

The Art of a Research Talk

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The Basics: Structure

- Title slide
- Introduce the issue/topic
- Background/lit review
- Research question
- Design and methods
- Results
- Conclusions/Future directions



Points to Consider

- Who is the audience?
(General conference vs. specialized conference vs. lab talk vs. brown bag)
- How much time do you have?
(A 4-minute blitz is way different from a 45-minute talk)

There's always a careful balance to be struck between *efficient* presentations and *detailed* information.

Introduce the issue/topic

- Shouldn't take too long
- Get audience in mindset to think about your research
- Examples:
 - News story/anecdote/current event example
 - Direct quotation
 - Hypothetical example/thought experiment

Background/Lit Review

- Provide citations but don't let them be distracting (Luttrell, 2019)
- Walk us through what we need to know
 - Lit review should be “complete” but not “exhaustive”
 - If time permits, consider going more into a study's methods/results
- Clearly define key terms

Objective vs. Subjective Attributes

Just *perceiving* an attitude attribute → strength.

- **Knowledge** (Smith, Fabrigar, MacDougall, & Wiesenhal, 2008)
- **Accessibility** (Briñol, Petty, & Tormala, 2006; Tormala, Clarkson, & Henderson, 2011)
- **Elaboration** (Barden & Petty, 2008)

Attitude Certainty

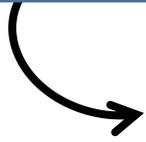
- **Certainty:** a subjective sense of conviction or validity about one's attitude or opinion
- Predicts attitude stability (Basilli, 1996; Abelson, 1988)
(But not always; Craig et al., 2005)

Research Question

- Clearly state the goals of *this* research
- (This should follow directly from lit review!)

Research Question:

How does Z affect the relationship between X and Y?



Your background should have discussed prior research on the X-Y relationship and introduced the concept of Z.

Design and Methods

- At least show sample size and method of recruitment
 - E.g., “ $N = 200$ BSU undergraduates”
- Be clear about design (e.g., “ 2×2 ”? “3 conditions”?)
- Give as much detail about manipulation/measures as feasible!
 - Pro Tip: Put full manipulation, question wording, etc. in a hidden slide or a slide after the conclusion slide.

Design and Methods

Try using flow charts to organize this section.



Design and Methods

Try using flow charts to organize this section.



Our program has calculated that you score MUCH HIGHER than other students for...

MORALITY

That is, while your thoughts were similar to other students' on a variety of dimensions, you seem to have based your thoughts about RECYCLING on MORAL BELIEFS AND CONVICTIONS more than the average student.

Our program has calculated that you score MUCH HIGHER than other students for...

PRACTICALITY

That is, while your thoughts were similar to other students' on a variety of dimensions, you seem to have based your thoughts about RECYCLING on PRACTICAL CONCERNS more than the average student.

Design and Methods

Try using flow charts to organize this section.



- Ambivalence
- Certainty
- Importance
- Perceived Knowledge
- Perceived Elaboration
- Perceived Accessibility
- Centrality

Design and Methods

Try using flow charts to organize this section.



Recycling Paper is Not the Answer

Despite perceptions that recycling paper is a noble endeavor, scholars such as Clemson University professor of economics Daniel K. Benjamin argue that, in fact, recycling may not be as beneficial as previously thought. Benjamin writes that recycling programs “force people to squander valuable resources in a quixotic quest to save what they would sensibly discard” Arguments against recycling include its

Design and Methods

Try using flow charts to organize this section.

