

Information Technology and Public Policy

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Notes for presenters

Students will be located at four sites: the University of Washington, Microsoft, UC Berkeley, and UC San Diego.

Sites will be linked using Microsoft ConferenceXP and UW Classroom Presenter – Internet conferencing and distributed presentation tools. A full archive (course session audio/video, Powerpoint lecture notes and course session annotations, electronic whiteboard) will be available on the web.

From the speaker’s point of view, the key attribute of Presenter is that it provides “virtual Mylar” allowing you to annotate your slides on the fly, for emphasis or clarification, using the Tablet PC stylus. It also has an integrated whiteboard capability. The price is that **your slides must be in Powerpoint** (vs. pdf or LaTeX or whatever), and **there must not be any “builds”** (single slides where material is added every time you hit return – of course, it's possible to simulate this perfectly well using multiple slides). You will **email your Powerpoint to our tech staff one day in advance of the class session**. (Email to Fred Videon, fred@cs.washington.edu, and Rod Prieto, rprieto@cs.washington.edu.) They will pass it through the Presenter pre-processor, and have it ready on a Tablet PC at the lectern when you arrive for class. Please **number your slides** as part of our “when the technology goes south” fallback plan.

More on Presenter

Tablet PC Presenter has a very simple user interface – there’s essentially no learning curve for basic presentations.

Your Powerpoint (.ppt) is pre-processed by the DeckBuilder application (or by a Powerpoint plugin) which creates a Presenter file (.csd). This file is in turn opened by Presenter.

In use, Presenter shows the instructor a different view than it shows the students. The students see a single transparency. The instructor sees a large version of the current transparency, and a “filmstrip” showing small versions of the next few transparencies (so you don’t get surprised!). You can “advance” by using the stylus either to poke the next transparency, or to poke the arrows at the upper left and upper right of the display. The instructor also sees simple controls for annotating, erasing, and using the whiteboard arrayed across the top of the display. All of these are completely intuitive.

To experiment with Presenter prior to class (you can use it on any Windows XP PC – doesn’t have to be a Tablet PC although it’s oriented towards that), you can download and install Presenter and DeckBuilder here:

<http://www.cs.washington.edu/education/dl/presenter/>. We will use version 1.9.8 – get it under “Downloads” in the left-hand column. Be sure to see the “Getting Started Guide” linked under “Notes” – http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/rea/Presenter_howto.htm. (We will not utilize the “Student Inking Activities.”)

Tips for annotation and whiteboard use

There are three “standard” uses of annotation: emphasis (“attentional”), diagrams, and text.

- Avoid clutter
- Use color thoughtfully (don’t use black ink to annotate black text)
- Pre-plan some specific annotations (provide an x-y axis, or a quad-chart)
- Pre-plan some whiteboard use.

More tips are in this easy-reading paper:

http://www.cs.washington.edu/education/dl/presenter/papers/AAM_2005.pdf.

Tips for class interaction

This is a multi-site class with audio and video latency. Interacting with students is very different than in a single classroom.

- Be alert for spontaneous questions from remote sites.
- Periodically pause for questions, perhaps polling each site.
- Plan some explicit activities during each class that will require groups of students to work together – “For the next 5 minutes, break up into groups of four and list the three most important ...”

When the technology goes south

Presenter itself is solid. The Internet conferencing, however, has proven to be flaky, because it utilizes multicast. The tech staff is prepared with a set of backup plans to avoid wasting too much time when things go south (“when,” not “if” ...):

- Switch from multicast to tunneling
- Drop back to a telephone conference call where the tech staff at each site advances the transparencies on cue (that’s why we ask you to number your slides)
- In the extreme, cut off a misbehaving site and have those students watch the web archive (which preserves all annotations, etc.) the next day

The trick is for them to make these decisions rapidly and reasonably. Do remember, this is an experiment!

The class meets from 6:30-9:20, with 15-minute breaks at approximately 7:20 and 8:20. We can move the breaks to cover technical difficulties.