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# Giving Scientific Talks

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Based on slides by Olivier Danvy

- .....→ You are the speaker
- .....→ You have an audience
- .....→ You want to transmit information
- .....→ You use a medium:
  - your voice
  - your body language
  - A blackboard / whiteboard
  - Slides



.....→ Be aware of

■ Which message you want to send, and

■ What you want your audience to remember

.....→ Make at least **one point** comprehensively



# The contents of the talk

- .....→ What do you want people to **remember** from your talk?
- .....→ *Don't say everything!*
- .....→ **Simplify**
- .....→ Rumour: people can remember at most **five** new things from a talk



- .....→ Assemble your future slides on a hand-drawn comic strip
  - It gives an overview (1 to 2 pages)
  - You can't write too much on each slide
  
- .....→ Choose a pedagogical plan for the presentation
  - Adapted to the audience
  - Adapted to the duration of the talk



- .....→ Have **simple** and **informative** slides
- .....→ Have a very **clear overall plan**
- .....→ Use a **roadmap**:
  - We were there;
  - We are here;
  - We go there.
- .....→ Except for the plan, **avoid forward references**



- .....→ Minimal rule of thumb: one slide, one point
- .....→ Each slide should have a **title**
- .....→ **1 good drawing is worth a thousand words**



# Allensbach (Institut für Demoskopie)

[Umfragen]

