

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.