Chapter 7　　Introduction to Presentation

About This Chapter

This chapter explains the basics of presentation. One way to publish the results of research is by way of a research paper, and another way is by giving a presentation at an academic conference.

Presentation styles at academic conferences vary according to field. In addition to presentation outlines, many presentations today use tools to help audience understanding. Types of presentation include so-called a poster session, but this guide will not cover it.

Presentations are also vital in business situations. They are used to promote mutual understanding and to make proposals. Considering that presentation is the skill to communicate ideas to others clearly, it is an essential survival skill in today's world.

The most important thing about a presentation is its content. However, if the content of two presentations is the same, the audience will pay more attention to the one which is more appealing. Conversely, a poorly delivered presentation may fail to convey what the speaker was intended to say.

Presentation procedure and style may differ depending on the academic field or details of the research in question. This chapter explains common points that exist in different presentation styles.

As for presentation tools, PowerPoint (Microsoft), Impress (OpenOffice.org), and Keynote (Apple) are well-known applications. This chapter's explanation is mostly based on Impress.

7.1   Basics of Presentation

A presentation is one way of delivering your argument. A more formal means is via a research paper, but a presentation has its advantages. These advantages include the following: you can have a question-and-answer session to further the discussion at the venue of your presentation; you can put additional emphasis on points you want to stress; and you can utilize various audio-visual materials. In other words, there is a sense of participation and a feeling of "being there" in presentations which a paper cannot provide.

On the other hand, you only get one shot at each presentation, either as a presenter or an audience. Therefore, it is difficult to scrutinize the content in detail at the presentation venue, and, more than anything else, the success of a presentation greatly depends on the skills of its presenter.

There are four key points in presentations. They are: (1) what to talk about during the presentation, (2) presentation structure, (3) audio-visual materials used in a presentation, such as slides, and (4) the actual presentation. In terms of what we are going to learn in this chapter, these four points translate to: (1) the skill to build a presentation logically and systematically, (2) the skill to build a presentation clearly, (3) the skill to facilitate understanding visually, and (4) the skill of expressing yourself.

All of them are difficult skills. The authors do not see themselves as presentation experts. We struggle every day in front of students in class as well as when giving presentations at academic conferences. Some people are naturally good at giving presentations, and others are not so lucky. But presentation skills certainly improve through training. So let us start learning tried and true tactics.

7.2   What to Talk About

In this section, we will discuss what to talk about in a presentation, what kind of words to choose, and what we should consider to accomplish that.

7.2.1   Audience

The first thing you need to consider regarding your speech is your audience. You have to take into consideration what kind of audience will attend your presentation. What you talk about in a presentation changes according to the audience, whether they are members of the general public or experts in your field who can make an educated guess at what you intend to talk about by just listening to your summary.

Generally, we basically assume that the presentation audiences are experts in a specific field. The lower the level of understanding of the audience about a certain topic, the more background information you have to provide for them. This means that you will have to omit some of the most important points you wanted to make in the presentation. Moreover, the jargon you can use, such as technical terms and acronyms[1], also changes.

Most audience members will not be gathering information objectively. That is, they will not listen to your presentation if it is boring. But they would not be there in the first place if the topic is something they are not interested in. Just remember all audiences with mixed backgrounds are hard to please.

So if you have to give a presentation which must satisfy experts from many different fields (though students are very unlikely to be put in such a situation), it seems that there is no general solution.

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[1]   For example, "PC" in this guide is used as an abbreviation for "personal computer," but in another field it may be used to mean "politically correct."

7.2.2   Reason to Present

Thinking of the reason why you are presenting also helps you to clarify what you should talk about during it. There are roughly three purposes for a presentation.

The first purpose of presentation is to report. This type of presentation reports, for example, what happened as a result of an experiment. Many scientific presentations are of this reporting type.

This type of presentation may have a hard time gathering an audience if similar results have been already acquired by using a similar analysis method. This is because, for presentations like this, the audience is interested in whether the experiment and analysis were conducted following the right procedure. Audiences prefer this type of presentation to be concise and clear. The most common presentation structure of this type starts with a brief explanation of what you will talk about, followed by your actual explanation, and concludes with a summary of what you have talked about.

We can further break down the reason for giving reporting-type presentations into more specific ones. These reasons include the following: for the audience to understand something, for the audience to express their opinions and participate in discussions, for the audience to take some specific action (for example, to demonstrate their competence or to visit the amusement park the speaker runs and ride the new attraction).

In reality, it may be difficult to define a specific purpose for a reporting-type presentation. However, having a specific purpose helps you define the direction of your presentation clearly, which in turn motivates you.

