

Elevator Pitch

HCC Seminar

10/03/18

Getting to Know Other HCC Students (5 min)

Directions: In your small group, go around and introduce yourself! Starting with the 3rd year, share your name and answer to the following question.

Question: If you were to be granted one wish, what would it be?¹

Elevator Pitch: How to Make Friends and Influence People² (20 min)

What is an elevator pitch? Well basically, it's an opportunity for you to sell yourself to an audience during the amount of time it takes to ride an elevator. So we're talking charming, engaging, short, and leaving them wanting more.

Does the elevator pitch matter? Well, it depends. If you're happy with the opportunities and network connections you have now, then perhaps not. But, if you want to increase your network, find new opportunities, and find other people who are interested in the things you are interested in an elevator pitch is just the thing! A well honed elevator pitch can help you at your next brown bag, conference, or awkward family function.

Emory's Business school³ says: "It is a positioning statement that tells the listener who you are, what you are known for, what you are interested in doing next[,] and how they can help." So what should an elevator pitch communicate?

- **Who you are.**
 - Your professional title, school, concentration area.
 - If it suits your personality, add something memorable to make a splash.
 - E.g., Hi! I'm Edith. I'm a Nth year PhD student at Georgia Tech working on finding and stopping the spread of fake news.
- **Your experience; what makes it unique?**
 - If you haven't already, now is a great time to mention your research goal/motivation, and projects you're proud of/known
 - It's *critically important* to eliminate jargon and terminology.
 - E.g., Did you know that we can determine which ads Russia bought from Facebook using deep neural nets? We learned that Russian ads are likely to appear in the afternoon in I published at CSCW last year.
- **Why this matters to your audience.**
 - Here is where you get to answer the question, so what?
 - This is especially important if the value of your work isn't clear to your audience yet.

¹ Credit for this question comes from the book *If 1...* by McFarlane and Saywell

² Riffing off the famous Dale Carnegie book.

³ This material is from Emory's Professional Development MBA book for the class of 2019

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- E.g., We need to help people make well informed decisions online, and to prevent foreign powers from meddling with our lives. My research is all about keeping the internet safe and espionage-free.
- **What opportunities you are looking for. (Optional)**
 - If there is something you're on the job market, looking to give colloquia talks, trying to learn about how people teach, this is a great opportunity to share your current area of interest with the community.
 - E.g., I'm getting ready to go on the job market and I'm really interested in schools like Cornell Tech, and (the schools of the people you're talking to if interested).
- **What you need from your audience? (Extra Bonus)**
 - Perhaps the person you are talking to has something you are looking for, contacts, advice, job/speaking opportunities.
 - If the situation allows it, this is a great time to ask for a favor.
 - E.g. I'd love your advice on what it takes to successfully get the attention of a faculty hiring committee, since you have experience landing a tenure-track position at such an elite institution.

The goal is to create a positive and memorable impression that opens the door for future conversations.

Bonus Discussion Prompts: (Come back to me if time)

- How does body language play into a good elevator pitch?
- What makes an elevator pitch memorable?
- How do you stop a pitch from sounding rehearsed?
- What can you do to make a pitch memorable without coming off as trying too hard?

Bonus Activity:

- Dumb down your research. What's a cute, one sentence description of your work?
 - Sample from Ceara Byrne: "I get to have dogs play with toys. Turns out we can predict their success as service dogs."
 - Idea from: <https://www.tickld.com/x/15-phd-students-dumb-down-their-thesis-just-for-us>

Extra Resources:

- <http://thepostdocway.com/content/elevator-pitches-scientists-what-when-where-and-how>
- https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/76988/elevator_pitch_8_28_2012.pdf
- <https://career.gatech.edu/how-create-elevator-pitch>
- <https://web.wpi.edu/Images/CMS/CDC/Elevator-pitch.pdf>

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Elevator Pitch Worksheet & Activity (15 min)

Let's develop an elevator pitch to use at your main conference!

