But why?
A quick guide to crafting an elevator speech about your research

Details, details, details! They're important. But so is the big picture, especially to people outside our immediate discipline. We need to be able to understand and explain *why* we're doing what we're doing. Use this worksheet to get to the heart of it—or, rather, way away from the heart to the sky above.

Don't worry about your audience for a first run-through. Just write it all down. Don't worry about grammar. You can start sentences with a verb, or with "To…."

What are you doing? (Details are fine here, but sum it up in no more than a few sentences.)

Why? (What results are you trying to get?)

Why? (What do your results tell you and the broader scientific community? Why do they matter?)

Why? (Why should we care about these results? What problems do they address? Or what questions do they answer?)

Why? (What broader implications does this have? For science, for society?)

If you need to keep going, keep going until you can't answer why anymore.

NOW....

Write out a statement of no more than a few sentences describing what you're doing and why to someone in science but not in your discipline. The statement should be completely jargon-free unless you define your vocabulary.

Try the following statement:

I am _____[[what you're doing]]_____ to _____[[why you're doing it]]_____.

Repeat as necessary for other audiences, playing with word order and drawing on only the details from above that are relevant and important to your audience. Potential audiences: your aunt, a senator, a 6th grader. Think about what will matter to each.

Listen
Remember to use a key, super important, super useful, may we say essential, skill: **listen**.

And now, all this said… Beware the robot! If you are too rehearsed, you may come off as stiff. But if you have your goal in your mind and have thought about how to describe yourself and your science, you will have a great foundation for doing so! Practice with a friend, and go forth and network!