The second reason to present is to persuade. It is very difficult to persuade people to make a decision or change their minds. Therefore, persuasion-type presentations are much more challenging than reporting-type presentations. This type of presentation is vital to business.

We can further break down the reasons for giving persuasion-type presentations, too. For example, you may try to persuade your audience to buy something, or become a partner, or give you financial support. As we have just described, it is relatively easy to define a specific purpose for a persuasion-type presentation.

The last reason to present is to give suggestions. This type of presentation is typically given at the beginning of a conference, in the form of keynote and opening speeches.

These reasons partly determine the format in which a presentation is performed, and fundamentally affect the presentation. Even if you are going to give the same presentation, you will need to change its format and style of the presentation according to whether you will give it at an academic conference in with 20 minutes for your presentation, with additional time for questions and answers, or at an informal occasion where no time limit is given, or when you have to deliver a 5-minute welcoming speech.

7.2.3   Preparing a Speech Manuscript

How should you prepare for an actual presentation? There are several methods you can use, but chiefly you can (1) prepare your key points only, (2) write out a manuscript and memorize it, (3) read a prepared manuscript aloud, and (4) prepare nothing (and improvise).

"Prepare your key points only" means you only prepare slides with only "bulleted lists" using Power Point or Impress (you may or may not show these slides to your audience) and formulate your speech itself as you go. This method is commonly used at an academic conference and in business.

The advantages of this style include: the audience feel confidence with your speech because your topics are laid out; since you can proceed while watching your audience's reaction, you can adjust the content of the speech to some extent (to better suit a particular audience, for example); and you can speak at your own pace. Note that, however, "adjust" here is not the same as "improvise."

Even a seasoned speaker needs to prepare thoroughly, including having a rehearsal. Actually, seasoned speakers never give a presentation without diligent preparation. A disadvantage of the "key points only" method is that sometimes you may not be able to tell your audience everything you intended to.

Another method is writing a manuscript and memorizing all of it for your presentation. This method is often used to make "routine" announcements, such as giving a profile of someone (including when introducing yourself) or announcing the opening of a conference. This method also brings about a sense of stability because your delivery is highly accurate and content is fixed.

However, the pace of your speech tends to be unnatural. Moreover, you cannot adjust the content of the speech on the spot, and above all, it takes a long time to write a manuscript. Its lack of spontaneity makes a memorized presentation not exactly a failure but easily forgettable. Therefore, the only merit of reading a manuscript aloud is accuracy. This type of delivery, however, is sometimes used when the speaker wants to quote words accurately during a presentation. Also, like a memorized speech, reading a manuscript is sometimes used to formally introduce someone or make "routine" announcements.

The last method is to improvise a speech on the spot, without using any visual aids like slides. A question-and-answer session at an academic conference out of necessity takes this form, but you should not do this for any other speech. You should not ask anyone to give a speech all of a sudden other than giving a toast at a party. If you are asked to give a speech well in advance, giving this type of a speech is out of the question.

7.2.4   Grounds for Argument

What is important in a speech is the rationale which supports the argument. Some of the methods used to derive a conclusion include deduction, induction and statistics.

Deduction, or deductive reasoning, attempts to derive a particular conclusion from general and universal premises. Mathematical proofs use deductive reasoning. On the other hand, induction or inductive reasoning attempts to find a general and universal rule from particular events. Another method is statistics, which is used widely in such fields as social science, medicine, psychology and human science. Data analysis including statistics is covered in a different chapter.

Each academic field has its own way of building a theory that is appropriate for the field. You learn how to build a theory and where to find its rationale at university. Please acquire these skills properly while you are a university student.

7.2.5   Speech Tips

This section introduces you a few tricks you should incorporate in your presentation. A dry and mechanical presentation is hard to sit through. A few little tricks will make a presentation easier to listen to for the audience and help your audience's understanding as well as promote their willingness to participate.

Use Metaphors, Analogies and Actual Experiences

For example, if you say "if we assume the earth is the size of a ping-pong ball, then the sun would be about the size of a sumo ring"[2] rather than saying "the sun is about 109 times larger than the earth," the audience can have a clearer mental image. If you can apply this technique skillfully during the key part of your presentation, your key points will be more memorable to your audience.

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[2]   A sumo ring is 4.55 m in diameter while a ping-pong ball is 40 mm in diameter. To judge whether this is an appropriate metaphor or not, consider if it is easy for the audience to imagine a ping-pong ball and a sumo ring, and whether your analogy is humorous. Since some of your audience members may not be familiar with sumo, this metaphor would not work for everyone. Probably, no metaphor will work for everyone.