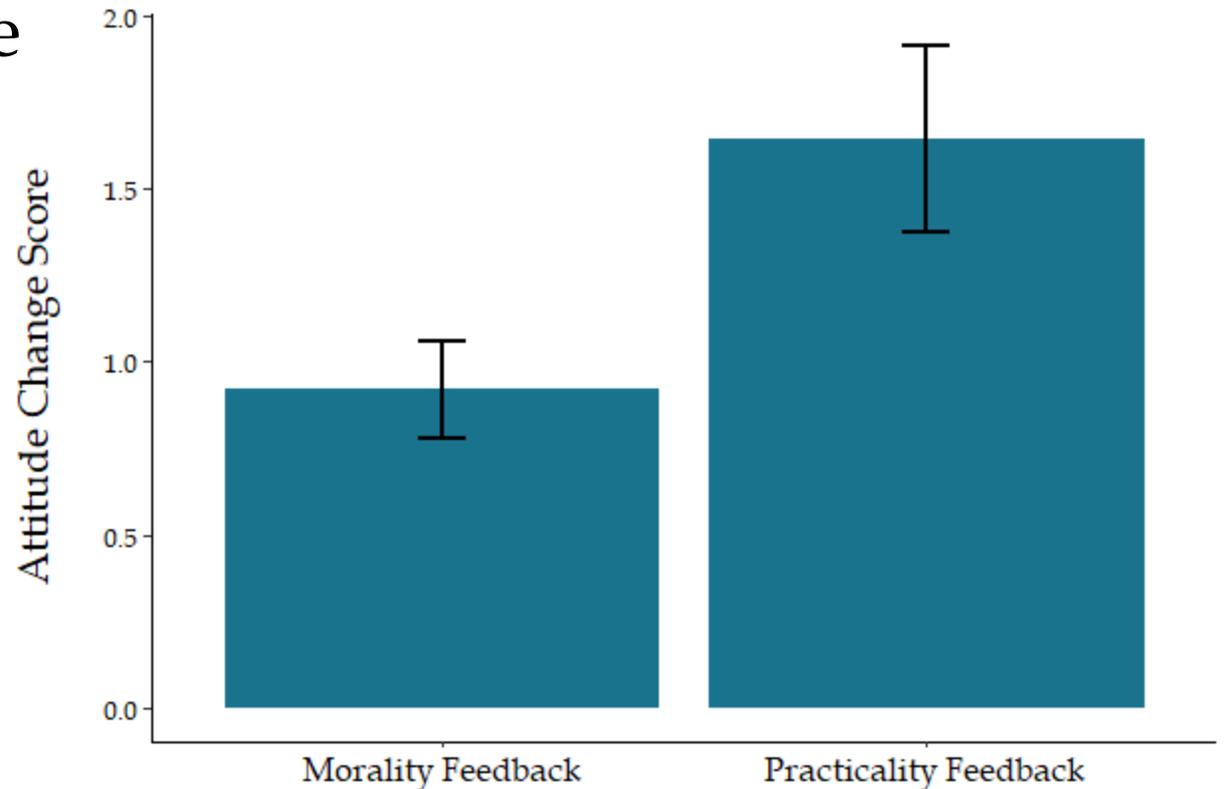


To what extent would you say that the feedback we provided was accurate?

(1 = Extremely Inaccurate; 9 = Extremely Accurate)

Results

- Visuals should take center stage (even for simple results)
- Label axes
- Include error bars (SE or 95% CI)
- *Walk people through graph!*
Highlight key effects.

