



Ignite Presentation Guide

Overview

Thank you for your engagement in presenting a great Ignite talk! The Ignite presentation format is a 5 minutes long presentation with 20 slides and with the slides advancing automatically every 15 seconds, forcing speakers to get the point, fast. It's such a fast format that it's best thought of as a performance, rather than a lecture.

Ignite presentations are a tradition at Understanding Risk Conferences. They are a way for session leads to 'pitch' their session on the opening night to 'sell' the audience on attending their session over the coming days.

Logistics and practices

The Ignite presentations will take place on **Monday, September 17 in the afternoon.**

There will be an Ignite rehearsal that you **must** attend if you are going to present. The Ignite rehearsal will be **on Monday morning, September 17 in the Palace of Serbia.**

If you would like to have a Skype training a few weeks beforehand, please let Xiaochen Wang (xwang26@worldbank.org) know by **Friday, August 24.**

Slide design

The UR organizing team will provide you with Slide 1 that will detail the session title, session day and time, session room and Ignite presenter name.

We recommend that your last slide (Slide 20) is also the session title, session day and time and session room.

Tips and helpful hints

The following tips come from a veteran Ignite speaker (not UR-related) and we encourage you to read through the list:

- **Pick strong stories and big themes.** What do you love? What do you hate? What is the best advice anyone ever gave you? Pick stories with big themes, since they require less introduction. What are the 4 most important things to know about X that no one talks about? The stronger the topic & title the easier the material is to create. Consider what one thing you want people to have learned when you're done and make sure to drive that home at the end.
- **Figure out your points before you make slides.** Talking about something for five minutes is easy – really, give it a shot once or twice before you make a single slide (practice with a timer) it will help you sort out what you want to say. You'll quickly discover how unlikely it is to run out of things to say during an ignite talk. Once you know the 4 major points you want to make, only then work on finding images and slides to support what you're going to say.



- **Don't get hung up on slides.** What you say matters most. Good slides support what you're saying, not the other way around. The last thing you want is to end up chasing your slides, a common problem at Ignite as you'll never catch up. **Pick simple images and if you must use text, be sparse (and use large 50+pt fonts).** No bullet lists, just one or two points. Make the slides flexible enough that if you fall behind it's easy to skip something to catch up.
- **300 seconds is easy to practice.** You can practice 10 times in an hour. Do it (The average Ignite speaker practices 5 times). 300 seconds equals 10 television commercials – you can make great points in a short time if you refine your thoughts. The entire sermon on the mount can be read in about 5 minutes and The Gettysburg address takes about 2 and a half minutes.
- **It is good to breathe.** There is no law that says you must fill every second with talking. When you practice, practice breathing. Give your audience a moment to digest the last thing you said. Take a moment between points. Like whitespace in visual design it's the pauses that make what you say stand out clearly. Give yourself a slide or two that's just for catching up and taking a breath.
- **Make your talk fault tolerant.** Unlike normal presentations, if something goes wrong there's no going back. You should build your talk into 4 or 5 pieces, where each piece could stand alone. Then if you fall behind, or something goes wrong, when the first slide for the next part comes up, you can easily recover.
- **Watch some ignite talks!** Some of the best ignite talks get posted to the ignite show where you can see many different ways people use the format. Some good examples include:
 - [Commutapult](#)
 - [Great Designers Steal](#)
 - [How to Solve a Song](#)
 - [Secret Underground World of Lego](#)
- **Plan to lose your first and last slide.** Time will get eaten by getting on and off stage, the audience laughing and by any ad-libs you do. When you practice allow for some extra seconds, especially in the second half of your talk, when you might need to catch up. Plan and practice for about 4:30 instead of the full 5:00.
- **Keep your fonts large.** Assume people don't see well. Even if they did, people will be trying to listen to you. The more you try to cram text on the screen at the same time, the less likely any of it will be understood. Same goes for complex diagrams – there just isn't time. Simple images or photographs work best. And again, you are not required to use slide at all.
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