If the audience remembers the content of your presentation three days later, your presentation was a success. Analogies, examples, and actual experiences can help your presentation become more memorable.

Lightening Your Presentation with Humor

Humor makes an audience relax and raises their interest level toward the speech and the speaker.

However, there are also risks accompanying humor as well. Not everyone can deliver jokes well. There is no universal humor which everyone will think is funny at a formal meeting. Well-planned humor loses spontaneity, and excessive humor may make you or your ideas look frivolous.

7.3   Structure of Presentation

The structure of a presentation does not differ much from that of a text. However, there are a few points where papers and presentations differ greatly.

One of them is for a presentation you need to consider the knowledge level of the audience. In the case of a paper, if a reader does not understand it, he or she can read reference books to acquire background information and then go back to it. For a presentation, however, there is no such luxury allowed[3]. Unless you present the content at a level the audience in front of you can understand, no one will be able to understand your presentation.

A text has a hierarchical structure, i.e. heading levels, such as chapters and sections. Since a text is split into paragraphs or headings use different sized fonts according to the heading levels, readers can follow the flow of the argument visually as well as intuitively. It is easy to get a feel of a document or similar at a glance. For example, the size of an academic paper can be understood just by looking at it. On the other hand, although the time for the delivery of most presentations is fixed, different presenters spend their allotted time in different ways. Therefore, a speaker has to guide the audience and help them understand the presentation's structure.

Let us divide a presentation into three parts, the opening, the middle, and the ending, and consider them. In general, the standard structure of a presentation is as follows: the speaker starts with the explanation of a broad concept during the opening section, describes his or her study (usually narrowly focused and detailed content) during the middle section, and positions the study in the context of the broader concept during the ending section.

Since the methods for developing an argument during the middle section vary from one field of study to another, they are difficult to generalize. But we can think of a few patterns.

One method has a summary of what to come in the beginning, details in the middle, and another summary at the end. This method is called the SDS method, after the order Summary, Details, and Summary.

Another method similar to the SDS method is the PREP method. PREP is the acronym for Point, Reason, Example, and Point. This method describes the conclusion first, followed by the reasoning by which the conclusion was reached, then adds explanation using specific examples, and finally states the conclusion again. Note that, just like in SDS, the beginning and the end are both the summary of the presentation.

Another method structures a presentation in chronological order. This method describes past and the present conditions, and then presents future prospects. For example, when describing the manufacturing process of a certain product, it is natural to explain in the order of the process. There may be a spatial structure in contrast to a chronological structure, but in either case, such a presentation structure may be a little atypical.

Except for the chronological type, the most important part of a presentation is the argument in the middle. You should give consideration to the breadth and depth of your argument, though it will also depend on the time allocated to the presentation.

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[3]   The situation has been changing because of the spread of mobile computing and the development of databases containing reliable information sources.

As the scope of an argument becomes broader, the depth in which it is discussed has to decrease. If you want a deep argument, you have to narrow its scope. In general, a popular presentation style at academic conferences is the deep exploration of a narrow topic.

Another reason way it is not a good idea to choose a broader topic is that it is harder to make an impact on the audience. It is difficult to squeeze the result of months or even years of research into a 10-minute presentation. What is most important is to give a presentation that has impact.

As for impact, the time where a presentation is about to end is the point when the audience pay attention to the speaker. A presentation shifts significantly when it moves from its opening section to its middle section, and from its middle section to its end part. But in particular, the time when the presentation starts to wrap up is the moment the audience members concentrate their attention on the speaker. Be it SDS or PREP, the reason why the conclusion is stated at the end is because the last message of the presentation tends to decide the impact that the whole presentation has.

7.4　　Audio-visual Materials

Audio-visual materials are very important presentation elements. These days, slides created by using PowerPoint or Impress are often used with a projector connected to a PC. Since many projectors have been introduced in elementary, junior high and high schools and in universities all over Japan, displaying slides with a projector has become a common style of presentation.

However, keep in mind that you may have to use an overhead projector (OHP). Or you can incorporate other tools in your presentation, such as a model or writing on a blackboard. Also there is another presentation style, called a poster session. This guide will not talk about these other methods; nevertheless these are important methods as well.

But, why do we use audio-visual materials in the first place? As mentioned above, there are several reasons to give a presentation, but a common one is to make an impact on the audience and let them go home with certain new information. Audio-visual materials are an effective means to make such an impact.

Projecting slides using a PC has many advantages, such as its ability to show graphics: in particular, charts, pictures, and photographs, and its ability to present text and audio at the same time. The prices of projectors have been become increasing cheaper, they have been reducing in size and the images they project have been becoming brighter. Together with notebook PCs, which have also been shrinking, projectors offer various advantages.

