the elevator pitch:
presenting your research in conversation

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What is an *Elevator Pitch* or *Research Spiel*?

- a concise statement of your research interests and experience to be shared *informally* and *orally* in various professional contexts.
  
  - a brief encounter with a scholar in your field at a conference
  
  - introductions around a table at the beginning of meeting
  
  - introduction to a guest speaker in the hallway right before his/her talk
  
  - conversation at a reception for a speaker
  
  - an actual elevator ride with a search committee member
What is the *goal* of an elevator pitch?

- to create a memorable and positive impression
- to open the door to further conversation
Questions your elevator pitch should answer:

• What is the **topic** of your research?

• What is the **problem**, **issue**, or **question** that you are asking and addressing in your research?

• Why is that problem interesting and important? (i.e. **So what**?)

• How does your work connect with a **broader disciplinary conversation** about this topic/problem in your field, and what does it add to that conversation?
Crafting the elevator pitch:

• Language

  • **key nouns**
    
    • offer topical touchstones that are accessible to wide range of educated people
    
    • avoid jargon if possible or deliver specialized terms using appositives

  • **action verbs**
    
    • express relationships among these key nouns using action verbs
    
    • describe the *movement* of your work and the *activity* or *action* of your involvement
Crafting the elevator pitch:

• Delivery
  • Eye contact--read your listener
  • Enthusiasm
  • Practice, practice, practice!
The Cocktail Party Pitch

- **Contexts**
  - telling friends or family what you do
  - discussing your work at poster sessions with possible collaborators, peers, etc.
  - cocktail parties, receptions, lunch meetings, campus visit engagements

- **Features**
  - Conversational, more of an exchange, an actual dialogue
  - Listen very carefully, and respond!
  - Seek connections between your research interests and your interlocutor’s interests
  - Ask questions
Additional Resources

• Harvard Business School’s *Pitch Builder*: http://www.alumni.hbs.edu/careers/pitch/

• Career Center

• Writing Center
GOING TO A CONFERENCE? HEADING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW?
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

COCKTAIL PARTY AND
ELEVATOR PITCH ESSENTIALS
NOVEMBER 8 & 15 • 5:30-6:45 PM • LAFORTUNE BALLROOM
BUSINESS CASUAL ATTIRE REQUESTED FOR COCKTAIL PARTY

An elevator pitch is a concise, well-prepared description about your research. Learn how to create it, rehearse it, and tailor it for a specific audience in a way that excites others. On November 8, leaders from the Graduate School, Career Center and Writing Center will teach you the skills that you will need to craft your elevator pitch. You will then have a chance to practice it among faculty and students on November 15 at the cocktail party the Graduate School hosts in support of this event.