DefCon 33
In-person | Las Vegas, NV | August 7 – 10, 2025

Quiet Confidence:

An Introvert's Journey to Technical Public Speaking

Emma Yuan Fang @ epam

Hello, I am Emma (Yuan)

- Senior Security Architect / Head of Security UK&I @ EPAM
- WiCyS UK & I, Women Techmaker
- Mentor @ WiCyS, Cajigo 100, RHUL, Microsoft
- Public Speaker @ Cybersecurity Conferences








Disclaimer: The views expressed in this presentation are based on my professional experience and all ideas are open for further discussion

My Public Speaking Journey 2024



June
CLOUDNATIVE SECURITYCON NORTH AMERICA 2024

August
BSIDES BRISTOL

September
mWISE MANDIANT WORLDWIDE INFORMATION SECURITY EXCHANGE DENVER, COLORADO SEPT 18-19, 2024

October
ISC2 SECURITY CONGRESS 2024 BOLDLY FORWARD October 14 - 16 | Las Vegas + Virtual

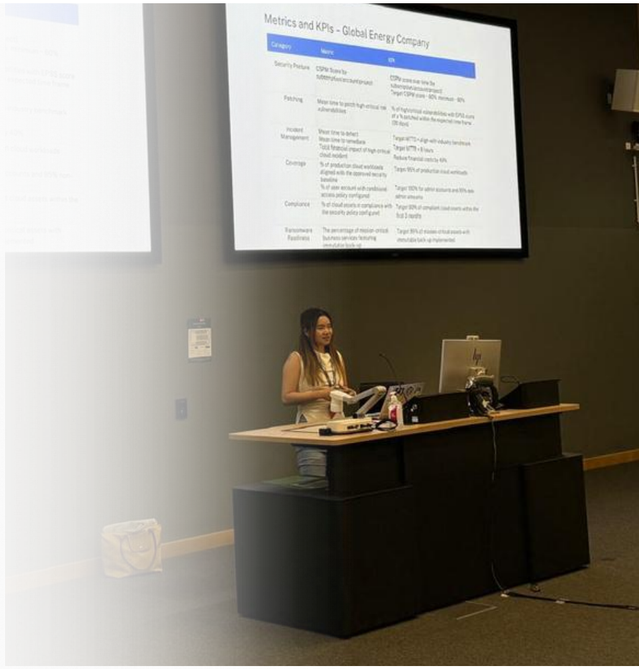
December
BSIDES London

August
BSIDES LAS VEGAS

September
BSIDES 808

September
InfoSec World A CRA Resource

November
WOMEN OF SILICON ROUNDABOUT



What Sets Us Back?

“I am not good enough/I am not capable of”



“It’s challenging to balance work, life and speaking engagements”



“The event/conference
is not appealing to us”



Why Public Speaking?

Build My Confidence

- Strengthen my verbal/communication/presentation skills
- Develop clarity in expressing complex ideas
- Build confidence in technical skills & expertise
- Overcome stage frights

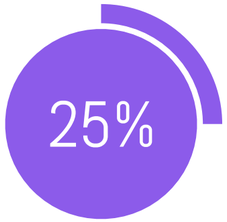


Build My Personal Brand

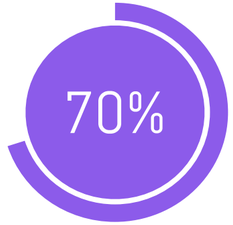
"Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room." - Jeff Bezos



- Make a positive impact through knowledge sharing
- Be a thought leader -Learn how to pitch my ideas
- Build my professional network and enhance external visibility
- Leading to new opportunity in the future



Women speaker representation at tech conferences



The ‘lone women’ who have spoken on a panel at a tech conference



women say the lack of gender diversity at tech events has influenced their decision to NOT attend

Be a Role Model

Myths About Introverts....