However, venues do not necessarily have projectors, and even if one is available, you may have trouble connecting it to your PC. Check this before you give your presentation.

Slides can be a powerful means of presentation, but at the same time, poorly prepared slides are not uncommon. This section describes standard practice for slide preparation, focusing on technical aspects. In order to avoid creating slides nobody wants to look at, key points to watch out for have been collected in this section. Be sure to observe these guidelines.

7.4.1　　Text

The following list is of key points to remember about text.

- Use a font size of 24 points or larger for bulleted lists and 32 points or larger for slide titles.

- Use a double-byte gothic type font for kana and kanji, and a sans-serif font for Western characters.

- Select fonts suitable for the time, the place and the occasion; do not use italics, etc.

- Do not write English words using capital letters only.

First, the most important point is to use a font size of 24 points or larger in bulleted lists, which form the main parts of slides. You should also take into consideration the dimensions of the room (especially its depth) you will give your presentation in as well as the sizes of the screen on which the slides will be projected, but in most cases you can avoid problems if you use a font size of 24 points or larger. For the same reason, slide titles should be 32 points or larger. Font sizes should be chosen in consideration of balance and they may be varied somewhat from slide to slide. However, font sizes should not change drastically between slides.

Incidentally, the default font sizes used in Impress and MS PowerPoint are for both application 44 points for titles and 32 points for text.

Gothic is a style of Japanese font with strokes of uniform thickness. This type of font is often used in titles in a book and gives a strong impression. In Windows, MS Gothic is included as standard. Mincho is another commonly used type of Japanese font. Mincho is a font style employing thick vertical strokes and thin horizontal strokes. Japanese books widely use Mincho for their texts, as in this Japanese version of this guide.

Fonts of the sans serif type have a uniformly thick typeface and no serifs (the short lines at the end of the main strokes of a character.) Arial is a typical sans-serif font. On the other hand, Times New Roman and New York are typical serif fonts, and as such do have serifs.

Presentation slides only include key points using a small number of words (we will come back to this topic later). They use only key points, not full sentences. When you write only key points using a small number of words, Gothic and sans-serif type fonts can be read quickly. On the other hand, when you write a long text, such as a book, you should use a Mincho or serif font.

Since there are different Gothic and sans-serif type fonts, use the one which is suitable for the time, the place, and the occasion. In addition to the font used for this guide's titles, Marumoji is one typical Japanese Gothic type font. There are also sans-serif fonts that are Marumoji-like, such as Comic Sans. These fonts do not give a serious impression, so they may not be appropriate for an academic presentation.

Italic characters have a slanted typeface. Italic characters have specific applications in publication, especially used with Western characters. But since Italic characters have poor readability on a screen, they should not be used in a presentation.

Finally, if all Western characters are written in capital letters, their readability will severely deteriorate. Type any sentence, for example "WASEDA UNIVERSITY WAS FOUND BY SHIGENOBU OKUMA" and "Waseda university was found by Shigenobu Okuma," on a slide and see for yourself which sentence is easier to read.

Examples are shown in Figure 7.1 (p. 106).

7.4.2   Colors

An explanation of color principles is out of the scope of this guide, but in order to see a color, we need three things: a light source, an object to see, and eyes. In terms of a presentation, the light source is the projector and the object to see is the screen. What we pay attention to is the eyes of the audience. In other words, the first of our concerns is what colors are eye-friendly for the audience.

We are going to talk about two kinds of colors here: background colors and font colors. In general, two colors with a high level of contrast, or to be exact, complementary colors, are said to set each other off the best. For example, black and white, and blue and yellow are complementary colors. Also black letters against a yellow background attracts attention, like in warning signs (for example, a nuclear sign).

フォント

ゴシック・サンセリフ体

- MSゴシック
- Arial
- Arial Narrow
- Normal
- **Bold**
- *The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog*
- THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG

明朝・セリフ体

- MS明朝
- Times New Roman
- Garamond

[1]

Figure 7.1: The Visual Effect of Fonts

However, what we have to consider here is readability. A bright yellow background tires the eyes.

Moreover, it is important to give consideration to those who have a color vision disorder. You should not prepare slides using a combination of red, green, and brown.

Individual colors give certain impressions. Cold colors create a calm atmosphere. On the other hand, warm colors give the audience a warm feeling. However, since strong warm colors may make your presentation look unsettling, you may want to use light warm colors.

Color combinations can be stored as templates. Once you create a color scheme, save it as a template. Or you may want to look for a good template and borrow it for your presentation.

