Guidelines for ICE-TCS seminar speakers

First of all, thanks for having agreed to deliver a seminar at one of the ICE-TCS events. Talks by external guests are fundamental for creating a vibrant research environment at the centre, and allow researchers and students at ICE-TCS to catch a glimpse of research topics that we do not cover in our small research community in Iceland. However, giving a talk at our seminar series is challenging, as our environment is rather different from those at larger universities and research centres. For this reason, in order to help you make your seminar as successful and satisfying as possible, we have decided to prepare some short guidelines to provide you with some information on your prospective audience and what we expect from your talk. Needless to say, we welcome your feedback on these guidelines so that they can be made as useful as possible.

1. Our centre, and our seminar participants, have an unusually wide variety of backgrounds and interests. We are joined by our interest in mathematical treatment, but diverge on almost everything else. Despite its small size, ICE-TCS hosts researchers working on, for instance, algebraic and categorical logic, algebraic combinatorics, approximation algorithms, algorithms for NP-hard problems, algorithms for wireless networking, combinatorics and combinatorial optimization, concurrency theory, logic in computer science, networked computation and reliable computing, permutation patterns, runtime monitoring, semantics of programming languages, structural proof theory and type theory. This means that the audience at an ICE-TCS seminar is likely to be as varied as the one at a plenary talk at a conference like ICALP, with some researchers in combinatorial mathematics added to the mix. As a consequence, it is crucial to pay heed to Gian-Carlo Rota's advice and "give the audience something to take home."
2. It is best not to assume background that is outside, say, a well-rounded B.Sc./M.Sc. degree in CS and to focus on conveying your main message using as little technical jargon as possible. Less is more. If your talk uses notions that are not common knowledge to CS graduate students (even in TCS), explain the concept as simply as you can and say why it is useful in your setting. Remember that it is often helpful to "remind" people of the things that they should have learned at some point.
3. Aim for the old adage: the first third of the talk should be comprehensible to students, the second third by any (theory) faculty member, and focus on the local specialists, if any, only in the last third.
4. Give the big picture: why is it interesting to study this topic? What is the context for the work you are presenting? We often take it for granted, but it is worth reminding ourselves.
5. Our ICE-TCS seminar slot is 50 minutes long and often there are classes starting right after it. Icelanders tend to be a bit late (we typically start seminars about five minutes after the announced starting time) and we usually have a number of questions. It is therefore best to prepare for a 30-35 -minute talk.

6. If you prefer to give a focused, largely technical talk---and of course we should be able to do that as well---we recommend that
    a. either you give a special, closed presentation for the experts on that topic at the centre,
    b. or state clearly in the abstract the assumptions you make about the audience.

We look forward to your talk!