"Most people who work in the Tech Industry are introverts"

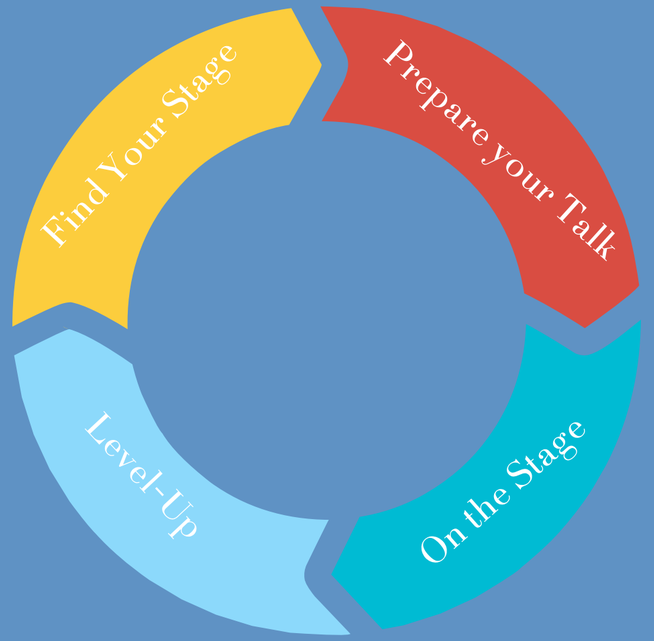
"Introverts are not good at public speaking"

"Introverts don't like people"

"Introverts can't be leaders"

My Path to Public Speaking

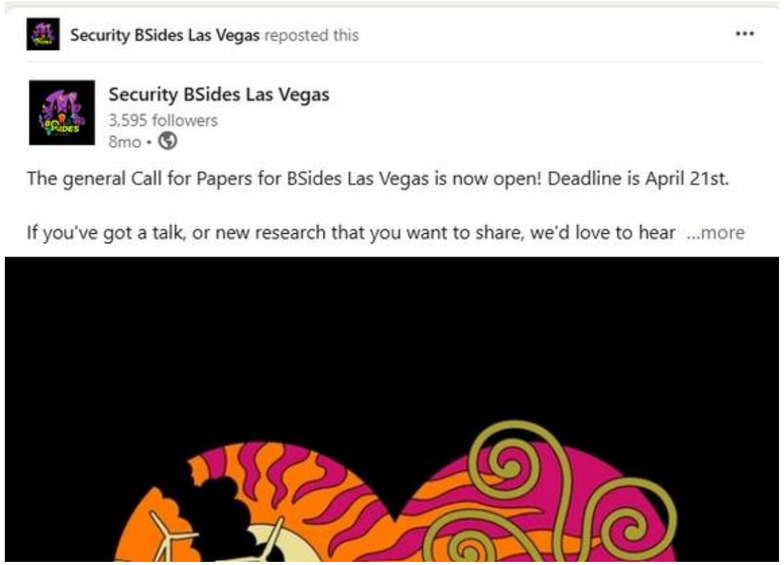
(The lifecycle)

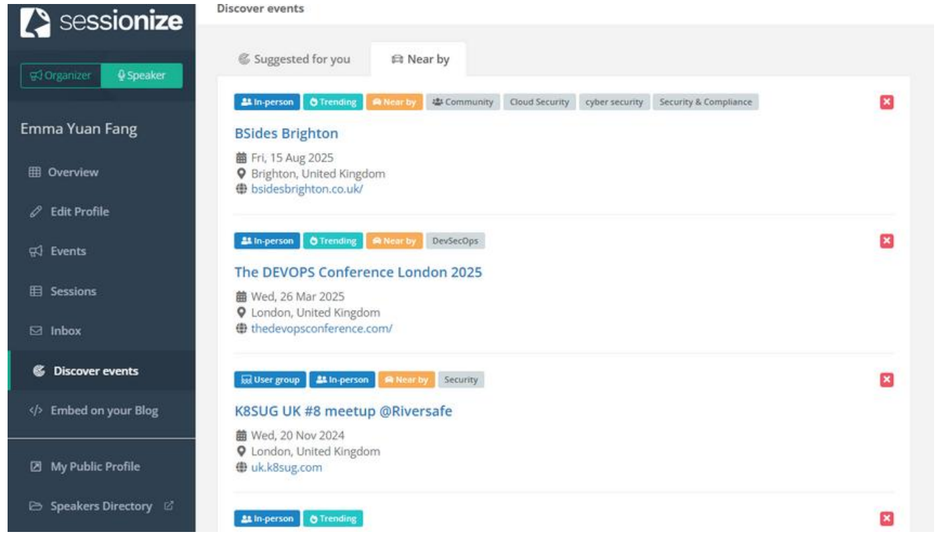


1 Find Your Stage

How to find your speaking engagements?