Many businesses have such templates prepared to create a sense of uniformity in their company presentations. In any event, just remember that colors deeply affect the design and impression of slides as a whole.

The following summarizes this section.

- Use a combination of colors with a high level of contrast for font and background color (a light font color against a dark background or a dark font color against a light background).

- Use subdued background colors as much as possible.

- It is important to give consideration to eye-friendliness for the audience and in particular those members who have a color vision disorder.

- Take advantage of templates.

Lately people have become increasingly more interested in colors. There is even such a thing as a color coordinator certification. Since various books about color schemes have been published and it is also easy to find reference information on the Web, you may want to check this subject out.

7.4.3   Layout

Layout means page composition or format. Presentation software comes with several layout options (we will come back to this topic when explaining Impress later).

The most commonly used types of slide layout are opening titles and bulleted lists. A typical example of an unsuccessful bulleted list is where too much information or text has been put on a single slide (we will come back to opening titles later). If your slides are jam-packed with text, the audience will stop reading them after having one look at them and will lose interest in your presentation. Once the audience loses interest in your presentation, the audience will stop listening to your presentation. The question-and-answer session at the end will be an awkward silence.

Slides are a means of communication. But the most important thing is to draw attention to you, the speaker, not to your slides. Slides can be used for efficiently providing a type of information that only slides can convey effectively. As soon as a slide are put up, the audience's attention is divided between the slide and the speaker. You want the audience to grasp the information on your slide quickly and bring its attention back to you. In order to do so, each slide must be structured in such a way that it can be quickly understood.

There are a few key points to accomplishing this. All of them may seem obvious, but let us go over them individually anyway.

- Use plain, recognizable titles.

- Balance the amounts of information given on slides and verbally.

- Avoid presenting information in unnecessary detail.

Except for the opening title, each slide is given a brief heading which summarizes the slide. Each heading can be a sentence or a phrase. Usually phrases are used for headings, but it may not be a bad idea to go ahead and use a sentence instead. In the book called "Molecular Biology of the Cell,"[3] which is considered by many as a great biology textbook, all headings are given in the form of a sentence that plainly explains the conclusion of the corresponding section. Using a sentence in a heading has an advantage of specifically indicating the content of the slide, and therefore both a speaker and an audience can focus on the topic while proceeding with the speech. However, since this is not common practice, the audience may think your slides are a little odd.

Next, it goes without saying that the content of each slide and that of the speech need to match, but you must see to it that the amounts of information in your slides and in your speech also match. This means that it is not desirable to have a dozen slides for a short explanation or a single slide for 30-minute speech. Good slides go hand-in-hand with the structure of the presentation, helping the audience grasps the structure intuitively.

Finally, if you put too much information in one slide, the audience will not be able to tell which item is most important, or will give up understanding your slides all together. Bulleted lists are generally used on slides. Each item in a list should be at most two lines longs, and a slide should contain at most four items, preferably three. Moreover, remember that you can have about seven sections in one slide. If you count the title as one of them, you can use about six items in the main body of your slide. If you want to include more than six items, consider using multiple slides.

7.4.4   Using Images Actively

Actively incorporate images, photographs, graphs, pictures, and figures into your slides, if they aid the understanding of the audience. However, this does not mean you must include images at any cost.

If you are going to simply read what is written on your slides, you may be better off having only images on them without text. Inexperienced speakers tend to cling on to the text written on slides. The authors have firsthand experience of such presentations. You may feel psychologically secure if you just stare at and converse with your PC or OHP screen, but such a presentation is painful to listen to for the audience.

7.4.5   Opening Slides: Put Yourself in Your Audience's Shoes

A common mistake a speaker makes is to believe, without foundation, that the audience has some idea about what you are going to talk about. If it is at an academic conference, for example, since attendees come all the way to listen to the presentations, there is the belief that they must have some background knowledge about the field. Also since the audience "invests" their time in listening to the presentations, speakers believe there is no doubt that they intend to bring the knowledge home.

However, you may be expecting too much if you assume that the audience has read your paper or even has basic knowledge about your particular field of study.

During your presentation, you are going to talk about the new idea you came up with or new discovery you made. Therefore your presentation will naturally become technical. So if you were the audience, what you would think before the presentation? Probably, you would think about these things.

