



GUIDELINES FOR CHAIRING AN ORAL SESSION

The following guidelines for chairing sessions at CiLOG are provided to ensure a smooth running conference. An attentive, well-prepared Session Chair can help ensure that the speakers give high quality, trouble-free talks and that the audience appreciates the entire session.

In the unlikely event that one of your speakers cancels at the very last minute, you might have available a short talk of your own to help maintain the continuity of the session. Perhaps a talk you've previously delivered at another venue, or one you would like to "take out for a spin" to gauge audience reactions, or a short movie clip showing something about your organization. ***At issue here is maintaining the published schedule.*** When a speaker drops out after the schedule is published, and attendees have made plans as to which talks to attend, a disruption caused by an empty slot can snowball across different tracks and disappoint people who really wanted to see your second speaker. ***So, rearranging the order of presenters should not be done lightly without consideration for the effect on attendees.***

Recognize that you are the leader of the session

You are the one everyone will turn to if there are problems among your speakers or within your audience. Thank you for agreeing to assume high responsibility. Much of the success of the conference will rest on the efficient and consistent execution of our technical presentation sessions. As important as running the session well is the critical ear. If you pick up on something that causes a stir or is particularly controversial, jot it down and make a point of informing someone from the Program Committee, the Board of Directors, or the CiLOG Chairs as appropriate. Feedback is an essential aspect of this program.

Preparation BEFORE the session

- ✓ Meet with the support staff from the Local Arrangements Committee prior to your oral session to review the workings of the lights, the equipment, and good positions for your speakers in your session's room. It is a good idea to make sure a laser pointer is available.



- ✓ Meet with all your speakers 15 minutes before the start of your session. At that time, make needed introductions and help them feel comfortable with the room arrangements and fellow participants. Discuss their positions at the podium and remind them of their time limitations. Have all your speakers try out their laptops, viewgraphs, and the microphone to determine any required assistance and to ensure a reasonable comfort level.
- ✓ Describe to your speakers the method you will use to notify them when they are nearing their presentation time limit and how you will interrupt them if they have reached the end of their allotted time. Try to leave time for pertinent questions and answers (especially if the talk is particularly inspiring or controversial). If however, all time has expired for that speaker, it is acceptable to ask the audience to discuss issues with that speaker after the end of the session. ***It is up to you as the Session Chair to ensure that ALL speakers receive their allotted time and that the audience has opportunity for their questions and comments.***
- ✓ AML Board wants to promote audience feedback whenever Cray speakers are presenting products, directions, and methodologies. It is, therefore, important to have these speakers honor at least a minimum 5-minute question/answer/comment period.
- ✓ Inform your speakers of the exact time that each of their talks are to begin, and remind them that attendees are free to get up and move to another session after each talk. Two or three minutes should be allocated for this anticipated movement of people from session to session. Further explain that because of this expected movement, it is particularly important for each talk to finish on time AND for the next speaker to begin at the appropriate time (even if the previous speaker ends early). You can help facilitate a smooth change between speakers by asking the next speaker to begin moving toward the front and even switching laptops while the questions and answer session unfolds.



When Your Session Begins

- ✓ **Please arrive to your session early** to welcome speakers and delegates. At no time should you need to leave your position as chair – any trouble shooting should be directed to Congress volunteers who can contact people, find water, or do whatever needs to be done. Should the projector not work, the room be too hot or too cold, or something happen to the room itself (a spill, noise intrusion, etc.), talk to the volunteers.
- ✓ **Please start on time and end on time.**
- ✓ **Concern yourself with the environment** - check sound and lights. If there are problems, either a Local Arrangements Committee staff member can assist or you can send someone to the CiLOG front desk for assistance. Directly ask members of the audience if they can see you and hear you clearly. Your audience will appreciate that you are in charge and concerned about them and the quality of the session.
- ✓ **Using the microphone**, formally announce the beginning of the session. If needed, politely encourage the audience to settle into their seats and conclude their conversations.
- ✓ **Introduce yourself as Session Chair** and give your affiliation.

Example introduction (you should write out the introduction for your session(s)):
“Welcome everyone to this session of contributed papers focusing on using surveys as a data collection tool. Thank you for joining us on this lovely Friday morning. My name is Michel Hammer. I work at the Logistics and Supply Chain Research Program at the University of Paris, and I will be serving as the session chair. We have sixty minutes for today’s session and three presentations. Each presentation will be allocated 15 minutes during which time the presenter will speak for 10-12 minutes and then take a few short questions. However, once the time elapses for each presentation, we will move on to the next and ask that further questions be held until after all of the presenters have had the opportunity to present. I will stop presenters who run over their allocated time out of fairness to all. Today we’ll be hearing about innovations in surveying using new technologies, useful ways to access difficult to survey populations, and how a targeted survey provided actionable information to a multifaceted nonprofit. Together, today’s presentations offer both process and product lessons for improving our own surveying practices. Let’s begin.”



