

Mini-Assignment 4: Multi-Resolution Elevator Pitch

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Complete this assignment individually.

*This assignment is due on **Monday, November 9, 2009 by 11:59p.m.***

1 Purpose of this Assignment

When you attend conferences, visit other universities, and generally interact with your other research colleagues, they will almost unfailingly ask you “So what are you working on?” or some variant of this question. *You must offer a coherent response.* In many cases, this will be your colleague’s primary mode for judging you and your research. A strong, clear answer to this question can form a very strong impression; on the flip side, a flaky response can be a “career-limiting” move.

The coherent response is commonly known as an “elevator pitch”. Your elevator pitch should be multi-resolution: you should have a research summary that gives the main idea of your work in no more than 30 seconds (the length of an elevator ride, the time you might cross paths with someone in the restroom/hallway, etc.). Your short elevator pitch is also very useful for explaining to people outside of your immediate area (often helpful for broader PR). If a colleague engages you in further discussion, you should be prepared to gently dive into more details (a 5-minute elevator pitch...a “cab ride pitch”).

2 Task

Your task is to devise a multi-resolution elevator pitch. The written portion of this assignment has two parts:

- A 30-second summary (one or two sentence) of what you are currently working on, *which will form the introductory statement in your presentation at the mini-conference. The 30-second time limit will be strictly enforced with an air horn and [cherry] tomatoes!*
- A 100-word summary of what you are currently working on. This summary could be a high-level summary of one particular problem you are working on or, if you are working on multiple projects, a high-level description of the general types of problems that you are interested in.
- A similar 1000-word summary.

The next assignment, your research presentation, is effectively a third, longer elevator pitch.