1.   What is this presentation about?

2.   Why is the content important?

3.   What is the basic knowledge required to understand this presentation?

4.   In what order will this presentation be given?

The opening title and the slide following it must answer these questions, and it is even better if these are visually helpful as well. For example, compare the following two slides.
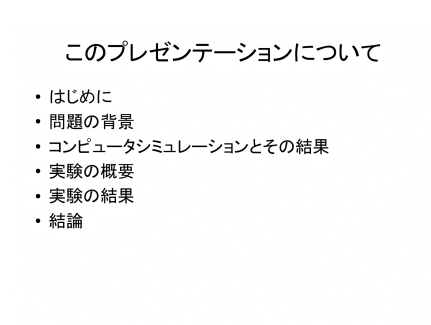

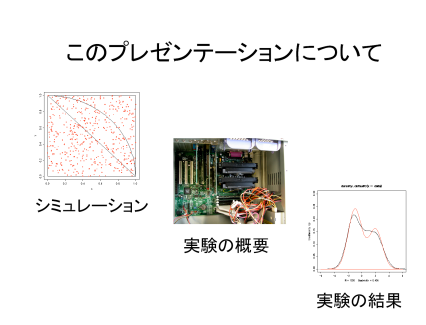Figure 7.2: Presentation Outline Using Text Only

Figure 7.3: Picking out Only Key Points with Use of Images

Since these examples are vague and the graphs and photographs used are totally random, it may be hard for you to understand the authors' intention. That intention is as follows.

First, since the words "はじめに (Introduction)" and "結論 (Conclusion)" are clearly included in the presentation, you probably do not need to mention them. A key graph or a photograph, which can conjure up a specific image concerning your subsequent argument, put in the most important part helps the audience follow the rest of the presentation smoothly.

You can similarly elaborate on your opening title. An opening title includes the title of the presentation, the name of the presenter and his or her affiliation. In addition, consider putting an image or a picture which relates to the content of the presentation. This image or picture can motivate the audience to pay more attention to your presentation.

7.4.6   Slides for the Middle and End of a Presentation

While the opening slides help the audience to grasp the overall structure of the presentation, the slides during its middle section explain specific details. However, the slide to show the structure of the presentation may be necessary here, too.

That is because when the middle section of the presentation is divided into several subtopics, it is necessary to explain to the audience new topics at the beginning of each subtopic and about the structure of the presentation with regard to the subtopic.

As mentioned earlier, the slides in the end section of the presentation, which summarize the entire presentation, are very important because they tend to have an impact on the audience. They do so because the end section is when the audience once more pays close attention to the speaker. This also depends on the number of topics in the presentation's middle section, but a short presentation should have as few closing slides as possible. Longer presentations do not have to follow this rule, but it seems a good idea to narrow down your key points when stating your conclusion.

7.5   The Actual Presentation

Even if you are fully prepared, failure is an inevitable aspect of presentation. In order to reduce failures, you should factor in certain risks.

7.5.1   Rehearsal

The preparation for a presentation requires more than the meticulous elaboration of slides. Be sure to have rehearsals. You should complete the elaboration of the slides at least a few days before the presentation day. The most embarrassing thing which can happen during a presentation is to forget what you are supposed to say. By having rehearsals, you are more likely to avoid a situation like that.

Even academic staff of a university, who give lectures just about every day, prepare meticulously including rehearsals whenever they want to give a well-structured lecture.

The question remains as to how much rehearsing you need to do. The answer to this question is "until you can deliver your presentation confidently." Having said that, you should not give a rote presentation by memorizing a manuscript from beginning to end.

Before an important presentation, you should have at least two rehearsals. You should have someone see your actual slides (not necessarily their final version) at least once.

You should refrain from changing your slides right before your presentation, except for correcting mistakes. You may think you are making improvements, but such changes are likely to do more harm to your overall presentation than good.

7.5.2　Voice and Motion

We are born with our voices. Unfortunately we cannot change our voices fundamentally. Some people have distinctive voices and some others have impressive voices. However we cannot acquire such voices even if we try. What we can change is the volume and speed of our voices. You should keep your voice at a volume and a speed that are comfortable for your audience.

In particular, keep to the speed you usually talk, and try to speak loudly and clearly. These guidelines also apply when you use a microphone. This may not be so easy until you get used to it, but by thorough rehearsal, you will be able to acquire a sense of the right speech speed.

The movement of your body is also important. We often see speakers standing with their back to the audience and staring at the projector screen in order to read it. We cannot tell to whom they are giving the presentation. Also since such speakers stand with their back to the audience, the audience may not be able to hear their voices well, either.

Factors, such as where you stand, whether you use a pointing stick or a laser pointer, and whether you use your hand to point to things, change depending on the room in which you give your presentation and the equipment in the room. The points you need to pay attention to here are not difficult techniques: they are something like making eye contact with the audience if possible, paying attention to the way you are standing and breathing, and making sure that the movement of your face and hands are natural. If a speaker feels insecure, his or her audience will also feel uncomfortable. We understand that it is just not possible for you to be not nervous during your presentation, but at least you should try to act as if you are not nervous.