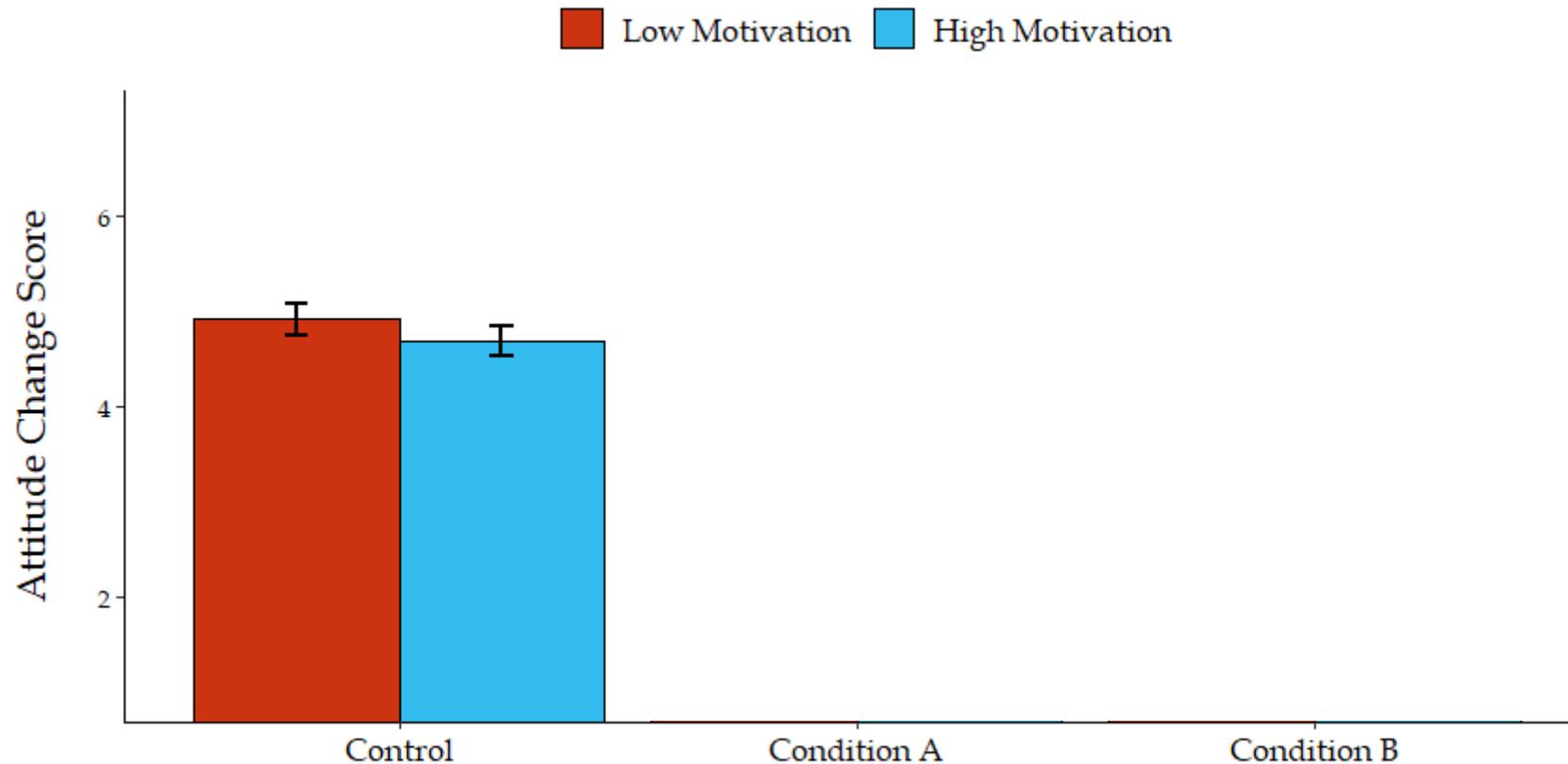


Error Bars: SE

$$t(66) = 2.36, p = .02, d = .58$$

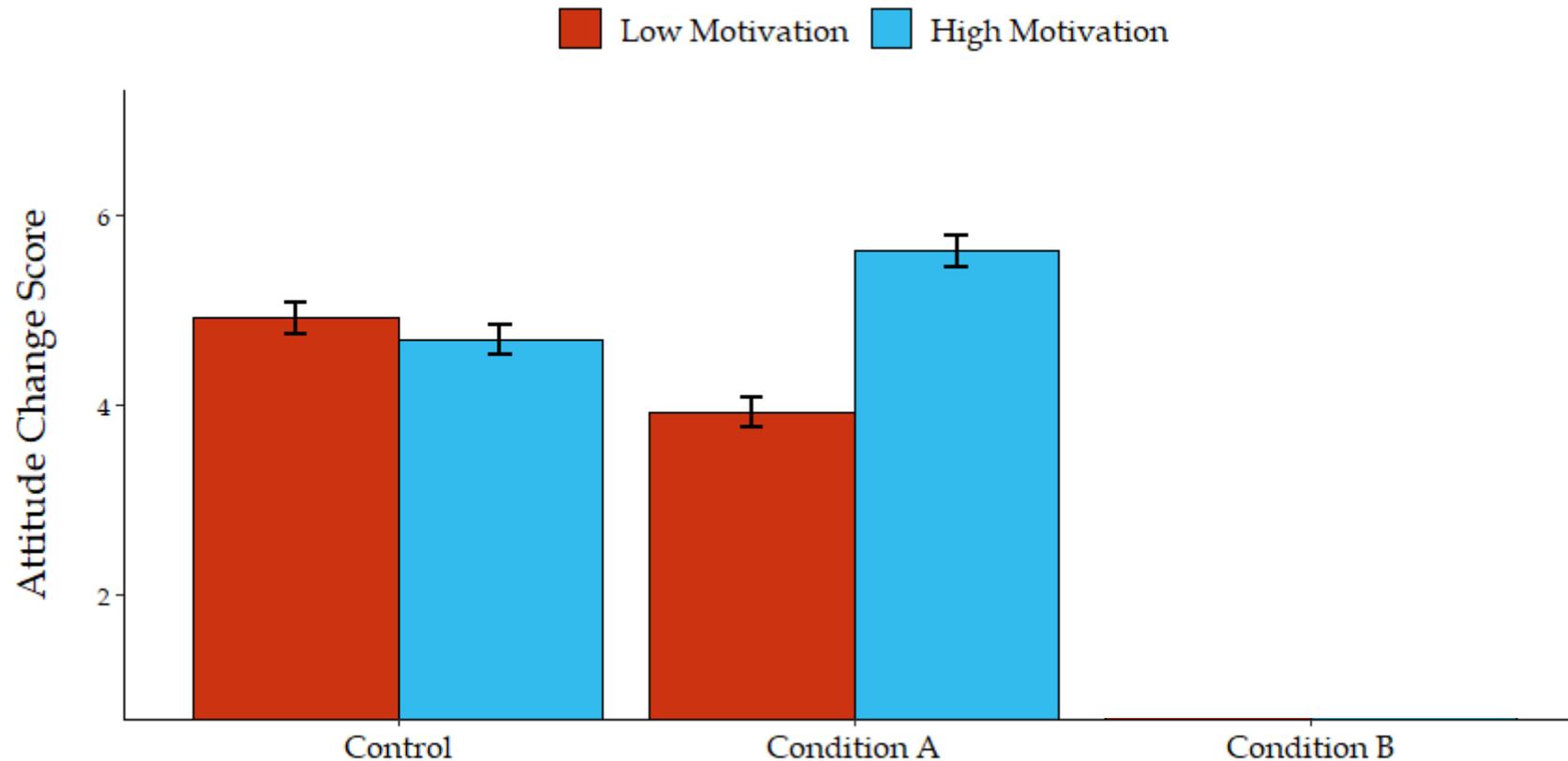
Results

For more complex graphs, try introducing one piece at a time



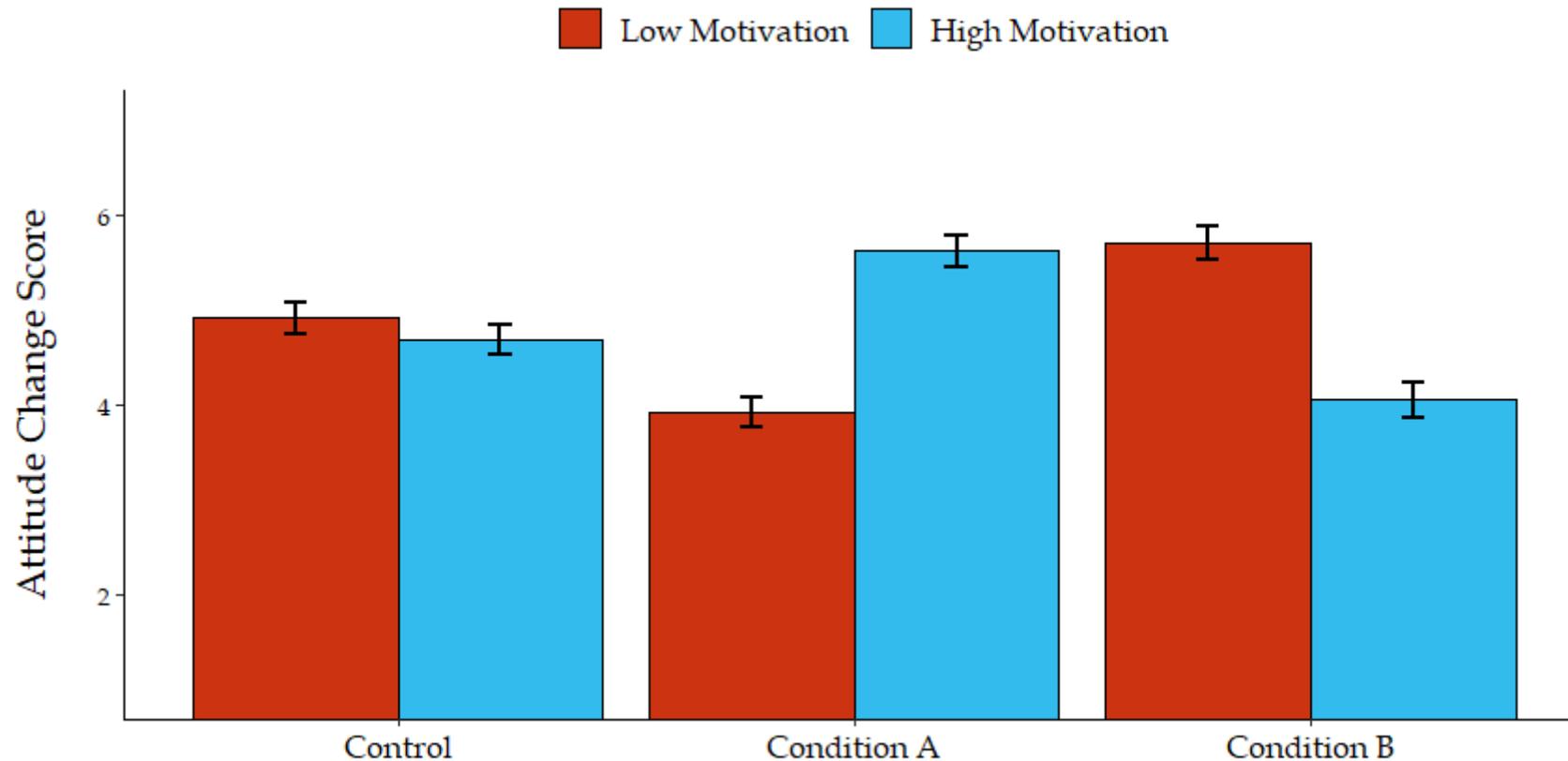
Results

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Results

For more complex graphs, try introducing one piece at a time



Future Directions