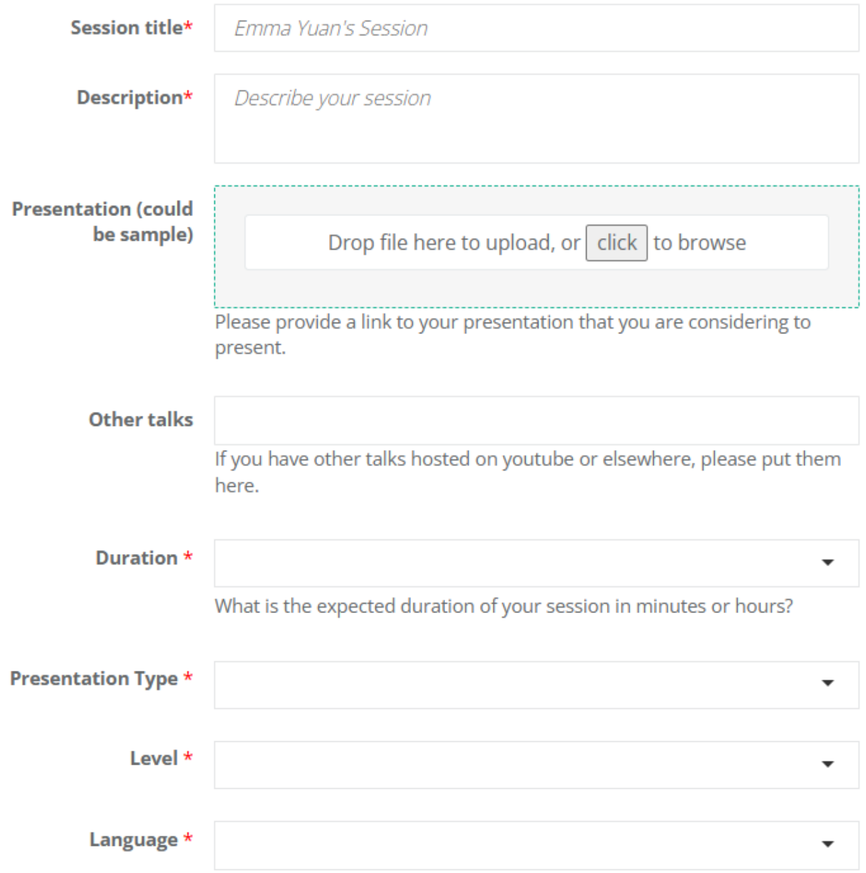
- Papercall.io, Sessionize.com...
- Dev.Events - https://dev.events/
- Speaker Spotlight Program - WiCyS
- Social Media e.g. LinkedIn
- Conference Website, Chapter Events





How to Craft “Call For Papers/Proposals” (CFP)?

- Timeline: CFP closes 3-7 months before the event
- Title + Abstract + outline
- Tailor your proposal to the theme
- Punchline is powerful (but not essential)
- ChatGPT (or similar) is your friend, over-reliance can lead to rejections!



2 Prepare For Your Talk

"Congratulations! Your proposal has been accepted"



- Speaking at Conference can be costly - secure your budget
- Vendor Neutral - this is not a sales pitch!
- Innovation is not essential, but it should show a fresh perspective
- Know your target audience, stick with the theme
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse

Top tips for Crafting your Slides

Things to consider when crafting technical presentation

- Keep the content concise and relate to your key messages
- Your slides are only the supplement to your talk, delivery is what truly matters
- Give people credits, if you are using their works
- Use visuals (diagrams, graphs), don’t be text-heavy
- Consider your target audience, avoid big block of codes