Remember the only thing you can do to alleviate the tension and anxiety you will experience during an actual presentation is to rehearse.

7.6　Creating a Presentation Using Impress

This section shows you how to create a presentation using Impress.

7.6.1　Presentation Wizard

To start Impress, click "**Start**" → "**Programs**" → "**OpenOffice.org 2.1**" → "**OpenOffice.org Impress**." Unless the setting has been changed, the Presentation Wizard is displayed (Figure 7.4).
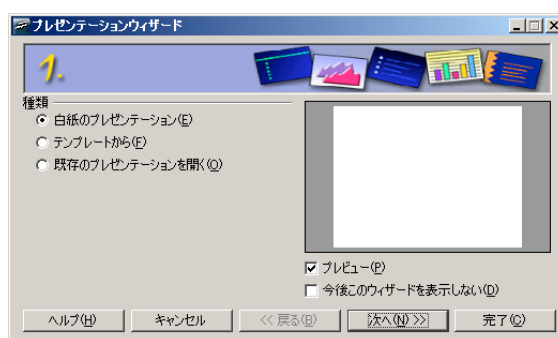

Figure 7.4: Presentation Wizard

In the wizard, you can choose from creating a presentation from scratch, starting from a template, or opening an existing presentation. Let us start from scratch. Just click "**Next**."

Next, select a slide design and an output medium for your presentation. Since you can change the slide design later, leave it as it is here. For an output medium, you can choose from screen, overhead sheet, slide, and paper (to be printed and distributed). For example, you would not use a black background when your presentation uses overhead sheets or paper handouts. So medium selection affects the slide color scheme.

Finally, determine the slide transition to be used and whether or not the slides will advance automatically. If you select a slide transition effect, the animation effect will be applied every time slides are switched throughout the presentation. However, since the animation effects of Impress are not very smooth, you may be better off not using them. Moreover, since probably you will not have all of your slides advance at a fixed time interval, leave "**Select the presentation type**" as "**Default**," and click "**Create**."
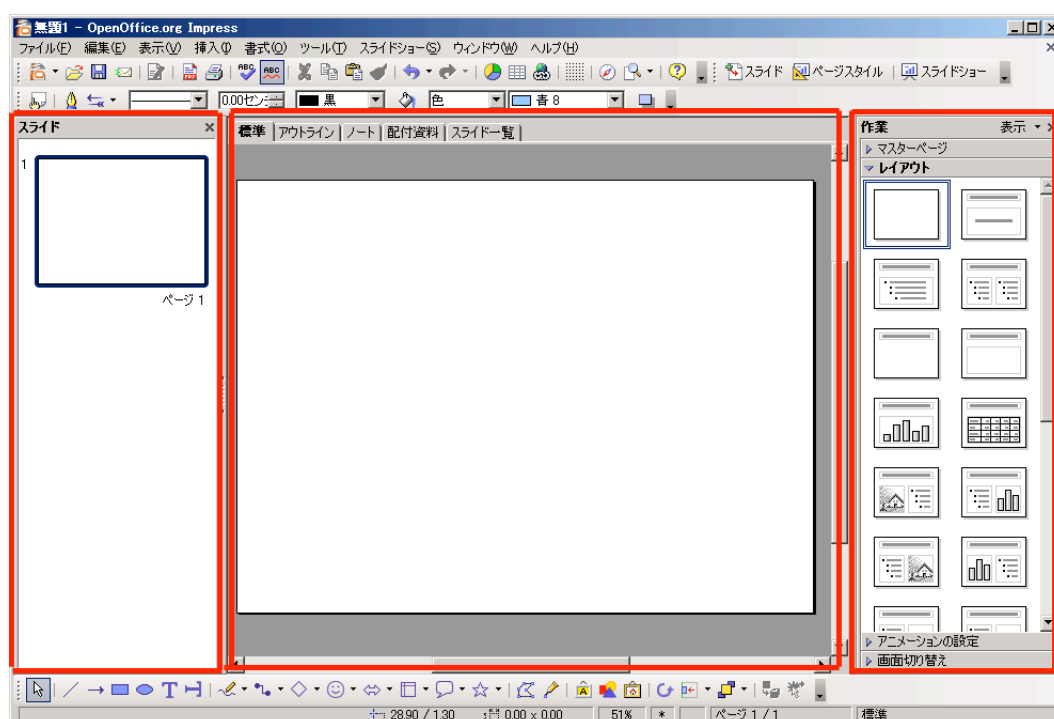
The window will look like Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5: Initial Window

7.7   Basic Impress Layout

Impress has a three-pane (section) structure[4] as shown in Figure 7.5, unless its configuration is changed. The left pane shows all the slides. The middle pane shows the slide currently selected in the left pane enlarged.