- Should clearly connect to presentation
- Be brief (when short on time, these often get glossed over)

Questions

- Listen and make sure you understand question
- Give the best answer you're able to give (not knowing is okay)
- Make notes of questions and comments you get!

Presentation Strategies

- **Practice** your talk.
 - Make you more comfortable.
 - Catch mistakes before the talk.
 - Make sure the timing is right.
- Face the audience, not your slides.

Design Strategies

- Fewer words in a larger font
- Use images when possible
- Fewer slides than minutes in your talk

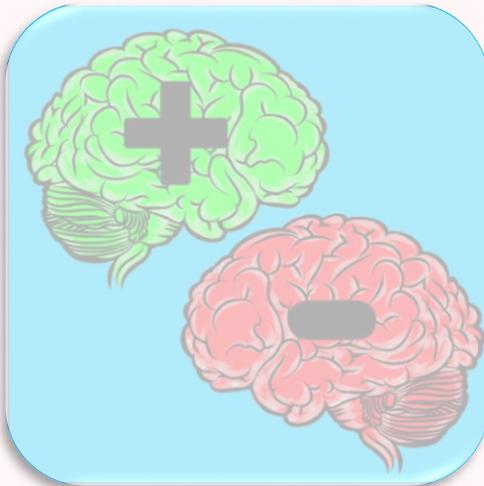
EXAMPLE

Intra-Affect Conflict



$B = 0.41, p < .0001, 95\% \text{ CI: } [0.26, 0.55]$

Intra-Cognition Conflict



$B = -0.12, p = .25, 95\% \text{ CI: } [-0.32, 0.08]$

**Subjective
Ambivalence**

Feeling
conflicted,
mixed,
undecided.