- ✓ Ask attendees to complete a ***Technical Presentation Evaluation Form for each talk during your session.***
- ✓ **For each talk, introduce the speaker;** give their affiliation and the title of their talk. It is nice to give a brief introduction of the speaker -- perhaps their background, or how their talk fits into the scheme of the session or conference. You may wish to use the published abstract as a starting point for this "introduction" material. The CiLOG' Scientific Chairman will provide you a "Chair Access" to EasyChair platform one month before the CiLOG. Consequently, you would verify the papers you will chair at the CiLOG.

Example transition between each speaker

"Emily and Michel, thank you for sharing your work. Now we will turn to our colleagues from the University of Nuevo Leon so that we may learn about the algorithms they used to analyze disruptions in global supply chains. Welcome!"

- ✓ **Watch the clock!** Should the presenter be unaware of the signs and go right to 15 minutes, you must interrupt and end the presentation, moving on to the next speaker. Remember – it may feel awkward to shut someone down but it is the speaker's lack of preparation that will put the remaining speakers and all of the audience in an uncomfortable position. It will not reflect poorly on you in being courteous to the vast majority of people in the room.

Example of closing down long-winded presenters:

"Flora, thank you for your time. I realize that you have more to share, but we must move on to be fair to all of the presenters. I encourage everyone to contact you after the session, or after the conference via email, to learn more. Now, I am pleased to introduce..."

Should the need to close down a presenter occur, the time keeper will hold up the card saying STOP and the technician will load the next presentation.



During Each Presentation

Please take into account the following:

- ✓ It is up to you as the Session Chair to assist your speakers if there are problems. If the speaker's voice is fading, bring water. If the speaker's presentation is not displaying well, help adjust the equipment. If lights need to be dimmed, either do it yourself or ask someone else to do it. If the speaker cannot be heard or cannot be seen, you should politely try to correct the situation.
- ✓ You must keep track of elapsed time during a presentation:
 - At 13 minutes of a 20-minute talk, give a *signal* to the speaker (could be card raised, or low voice). Adjust as necessary for longer presentations.
 - At 15 minutes of a 20-minute talk, *interrupt* the speaker (this could be done by standing up, or actually stating "It is time to conclude").
- ✓ Question/Answer Period: If time permits, the Session Chair should invite questions if the speaker does not do this.
 - **An excellent Session Chair** will have at least one general question ready for each speaker in order to help get the discussion off the ground, should the audience be reticent.
 - **A really excellent Session Chair** will actually ask each speaker for a potential "seed" question for you to ask should the opportunity be available!
 - When questions are asked, make every effort to get a microphone to the questioner. If this is not possible, remind the speaker to repeat the questions, or repeat the question yourself if you are in a better position to hear the question. Use your own judgment regarding the need for this depending on room acoustics.
- ✓ As the allotted time for the speaker's talk ends, initiate applause for the speaker.



At the End of the Session

Please take into account the following:

- ✓ **Facilitate the question period.**
 - (a) During discussion periods, keep notes as to who has raised hands and call on people in turn. Set an expectation for professional, courteous, discourse. Ask that questions be short and targeted and encourage attendees to follow-up after the session as well. If there are many people with questions, avoid letting one person monopolize the discussion.
 - (b) **Repeat back questions from the audience:** to be sure that everyone heard the question clearly. The audience member is likely facing front and those behind her or him may find it difficult to hear the question posed.
 - (c) **Wrap-up and end:** Provide a clear conclusion to the session by thanking the presenters and the audience and stating that the session has concluded. At the end of the session, if there is a session following, ask that everyone leave the room and continue the discussion in the foyers so that the next session will have time to set up.
- ✓ When the last speaker's presentation and questions/answers have concluded, THANK the audience for attending and state that your session is now completed.
- ✓ Remind attendees to fill the evaluation form shortly before leaving the conference and complete their evaluations. The evaluation forms will be placed at the exit of the room.

Thus you will end your duties as Session Chair! and you will receive the gratitude and admiration of your colleagues for a job well done. CiLOG is possible through your volunteerism and participation.

Thank you again for your help!