

Who's the Audience for my Thesis?

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A mistake students often make when writing their thesis proposal, poster, presentations, or reports is to aim at the wrong audience. You will turn your written work in to your thesis adviser, and you'll deliver your presentations and posters to a room full of your classmates and faculty. However, these people are **not the audience** at which you should be aiming.

Instead, imagine you are going to submit your work for publication in a computer science journal or conference, and it will therefore be read by people who are not your classmates or faculty. Your audience for your poster, presentations, and thesis reports is therefore a **general computer science audience**. This audience:

- Is **not** your professor or classmates.
- Knows computer science generally, but perhaps **not your specific sub-area**. Think of your audience as recent graduates of an undergraduate computer science program.
- Doesn't know about the **specific courses** you've taken here at Union. In their undergraduate programs, they've taken courses in the core of CS, but maybe didn't take the same electives you did.
- Didn't **see your previous drafts**, posters, or presentations. Whatever draft you are working on should stand alone.
- Wasn't involved in the **discussions you had** with your thesis adviser about the project. They don't know **why** you made the choices you made, or even that there were choices to be made. You need to explain it all to them.
- Doesn't know about the **specific resources you used** here at Union. If you used our usability lab, you'll probably want to describe it. If you had a robot roaming around Reamer, you'll probably want to describe the spaces you used and why you used them.