

How to do a Journal Club: Part II - Mechanics

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590 J club; Oct, 2004

University mission

“To discover and disseminate knowledge”

- Knowledge discovery
 - Reading
 - Research
- Knowledge dissemination
 - Teach
 - Write
 - Present

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Why oral presentations?

- Presenting well is correlated with
 - Ability to disseminate ideas
 - Professional success
- Presenting well is *not* correlated with
 - Quality of work
 - Quality of writing
 - Quality of character

(credit to Russ Altman for these sentiments)

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Public speaking tips

- Practice your patter
 - Measure time (20-25 mins of patter, 10-15 mins for discussion & questions)
 - Pause for emphasis
 - Speak slowly and distinctly
- Look at audience, not screen or monitor
- Be aware of body language
- Do not read your talk
- Be enthusiastic!

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Slide text

- It is almost always a bad idea to put complete sentences in your slides, especially if the sentences are long and complex.
- It is bad to crowd your slide with text; instead, you should use figures or omit words.
- One bullet -- one idea
 - Sub-bullets: never by themselves
 - Sub-bullets: always parallel

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Fonts (This is 40pt Arial)

- This font is 32 point Arial.
 - This is 24 point font. Try to stay this size or larger
 - This is 20 point font. It is the minimum for readability.
 - Never, never use smaller than 20 point font.
 - Beware of MS powerpoint “auto-resizing” your fonts!
- Use one font throughout your talk
- Beware of small fonts in figures
- Prefer sans-serif fonts

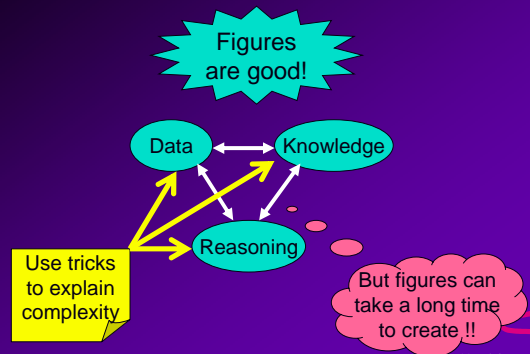
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Slide backgrounds

- Backgrounds should not be distracting
- Use a contrasting color scheme
- (Don't do this)
- Use light fonts on dark backgrounds

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Figures



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Figures: Don't do this!

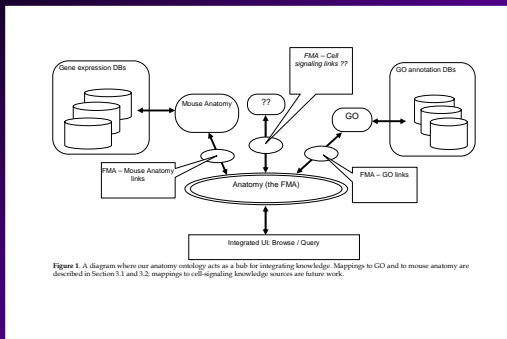


Figure 1. A diagram where our anatomy ontology acts as a hub for integrating knowledge. Mappings to GO and to mouse anatomy are described in Section 3.1 and 3.2, mappings to cell-signaling knowledge sources are future work.

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Structure and organization

- Have a single take-home message
- Structure:
 - Set up the problem
 - Preview your take-home message
 - Provide meat: support your message
 - Conclude: Repeat your message
 - Questions?

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Slide order

- Each slide is important
- Each slide should be independent
- Know your transitions
- Use the slide sorter to rethink organization
- For longer talks, use an outline slide

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Question answering

- Stay in control
 - Be brief
 - "Hold that question – I'll return to it"
 - Let's talk about this "off-line"
- Guess at probable Qs, and prepare slides
- Relax, listen, think
- In large halls, repeat the question
- If you don't know, say so

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Summary

- Goal: communicate your ideas
 - Avoid distraction
 - Have a clear structure
 - Speak well

Good Luck!