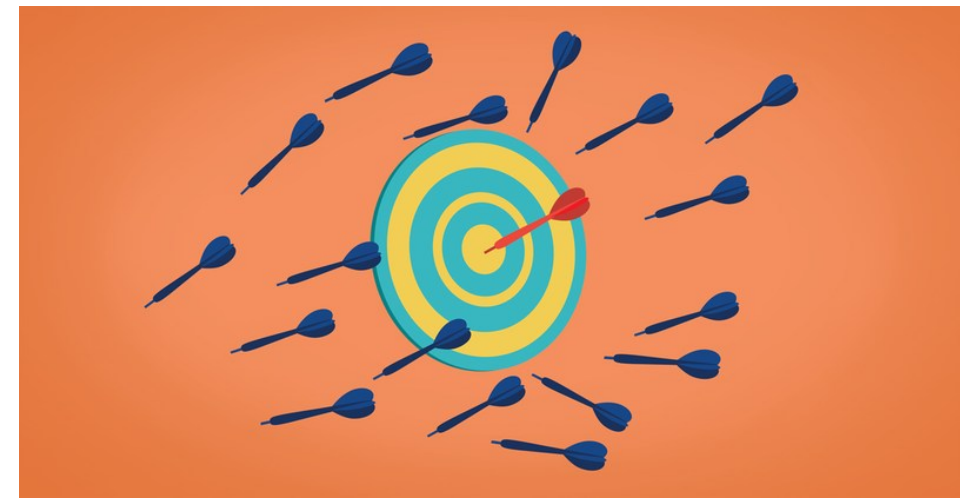
- Guess likely questions & prepare
- Don't skip to backup slides unless necessary
- Sometimes it's better to defer a question
- Answer, then stop.
- Share feedback with co-authors afterwards



<https://duffy london.com/product/tables/abyss-horizon/>

Delivery tips

- Practice and get feedback; iterate
- The first slide - what will you say?
- Be loud enough
- Use pauses
- Flow: think through transition *in* and *out* of each slide
- Qualitative examples: say something about one or two.
- Manage time: stopwatch, prevent derail
- If you're skipping something, then skip it.
- Think about where you want to stand / test the room.
- Check the laptop, AV
- Nerves: "If you're nervous, it means you care" ~Trevor Darrell





Carefully done slides

reduce cognitive load

- Animation – to focus attention
- Font size – 28+ for main text
- Simplest visual possible to make the point
- Consistency: font size, capitalization, alignment...
- Avoid jitter of text placement in consecutive slides
- One liners where possible
- Use color to link pieces of equations
- Delete “Hi my name is ...” from notes of first slide!
- Avoid content-free “Thank you!” slide



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