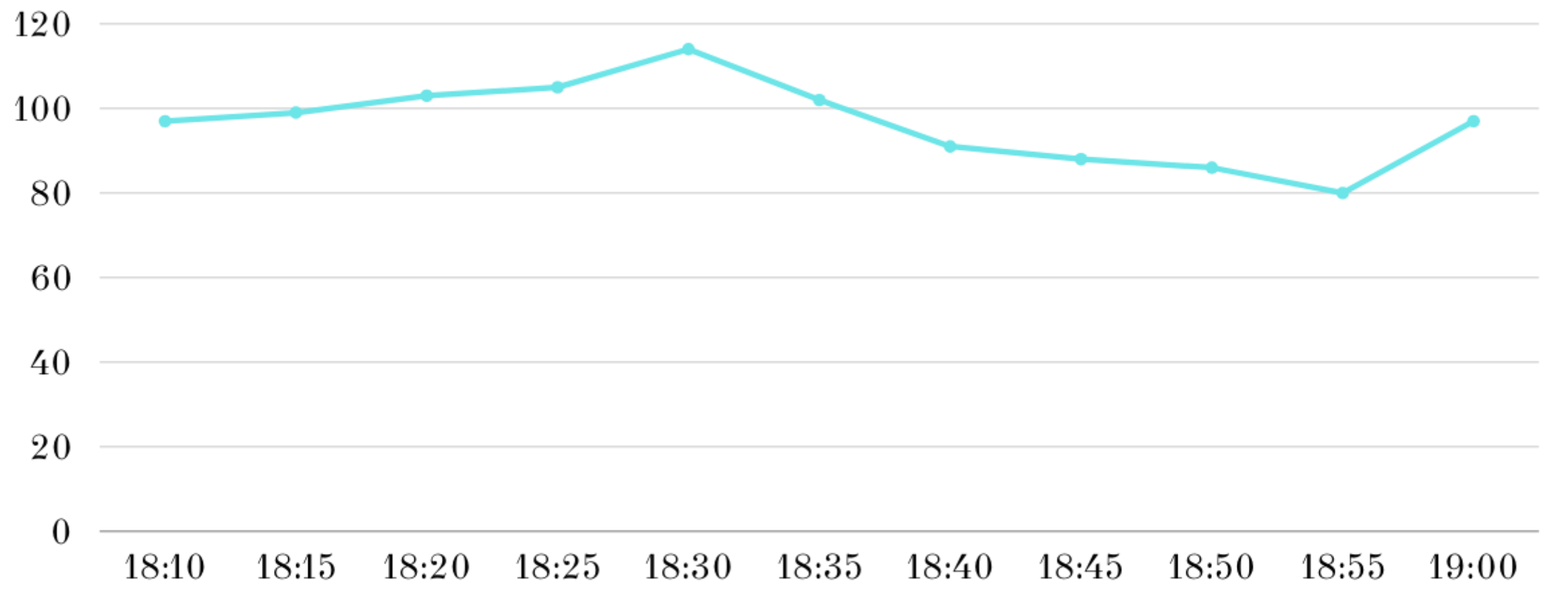
3 On the Stage

"Own Your Spotlight"

- How to overcome stage fright?
- Nerves are NORMAL, just manage it
- Connect with the audience
- Adjust your voice and use body language
- Be resilient
- Adopting storytelling techniques

