1 The Assignment

This assignment will give you further experience preparing and presenting a technical talk, as well as further experience critiquing other technical talks, in a friendly setting. What is different this time is (a) the greater scope of your talk, and (b) the expectation of a cohesive group presentation.

The motivation for this assignment is similar to that for the individual presentation. Since many of your activities as a professional will be carried out as part of a team, it is not unreasonable to expect that many of your professional presentations will also be a team effort. There is still a need for the material to be logically organized, explained, and illustrated so that the audience can learn something from your presentation. However, when a presentation must be a group effort, additional time and planning is necessary so that ideas can be communicated and a consensus can be reached. More effort is needed to assign tasks, coordinate activities, and develop the final product.

1.1 Topics

The topics for this talk are drawn from the same list of topics as the individual presentations. As you recall, the topics covered software products that might be used in a professional setting. Unlike the individual talk, this talk must be broader in scope, must cover more features, and must cover those features in more depth.

In addition to the time spent gathering information about the product and preparing the presentation, you will have to allocate time to meet with your group to develop and organize your presentation. When your group decides to have a meeting, try to create an agenda ahead of time, and keep notes during the meeting to keep track of important ideas. There is no official draft review of this assignment, however it is expected that individuals will review their plans and material with the other members of the group and offer constructive suggestions. It is also permissible for a group to help another group, for example, by providing technical assistance. The group should strive to develop a common “framework” and approach so that each member can contribute their part seamlessly. The final presentation should be well organized and cohesive; i.e., it should not look like a series of individual presentations strung together. Some class time might be set aside for groups to meet, discuss, and work on their presentation, but you should plan on meeting primarily as a group outside of class.

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1 Adapted from RIT DCS, H. Etlinger
1.2 Scheduling and Approval

As a general rule, only one group may speak on a given topic, although some exceptions may be made. Your group’s topic and time slot must be requested by email and will be approved on a first-come first-served basis. The request must be made on or before the due date given at the top of this assignment.

To request a topic/time slot, your group must send an email message to your instructor on or before the due date. This email message is formal, not casual. Include in your subject line your course number and your section number, and clearly indicate the nature of your request. Indicate the name of your group, the members of your group, and the group member who should receive the response from the message. Give more than one possible topic, listed in order of preference. For each proposed topic, include two or three sentences describing what you plan to cover. In a similar fashion, list a few time slots in order of preference (each entry in the list should consist of a specific date and a specific time slot).

As topics and time slots are approved, they will be posted to a schedule published on a web page. You are encouraged to view this schedule before submitting your request. **No group** will be allowed to speak on a topic that is not first approved.

1.3 Content and Format

Target your presentation to last somewhere between 25 to 30 minutes, including question/answer time, with each member of your group speaking an approximately equal amount of time. Group members must coordinate their efforts and develop strategies in the event that something unusual happens (for example, an overhead projector fails, a computer connection cannot be established, etc). You should also coordinate the transitions between speakers in your group so that the result is smooth and logical. Allow five to eight minutes for questions and answers, but be prepared to talk about something else if there are no questions.

As with individual presentations, you will have access to the white board in the classroom. Plan on distributing handouts to the class. Include whatever visual aids you think are desirable (e.g., outlines, diagrams, screen dumps, examples, etc.).

It is expected that the bulk of your presentation will consist of material that your group produces itself. In some cases, you may wish to show or distribute material that comes from other sources. That’s fine, but make sure you properly acknowledge all sources. While some examples developed by others will be acceptable, you should strive to develop your own examples as well.

If you would like me to copy handouts for you, you must give them to me at least 48 hours before you’re scheduled to talk. Along with your handouts, include a separate request memo that formalizes your request and includes any specific copying instructions. You may either give this request directly to me, leave it in the mailbox...
outside of my office, or send it to me as an email message, with the item you would like copied as an attachment to the email message.

When it’s your turn to present, take a moment to organize your group. Consider whether you need to adjust the lights or arrange anything else in the classroom. Arrange ahead of time roles for individuals so that initial set up and the distribution of materials is done efficiently (make sure I get a copy). Factor in time to set up and take down equipment. Finally, make sure you begin your presentation by formally introducing each member of your group!

1.4 Attire

The purpose of this assignment is to give you as realistic an experience as possible within a class setting. This includes dressing as you would for a formal business presentation to clients. Men should wear a tie, slacks, reasonable shoes and optionally, a sport coat or suit. Women should wear a dress, a “dressy” blouse and skirt, a blouse and slacks, or a business suit. This will help set a business-like tone for the class. You should think of your presentation as a technical talk delivered to colleagues, some of whom may not be familiar with you or with the product you are talking about.

2 Evaluation

Each group will be critiqued by the rest of the class. The critique will cover both technical content and style. A significant portion of your in-class participation grade will be based on your critique of everyone else’s presentation, so you need to be there both mentally and physically. Your attendance at all presentations is required! You will not have to evaluate other groups on the day that you speak, although you can do so if you wish.

Students should pick up a packet of evaluation forms at the start of class. Fill in your name and the identifying information for the day’s talk based on the class schedule. As the talk proceeds, fill in parts of the evaluation form and then complete it shortly after the talk is finished. The evaluation must be turned in at the conclusion of class and is not accepted after that.

3 Grading

Each group will receive copies of the evaluations from the class and also the instructor’s comments. A group can earn a maximum score of 150 on their presentation. The score is based on the following grading rubric:
In addition, a group may have their earned score reduced by up to 15 for not following the correct procedure for submitting a request for a topic and time slot.

This assignment is worth a maximum of 15 points toward the “Group Presentation” category. Dividing the earned score by 10 results in the actual number of points awarded for this category.

The table above will be used to derive a group grade, and in the vast majority of cases, each student within the group will receive this group grade. In addition, each group member will also be given an opportunity to complete and submit a group self review form after giving their presentation. This form contains further instructions as well as information on how the group self review contributes to your grade. Information from this form as well as instructor observation can be used to adjust the group presentation grade for any individual, if necessary. Although the final deadline for submitting this review form occurs after all presentations are given (during final exam week), students are encouraged to turn in their evaluations no later than 24 hours after giving their presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>visuals and handouts</td>
<td>0 - 25</td>
<td>format, content, accuracy, support for presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentation content</td>
<td>0 - 25</td>
<td>examples, explanations, accuracy, amount of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentation organization</td>
<td>0 - 25</td>
<td>agenda, introduction, body, conclusion, use of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentation style</td>
<td>0 - 25</td>
<td>pace, mannerisms, confidence, appearance, enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group aspects</td>
<td>0 - 25</td>
<td>coordinated effort, cohesive presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overall assessment</td>
<td>0 - 25</td>
<td>integrated view of all presentation aspects</td>
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</tbody>
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