Additional Tips from the Twitterverse

(and credit for tips that made it into the presentation itself)

Linda Skitka (@LindaSkitka):

- No more slides than you have minutes. Few people mind if you finish a talk a bit early, but they will all resent you going long. BIG PRINT. Minimize words/maximize images. Face the audience/not slides
- Make the take home message easy to remember: An audience member should be able to easily summarize the point of the prez to someone they bump into in the hall afterwards who asks what it was about.
- Use the microphone if one is provided (you may have hearing impaired people in audience, and in some venues, people can synchronize hearing aids w/speaker/mic system) and consider color choices of slides carefully to consider people w/vision issues (e.g. color blindness).

Amy Summerville (@RegretLab): Orient the audience to the graph. What are the axes, and what comparisons on them are you testing? Put 95% confidence intervals on means so it's clear at a glance what's actually different.

Michael Tristano (@mtrist2): Define your use of terms! And early! For instance, if within the first 1.5 minutes of your presentation you say "My larger project attempts to understand how power functions in organizational contexts..." the use of power should be laid out clearly for the audience.

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(and credit for tips that made it into the presentation itself)

Anita Blanchard (@AnitaBlanchard): 3 points per slide. I say no more than 1-2 slides per 5 minutes of the talk. Don't post numbers people can't read. Talk don't read your slides. Practice a LOT beforehand.

Erin Westgate (@ErinWestgate): Use illustrative images not text - people can't help reading (stroop is real!), Keep slides simple, Maximize contrast (can't beat black-on-white for visual perception), Min 24pt font (but go bigger). [from Denny Proffit]

Porous (@CallMeDeconBlue): Lead the audience through the story of your research. It should have an obvious climax but also unresolved minor stories to keep excitement and facilitate good questions. Also practice the talk 3 times. You will weed out the unnecessary parts that way.

Eric Layland (@eric_layland): Small tip: Don't end on a final slide with just "questions" or "thank you." End your presentation on a slide that contains your most important takeaway point(s). This slide may remain up the entire time you answer questions. The 1st slide also has potential for long viewing time.

Anna Ropp (@AnnaRopp): Definitely practice the entire talk, but practice the first 2 minutes or so, including how fast you are talking, until it's fairly automatic. By the time I get through that part, I'm less nervous and more capable of effectively dealing with pacing, phrasing, etc.

Additional Tips from the Twitterverse

(and credit for tips that made it into the presentation itself)

Erin Chiou (@ErinChiou): When you have limited time, one tip I've learned is to focus on practicing the transitions between slides, rather than trying desperately to memorize a full script.

Alex John London (@AlexJohnLondon): Practice before you give it and make sure you are under time.

Joe Currin (@JoeCurrin4Real): Best advice I ever got was in my undergrad when preparing my first research presentation. It was, "Whenever possible, use a chart, graphic or image to remind you of the point you were going to make on your slide. Try to have as little text on a slide as possible."

Jordan Lewis (@prince_217): Convey genuine passion/interest in an engaging manner. Don't use any terms that are too technical - be professional but relatable to the layperson.

Jennifer Jones (@jenny_a_jones): Keep slides simple with lots of references. If your data or model is complicated, a handout helps.

Ben Walker (@walkerbenji): You don't have to structure your talk how you structured your paper

Zachary Giano (@ZachGiano): I find it useful to animate the points or charts (i.e., having them pop up as you talk about them). Giving everything on the slide at once loses your audience, as they start reading before you talk about it.

Thank
—YOU—

**Also, thanks to Dennis Proffitt's "How to Give a Talk" slides for inspiration on organizing this presentation.*