Who you are:

Your experience, your research goal/motivation, and projects you're proud of/known for:

The importance of your experience to your audience:

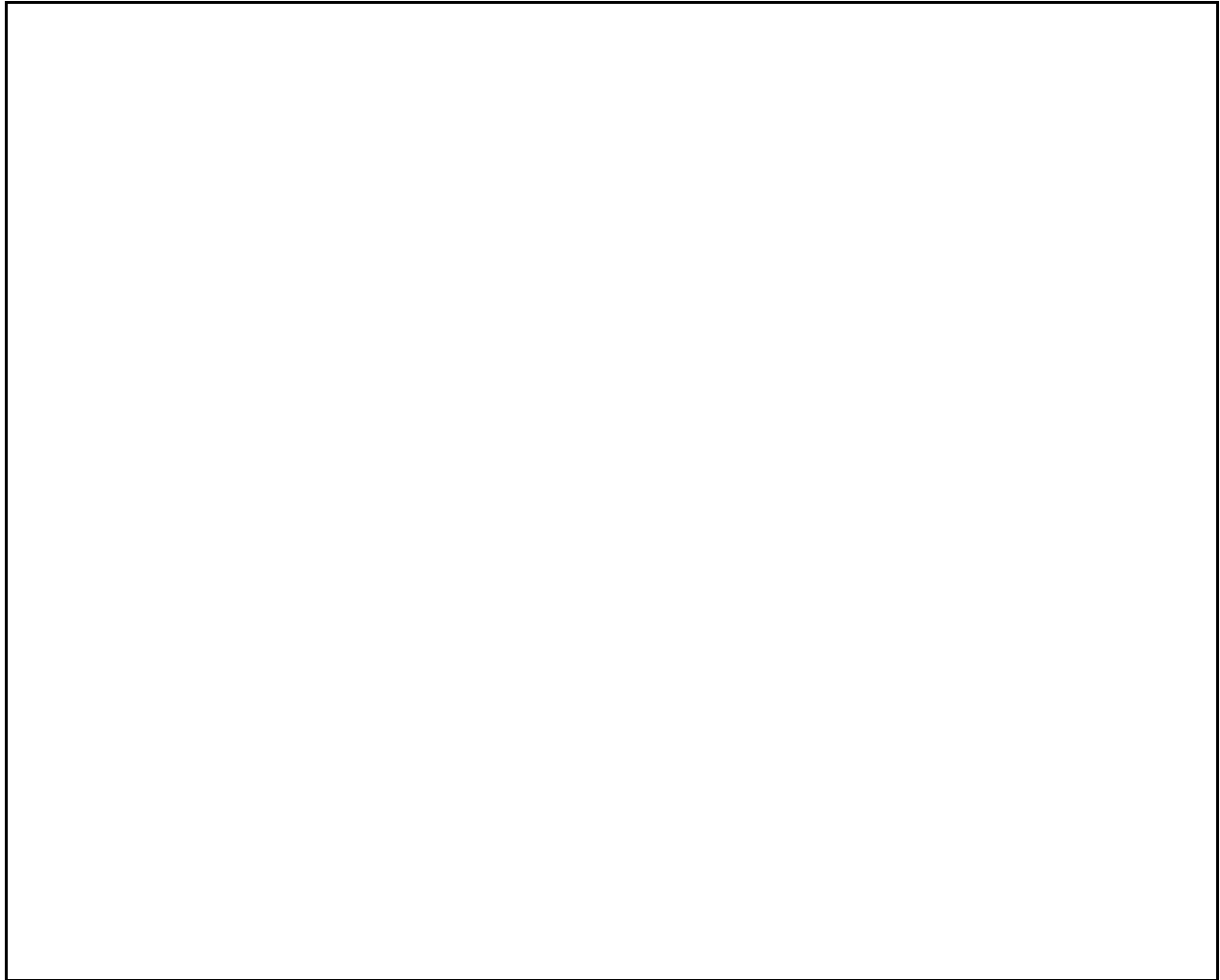
What you need from your audience:

Now, combine your previous answers into a 30-second elevator pitch. This should be around 54-75 words (less is better). Write, edit, and strengthen your pitch:

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Practice, practice, practice! Give your elevator pitch to your group.

While others are giving their pitch, write down notes you have on how they could improve their pitch. If there is time at the end, go around again sharing your feedback.

Final Thoughts: Make sure to be consistent with your personal brand/story!

- Have a story. Your story should be captivating, believable, and one-of-a-kind.
- Show off your personality.
- Engage your audience, make sure you're speaking to things they care about.
- Customize your pitch, practice it, but be sure to sound natural.