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[4]   A pane is another word for window. When a window is divided into two or more areas, each such area is called a pane.

The middle pane contains tabs[5] labeled "Normal," "Outline," "Notes," "Handout" and "Slide Sorter." These tabs are used to switch the way information is displayed in the middle pane. You can attach notes for the presenter to the slides projected during an actual presentation. If you use bulleted lists in most of the slides, you can create an outline of the presentation by extracting only the text from the slides. You can display only an outline of the presentation (in the Outline tab) as it is easier to see the logical structure of the presentation in this form.

The right pane is used for deciding the layout of the slide currently displayed. You can choose from various standard layouts, such as a blank slide, title and text and title and chart.

The right pane provides another useful function: "Master Pages." The default layout of Impress is black text against a white background. Nothing is wrong with the default layout, but sometimes you may want to add some colors. You can use design and color scheme theory to pick colors, but producing good designs and color schemes also requires talent. Nonprofessionals often fail to produce good results. Therefore, Impress provides certain templates for color schemes and so forth in the form of Master Pages.

Master Pages are easy to use. You just click "**Master Pages**" in the right pane, and click the Master Page you like out of those displayed. You can see that the background and text colors and text layout change.

There are not many standard Master Pages included in Impress. But since additional Master Pages (templates) are available free of charge on the Internet, installing them on your PC may be a good idea.

http://ooosupport.good-day.net/en/download/templates/index_html

7.7.1   Creating Title Page

First, let us create a title page. If "layouts" are not displayed in the right pane, click "**Layouts**" there. A blank slide is displayed right after Impress starts. Let us give a layout to this slide. Click the layout you like from those displayed as in Figure 7.6. Your chosen layout is applied to the slide.
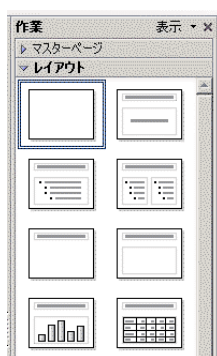

Figure 7.6: Layouts

The layout of the title slide is the top right one in Figure 7.6. When you click this layout, the text "Click to add title" and "Click to add text" appear in the previously blank slide. Click on these and type in text to create your title page.

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[5]   These "tabs" are often used to change the display in the respective pane.

However, you may want to put a little more effort into font sizes and the layout of the title page. It may be better to start from a blank slide and add your favorite parts from the Drawing toolbar (Figure 7.7), which is displayed by default in Impress.
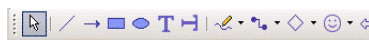

Figure 7.7: Drawing Toolbar

7.7.2   Adding Slides

To add a slide, click "**Insert**" → "**Slide**". The added slide inherits the layout of the last slide. For example, if you are working on a blank slide immediately before adding another slide, the new slide will be blank, too.

If it is easier to create another slide from the slide you are currently working on, click "**Duplicate Slide**." The current slide will be duplicated to create a new slide.

"**Summary Slide**" is a useful function. It will pick up only titles from all slides and create a bulleted list. In other words, the function will pick up titles and create a table of contents automatically. It comes in handy when creating a slide such as "Presentation Outline."

The reverse function is "**Expand Slide**." If you created a table of contents on a slide in the form of a bulleted list, this function will create slides each of which has one of the items from the table of contents as a title.

7.7.3   Inserting Charts

You can also import tables, charts, pictures, formulas, movies and sound into your slides. Select one from the "**Insert**" menu.

For charts, pictures, movies or sound, you must select a stored file. That is, you need to create it beforehand. A simple figure can be created using the drawing function of Impress.

You can create a graph or a table using Impress, but it is easier to copy and paste one from Calc. In this way, the data can be easily reused again and again.

7.7.4   Playing a Presentation

After completing your slides, play your presentation. To start a slide show, click "**Slide Show**" → "**Slide Show**."

You should keep in mind that a slide show starts from the slide which is currently displayed. When you have just finished creating your slides, the last slide of the presentation will probably be displayed on your PC screen. If you start a slide show in this state, Impress will show only the last slide and the slide show will end.

To start a slide show from the beginning, click the first slide in the left pane to display it and then start the slide show.

If you want to start a slide show from a specific slide, you can do so by displaying the slide before starting the slide show.