

Guidelines for Demonstrations

(No, this is not a political manifesto!)

Almost predictably, a subsystem will fail in the course of a demonstration, leading to generally shared embarrassment and the collapse of any satisfying demonstration. Why does this phenomena occur so regularly? Some attribute demonstration failures to a particular quantum particle called *demo-ons* or, for those with a less mystical worldview, *demons*. I have a more prosaic reason. The demonstrator's desire to demonstrate the latest and most far-reaching achievements to date (namely, 3 A.M. that morning!) results in the presentation of rather poorly constructed or verified system modules, concepts, and operations. The following guidelines should help you to avoid this pitfall:

1. Stay on schedule so that you have plenty of time to prepare for the demonstration.
2. Do not try to do too much. A successful demonstration that does not quite feature all your results to date has a more positive impact than a failed demonstration that does not successfully present any of your results to date!
3. When possible, present a short talk outlining the scope, purpose, and operational level of the system being demonstrated (refer to the *Guidelines for Oral Presentations*).
4. Plan the demonstration itself like a short talk (refer to the *Guidelines for Oral Presentations*). For example, point out only the important points, do not bore the audience with too much detail, make the demo brief (time it), and practice the demo ahead of time in the same context of the actual demo, if possible.

SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS

To present a generic demonstration on a moment's notice, save old demonstrations which can be conjured up quickly. Informal, spontaneous demonstrations of work in progress have only the immediate goal of establishing a point of reference of current progress for the viewer.