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Bonus Elevator Pitch Worksheet

Let's develop an elevator pitch for a general public audience—which may include a journalist... you never know.

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Your experience, your research goal/motivation, and projects you're proud of/known for:

The importance of your experience to your audience:

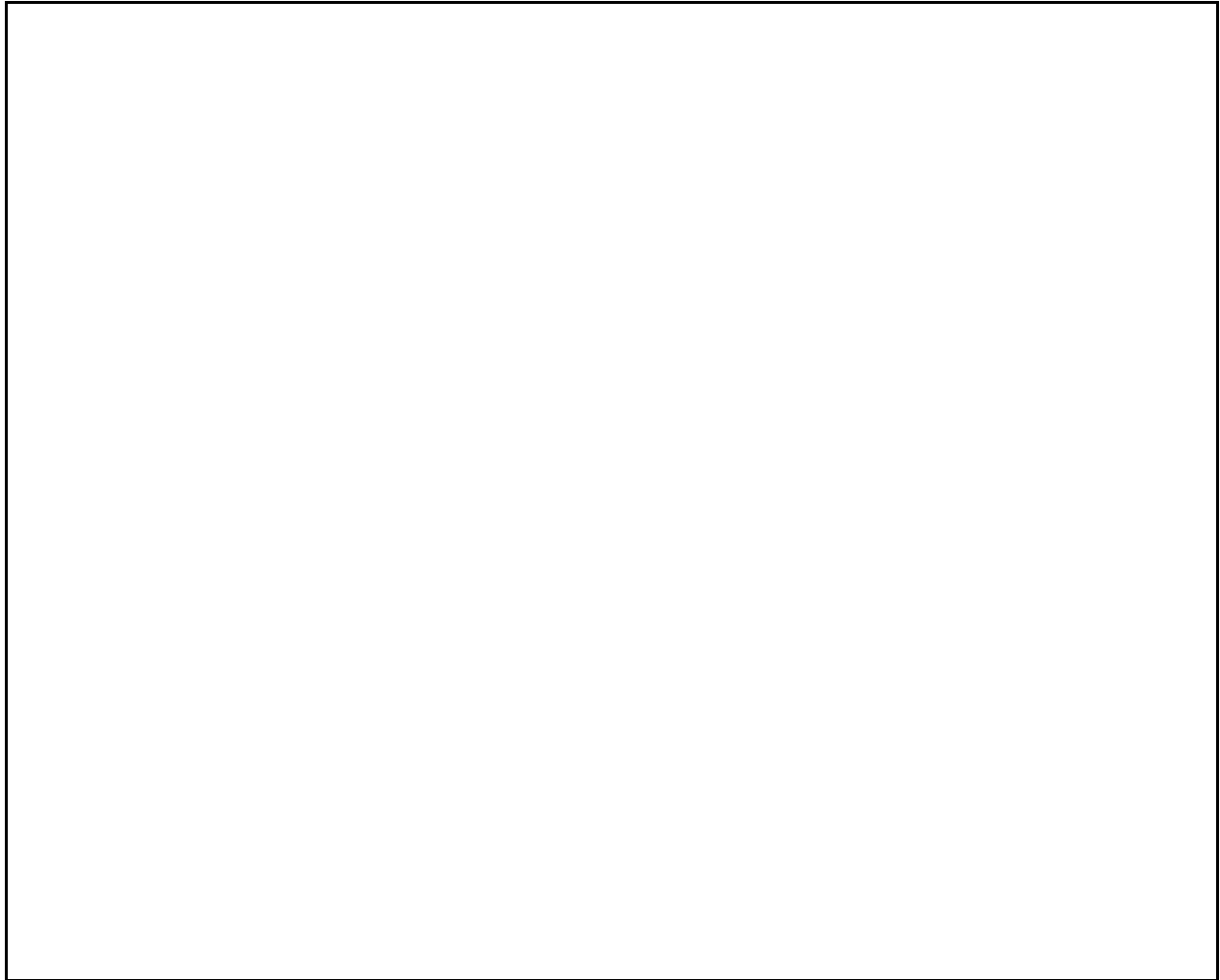
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