

Remarks on presentations to course coordinators

Presentations to course coordinators on the finalized versions of your proposals were completed recently. Here are a few remarks we want to make on the presentations:

- Purpose and role of these presentations: You may have noticed the difference in presentations made to your industrial advisor and to course coordinators. Your industrial advisors (and academic advisor) are part of the project and hence when you have a presentation to make to this “close” group, you can mention certain details, or sometimes even skip or simply summarize what you have done before (as everybody is aware of the details, and have command on those details, up to a certain extent). On the other hand, when you are presenting to the course coordinators, they would like to understand your intent, the progress of each group, methodology to apply, plans to compare the as-is case with your proposal and asks you to visualize the final product you are going to submit. Some of the questions are intended for an immediate answer, whereas the others are concerns and suggestions those should be responded in later stages after discussing within your group. Your project plan (work packages, their durations, expected outcomes) is very crucial for the course coordinators, and they want to make sure that all group members take active roles in the project plan.
- Duration of the presentations: Unfortunately, we can only allocate 15 minutes per group, and hence you have to learn to be very efficient (real life!)
- General remarks on progress: We are satisfied with the progress of most of the groups. With some groups we have observed problems and delivered our concerns during the meeting.
- Some common mistakes observed:
 - Some presentations were not well-prepared. This is a tool for giving us information on your progress and hence it is important. You need to spend time on the slides, as well as to rehearse the presentation before the meeting.
 - You have a tendency of trying to answer everything even if you do not know the answer. You have to understand that if you do not know the answer and talk non-sense you will always lose credibility. As stated above, some questions are not for an immediate answer, but are issues you need to consider for further work.
 - Incorrect use of jargon is a widespread mistake. As IE’s if you cannot use certain term properly, you have less power and become no longer credible. The words “maximize, optimize” should be carefully used together with the statement of an objective function. If not use words like “improve, decrease” to state your expectations.
 - Data is only part of the story. You need to be ready and plan what you are going to do, how you are going to do, how to interpret certain outcome before you actually have the data. Similarly, to show the improvement you bring with your project, you have to plan in detail what you will need (metrics, detail level of data, etc.) ahead of time. Even if the industrial partner they don’t currently collect such data, they might be willing to collect the data you need for a certain period, just for the project in the coming couple of months so that you will have a comparison basis around March.