

# Top Tips for Talks

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<http://astro.dur.ac.uk/~done/howtogivetalks.pdf>

# Structure

## Don't

- Launch into the material without stating goals or purpose.
- End abruptly after your last point.
- Throughout, keep your audience clueless about *what* you are doing and *why*.

## Do

- Give a title + author slide,
- Structure into a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Beginning: Summarize scope, motivation and goals
- Conclusions: summarize at the end the points you would like the audience to take away

# Content

## Don't

- Target the talk to *your* knowledge
- Bore the audience to death with details
- Or do the opposite and just give impressive words with no content.
- Morph seamlessly from review to project

## Do

- Target it to your AUDIENCE
  - What do *they* already know about the subject or background to it?
  - What are *they* likely to find interesting and exciting?
- Stress what YOU did!

# Timing

## Don't

- Attempt to cover far more material than is practical in the time allotted.
- Be really really speedy to make sure every detail is covered.
- Or opposite, end the talk abruptly about halfway through your material.

## Do

- Work out how much you can cover in the TIME ALLOWED (+ questions)
- 20 min + 5 min questions
- No more than 1 concept per slide and around 1 slide per minute
- PRACTICE TIMING
- Set marker points: you will speak faster in front of an audience!

# Viewgraph Style

## Don't

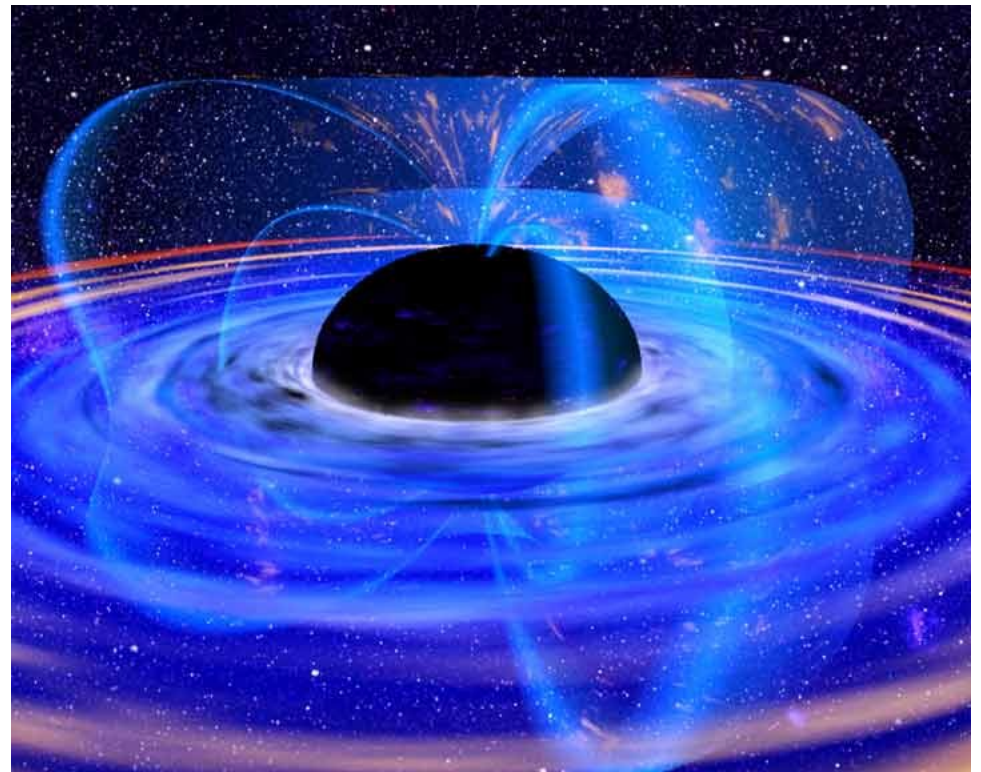
- Bombard your audience with text (like this!)
- Use too small a font size (24pt minimum, this is 28)
- Get too techno – moving text is distracting, so are busy /dark backgrounds
- Include movies/internet links unless you can check they will play

