



The Paper Chase

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Preview

- Writing a paper
 - And reading it...

- Writing a talk
 - And giving it...



Primary Rules

- "One ping only, please."
Captain Ramius
Hunt for Red October, 1990



Secondary Rules

- Scientific writing
 - != literature
 - == journalism
- Don't bury the lead (top-down structure)
 - Write in simple, direct sentences
 - "Just the facts, ma'am."
Sgt. Joe Friday, *Dragnet*



Say what *they* need to hear

- Motivate, explain, and discuss
 1. Tell them what you will tell them
 2. Tell them
 3. Tell them what you told them (briefly)

- “Cartoon” your diagrams

- Less is more



NOT what *you* want to say

- Don't rehash your discovery process
- Skip tangents you find interesting
- If you have more than one thing to say:
 - WRITE MULTIPLE PAPERS



Caveat scriptor

The reader is *always* right

- Keep their interest
- Convince them
- Even if they're not right:
treat them as if they were
Or find a different set of readers (venue)



Reading a paper

- Skim
- Take multiple passes
- Listen for the “ping”



Writing a talk...

- Focus on WHAT, not HOW
 - An advertisement to read your paper
 - NOT a substitute for reading it

- Skip the animations



KISS

- 5 items per slide... why?
- AUDIENCE SHORT ATTENTION SPAN
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- Some of your audience is *old*



Giving a talk

- Do not read every...
 - Single, solitary, unique, and non-repeated word
 - On the slides you have presented for
 - Infocom 2006's Student Workshop panel on writing
- Lasers are for DVD players
 - Optics labs, Bond villains, etc.
- Are you waiting for a call?



Finally...

“One ping only, please.”