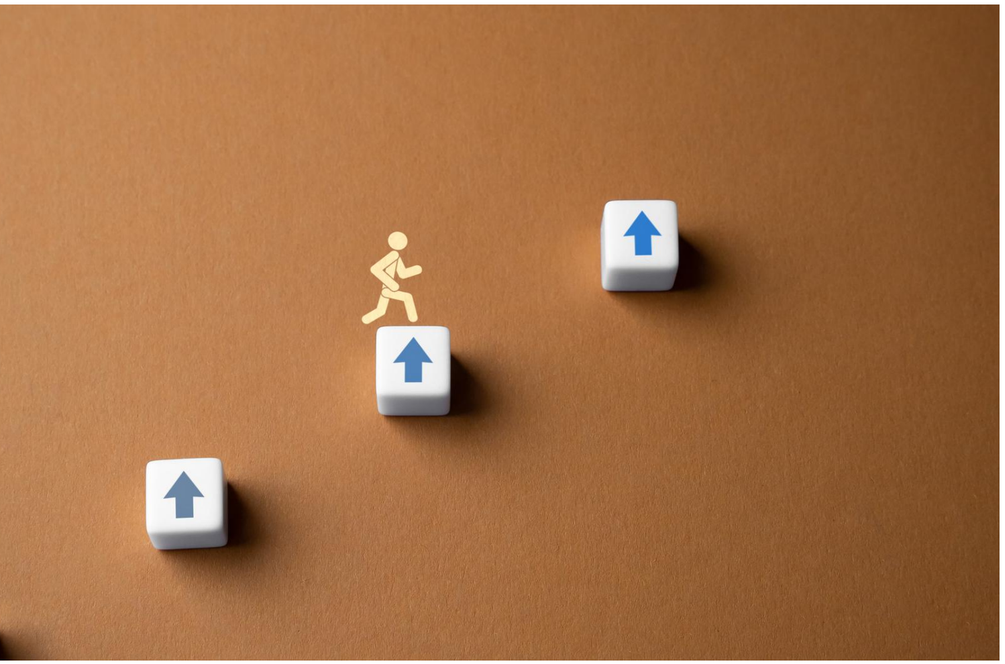


Heart Rate Patterns During Public Speaking



4 Level Up

How to improve your next talk?



- Seeking feedback from the audience, organiser or colleagues
- Self-reflection - review your recordings
- Embrace growth mindset