## Do

- Rely primarily on the spoken word: *talk*
- And on PICTURES: images reinforce words (not like this!)
- Header title to summarize slide concept/topic

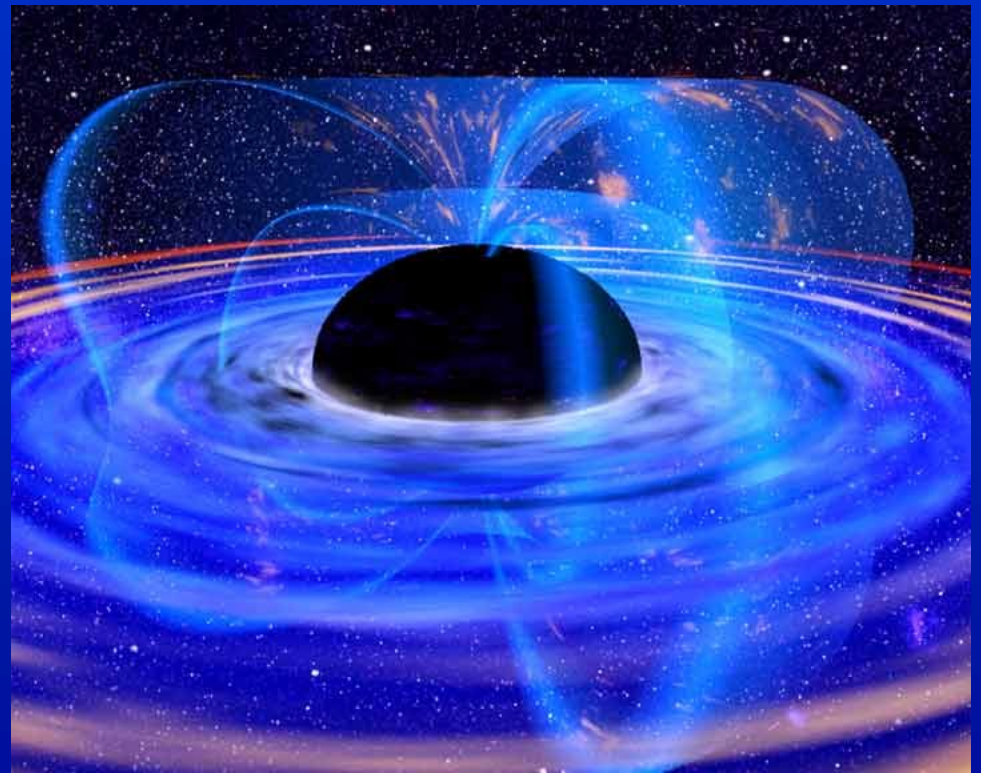
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- Accreting BH: huge X-ray luminosity close to event horizon  $R_s$
- Emission from region of strong spacetime curvature
- Observational constraints on strong gravity **if** we can understand accretion!



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# Presentation

## Don't

- Talk to the screen
- Use notes (use your own viewgraphs as notes!)
- Mumble
- Jangle keys/coins in pockets
- Use a laserpointer – it magnifies handshake!

## Do

- Face the audience and talk mainly to them, turning to the screen *occasionally* to point to a key figure – you can see your PC screen.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard at the back of the room
- Arrive early at session to upload talk onto system

# Ending and questions

## Don't

- Just stop after your conclusions
- Panic over questions!

## Do

- Give the audience a clear end signal: 'thank you'
- Concise answer if you know, or 'that's a really good question' if you don't (time to think!)
- 'I don't know the answer but I think...' or 'lets talk about that over coffee'

# Summary

## Don't

- Panic

## Do

- Structure your talk
- Target your talk
- Time your talk
- Practice your talk