Tips & Tricks for Presenting at a Virtual Conference

GCWS Graduate Student Conference

Prepare Yourself

Do something active or positively stimulating before your presentation to get into a good state of mind.

Take steps to make sure your voice is in a good place. Drinking tea or a soothing beverage is helpful.

Practice your presentation to build confidence. Watch other speakers who inspire you before you practice.

Use a timer, to ensure you are working comfortably within the time constraints.

Speak in a way that is passionate and excited about your content, this will transfer to the audience and keep them engaged.

Prepare Your Content

You can be as conversational or formal in your presentation as you like. There will be a Q&A after everyone presents and this is your opportunity to engage directly with the audience.

Go through your slides the night before you are presenting and make sure there is nothing missing, extra, or out of place.

Visual components are important for an online event since people won’t see your hand gestures or body language as well. Visual aids can help you better explain what you want to say.

Create a script or outline for yourself. This allows you to take stock of where you are at in your presentation if you lose your place. You can include cues for yourself, such as which images or videos to show, to make your presentation run as smoothly as possible.

Practice your content so that you do not read off your script the entire time. Make sure that you use natural intonation, pitch, and volume just as you would in a conversation. Your script should serve as an aid. Reading directly from the paper, especially with a virtual format, will lose the audience.

Prepare Your Technology

It is important that your environment isn’t too dark. Test different lighting options to see which works best. This applies whether you are presenting live or pre-recording.

Do a sound test ahead of time to ensure your microphone is working and your sound is clearly audible. Practice muting and unmuting yourself so that you are prepared for your presentation and the Q&A.

Test your wifi connection the day of your presentation, with enough time to troubleshoot any issues.
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Online Specific Presentation Tips

- Mute your microphone when you’re not talking.
- Look directly into the camera as often as possible, this will engage your audience.
- Feel free to present seated or standing.
- Pretend the attendees are in front of you while you are presenting.
- Don’t be afraid to use hand motions, as you would naturally when presenting in person.
- Vary your pitch, speed, and volume.
- Practice intonation and your script, so there is an ebb and flow.
- Time your presentation to remain within your allotted time. Be mindful of this during your presentation.
- Remove audio distractions: cell phone, e-mail pop ups, rustling papers, etc.
- Close tabs in your browser and desktop, especially if you will be sharing your screen. Hide sensitive info.
- Mute notifications on your screen for the duration of the presentations.