



So You Think You Can Research?

The *So You Think You Can Research?* event is a fun opportunity for UAH students to share their research and creative projects with the broader community of students, faculty, and staff that form our UAH scholarly community. The event is open to students from any major or academic program at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

The format requires students to condense their research or creative work down to a single presentation slide and write a short 3- to 5-minute talk to accompany their slides.

Presentation Tips

- Remember your audience will be well educated, but they are not necessarily experts in your field. Use jargon free language that makes your research clear to the listener.
 - For example, rather than saying “the rhetor misjudged the *Kairos* of the moment,” I should say “the speaker had poor timing for their remarks.”

- For “elevator speech” presentations, a good structure is:

	3 Minute Version	5 Minute Version
<i>Attention getter</i>	:15	:30
<i>Introduce yourself and the research</i>	:30	:30
<i>Describe the research in detail</i>	1:15	2:30
<i>Share the broader impact</i>	:45	1:00
<i>Conclusion with a clear takeaway</i>	:15	:30

- Unlike a research presentation made within your own academic department, you are likely the most credible person in the room on your specific subject. Instead of exclusively focusing on proving that you are correct, sell the impact of your research by focusing on why it matters to society.
 - Another way of thinking about this is to consider the two review criteria for most grant applications: *intellectual merit* and *broader impacts*. You should describe your research and findings (i.e. their merit), but you should not forget to address impacts. The *National Science Foundation* looks for at least one of five potential impact statements; in this setting, two are applicable:

- First, how will the research enhance general understanding of science and technology?
 - Second, what are the benefits to society, such as starting new companies, creating or improving consumer products, informing public policy, or enhancing national security?
- When preparing your presentation, write your main points on small flash cards to have with you as a memory aid. Avoid using a phone, tablet, or large sheet of paper as those are distracting and hard to use during live speeches.
 - It is always a good idea to practice ahead of time in front of someone to get feedback. Also try to find time to do a full “dress rehearsal” in the space you will be presenting in to be comfortable with the technology and lectern provided.
 - Make sure to use gestures, keep a nice, conversational speaking pace, and make plenty of eye contact around the room to various audience members.
 - The presentation slide should enhance your oral presentation; it should not be the primary focus. A single high quality image or chart that provides context or enriching detail is a good tactic.
 - ✓ Avoid using multiple, small images on the slide because they can distract from your remarks as the listener scans the slide rather than focusing on you.
 - ✓ Use words sparingly on the slide to serve as a memory cue rather than as a primary way to deliver the message. That means avoid using paragraphs or full sentences.
 - ✓ One technique is to use the *animations* – “appear” option in PowerPoint to reveal the content as you get to it in your presentation.

Good Slide:

Eye Tracking to Improve Websites



Test for:

- Fatigue
- Confusion
- Distraction

Goal: Enhance Readability



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Animated Slide Series:

1 Eye Tracking to Improve Websites

2 Eye Tracking to Improve Websites

3 Eye Tracking to Improve Websites

4 Eye Tracking to Improve Websites

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Bad Slide:

Eye Tracking to Improve Websites

In our evaluation and User Experience (VUE) Lab, we use biometric sensors to measure how users interact with different technologies and content. The eye tracking device uses a near infrared laser pointed at an angle into the research participant's eyes. The light is reflected back to the camera where fixation point, blink rate, pupil dilation, and saccades (rapid eye movement) are recorded.

- We use the captured eye tracking data to test for respondent fatigue, confusion, and distraction.
- They navigate through graphical user interface and process the content.

The goal is to enhance readability by providing information hierarchy and concept simplification to our users. Another useful outcome of eye tracking websites as part of usability testing is the creation of more natural navigation bars and search functions.

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Title and first text area is small and in a low contrast color.

Text is a full paragraph.

Images are small and difficult to see in detail.

Bulleted lists should use short phrases rather than full sentences.

Font style should not change partway through.

Use bolding or italics sparingly to highlight most important content.

- When presenting data, use an appropriate chart, graph, or table with only the numbers necessary to convey your message. If you can highlight the most important number in bold or by using a circle, that will help the audience to understand and focus on your research.



These presentation tips are meant to get you started. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Candice Lanian at candice.lanias@uah.edu

The UAH presentation slide template is available online at <https://www.uah.edu/omc/brand>.