*Wenn am nächsten Sonntag Bundestagswahl wäre ...*

1998–2002 | 2002–2005 | 2005–2009 | **Aktuell**

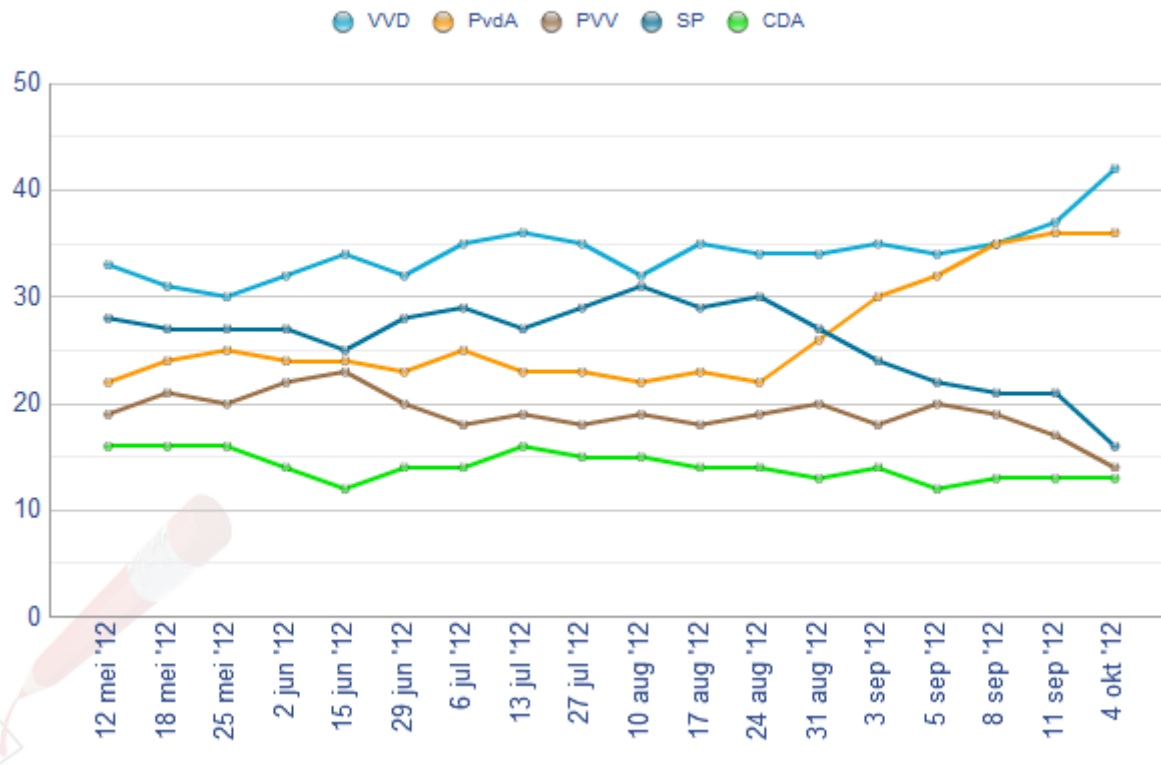
**Gesamt** | Ost | West

	CDU/CSU	SPD	GRÜNE	FDP	LINKE	PIRATEN	Sonstige	Befragte	Zeitraum
26.09.2012	34,0 %	30,0 %	14,0 %	5,5 %	6,5 %	5,5 %	4,5 %		03.09.–17.09.
22.08.2012	35,0 %	28,0 %	15,0 %	5,5 %	6,0 %	6,5 %	4,0 %		01.08.–13.08.
18.07.2012	36,0 %	27,0 %	14,0 %	6,0 %	6,0 %	6,5 %	4,5 %		01.07.–12.07.
20.06.2012	34,0 %	28,0 %	15,5 %	5,5 %	5,0 %	7,5 %	4,5 %		04.06.–15.06.
23.05.2012	35,5 %	30,0 %	14,0 %	4,5 %	5,5 %	7,0 %	3,5 %		05.05.–19.05.
18.04.2012	34,5 %	28,0 %	14,0 %	3,5 %	7,0 %	10,0 %	3,0 %		01.04.–13.04.
21.03.2012	35,0 %	30,0 %	16,0 %	3,5 %	7,0 %	5,0 %	3,5 %		03.03.–15.03.
22.02.2012	36,0 %	28,0 %	15,5 %	4,5 %	7,5 %	5,0 %	3,5 %		04.02.–16.02.
25.01.2012	35,0 %	29,0 %	16,5 %	4,0 %	7,0 %	4,0 %	4,5 %		07.01.–21.01.
13.12.2011	34,0 %	30,0 %	16,0 %	4,0 %	7,0 %	5,0 %	4,0 %		21.11.–04.12.
16.11.2011	32,0 %	30,0 %	17,0 %	4,5 %	8,0 %	4,5 %	4,0 %		28.10.–11.11.
19.10.2011	31,0 %	30,5 %	17,5 %	4,5 %	7,5 %	5,5 %	3,5 %		04.10.–16.10.





### Trend



- .....→ Small fonts (theorem: the fonts are **always** too small)
- .....→ Invisible color (avoid **pale** colors, i.e. **yellow**)
- .....→ Meaning attached to colors (color-blindness; colors are different on beamer than on a screen)
- .....→ Long and complete sentences (written style)
- .....→ Overcrowded slides
- .....→ Unreadable slides
- .....→ Slides written at the last moment



.....→ Before the talk: try to immerse yourself in what you are going to say

■ Give the talk to yourself at least once

.....→ Right before the talk:

■ Do:

● Be comfortably dressed

● Breathe deeply

■ Don't:

● Drink a carbonated beverage



- .....→ Straighten up
- .....→ **Face the audience**
- .....→ **Smile.** Express that you are happy to be here.
- .....→ Dare to speak **slowly** and **loudly**.

Don't be afraid: nobody is going to eat you.



- .....→ **Speak slowly and loudly**
  - Repeat important points...
- .....→ **Speak for the others (not for yourself)**
- .....→ **Don't force your voice:**
  - Lower for males (to inspire confidence)
  - Higher for females (to inspire mercy)
- .....→ **Be balanced: don't let your tone**
  - Fall down (it sounds sad and depressed)
  - Jump up (nobody is strangling you)



- .....→ **Announce** the ending (e.g., with a slide entitled “Conclusion”).
- .....→ **Summarize** the background (and thus the significance of your work).
- .....→ Summarize the **achievements**.
- .....→ Open perspectives (future work).
- .....→ Say “Thank you, are there any questions?”
- .....→ Or: “Thank you” and let the chairperson take over



# Don't

- .....→ Don't overestimate your audience: you have probably spent more time thinking about your problem than most people here
- .....→ Don't overestimate yourself: prepare your talk well



# Conclusion

- .....→ Have a roadmap / plan: don't let the audience get lost
- .....→ What should the audience remember?
- .....→ Have good, clear slides
- .....→ Practice your talk
- .....→ Speaking style: voice, body language