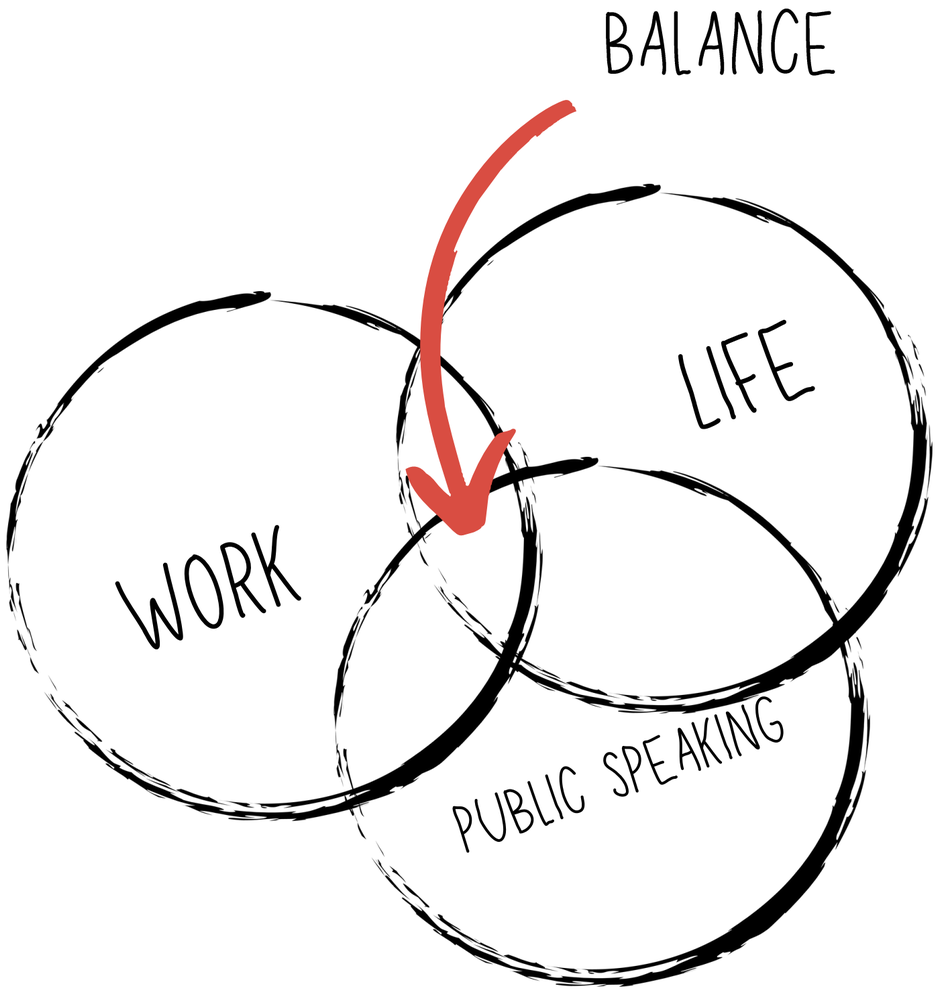
and...
REPEAT

Final Tips

How to avoid Burn Out?

Balancing your work, life, and speaking engagements

- Prioritise well-being
- Seeking support from the loved ones
- Plan the travel and make sure you can commit
- Mindful preparation, avoid last-minute crunches
- Pre-presentation meditation



What are the unique strengths introverts bring to the stage?

Authenticity is your superpower

Good Listening = deeper engagement

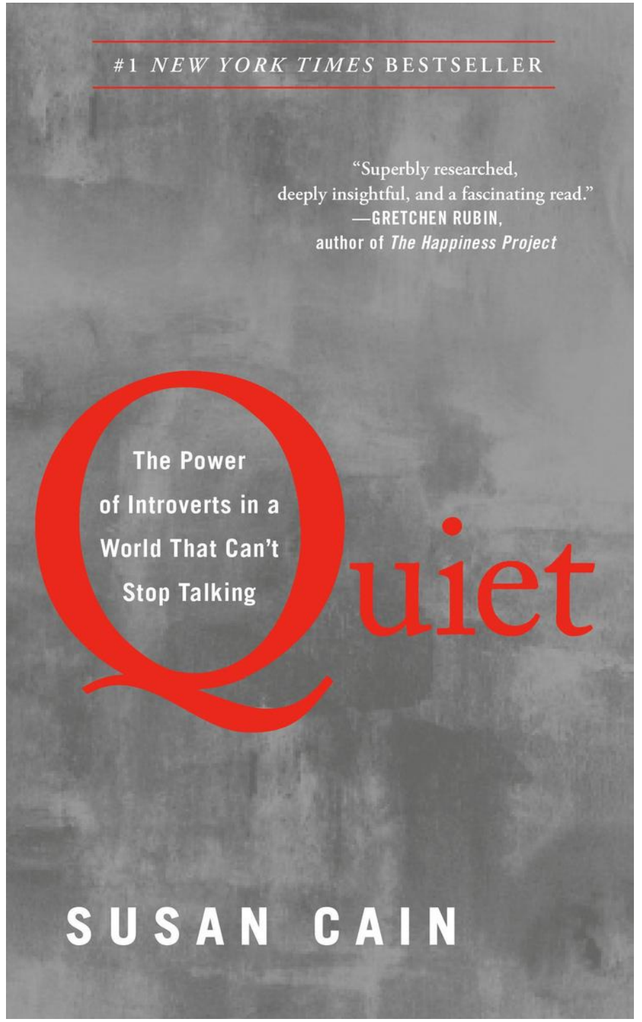
focus on quality over quantity of words



Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

“There's zero correlation between being the best talker and having the best ideas.”

By Susan Cain



How to Make Your Talk Stand Out?

The questions you can ask yourself are....

- Does it solve a problem?
- Be explicit: is this research, a methodology, a tool?
- Speak human, not jargon: Simplify complex ideas
- Does it align with the conference theme and the interests of the attendees?
- Can you deliver it confidently?
- Is it going to teach your audience something new?

How to Handle Rejections?

Your proposal has been rejected, now what?

Be positive

don’t take it personallly

Review the feedback (if any)

Revise and resubmit



Call to Action

Ready to become a Technical Public Speaker?

Anyone can be a public speaker if they want to

Start somewhere, even something small

Challenge stereotypes

Build resilience along the way

Commit, Don’t Give-up, and Advance



Thank You!



Emma Fang, CISSP

Senior Security Architect @ EPAM
| Cloud Security, Strategy | Cloud Sec...