Press Training - How to Pitch

6.S063 Engineering Interaction Technologies

Prof. Stefanie Mueller | HCI Engineering Group
who every gave an interview?
an article written in the press about a project?

<raise your hand>
what are some **tech outlets** / **magazines** you read?

<30sec brainstorming>
what are some tech outlets / magazines you read?

- New Scientist
- MIT Technology Review
- Gizmodo
- Wired
- MAKE magazine
- Creative Applications
the moment you see an article about it, the invention is already several years old:

• from idea to submitted paper ca. 12 months
• from submission to acceptance: min. 6 months (can be years)
• press comes afterwards
• so idea is already 2 years old when you hear about it for the first time
• don’t jump on sth that was just announced in the news because you are already too late (e.g. Kinect)

-> read research papers, talk to friends
how to pick a product name
any thoughts on the name and tagline?

<30 sec brainstorming>
name: Glowforge™
tagline: The iconic 3D Laser Printer
Make magical things at the push of a button.

big sigh from an expert stand point
but great for customers / marketing
almost every product has a name + tagline. what are other product names that come to your mind? are they good or bad? why?

<30 sec brainstorming>
how would you name your project? what would be its tagline?

<2 min in teams>
let’s look at some examples and discuss if they are good/bad

(these are research papers, but same principles apply)
thoughts?

- hard to google, as lord of the rings is very famous
- if you have not seen the movie, you don’t know what this is
when you say it, people hear ‘fabrication’

auto-correction in google
thoughts?

- overclaiming
- (was not on purpose, just fully realized later : /)
Laser cutting 3D objects?

WHAAATTT?

overclaiming though sometimes gets you a lot of attention

laser cutting 3D objects? WHAAATTT?
(of course not possible right now)

but people might leave disappointed…
your project name will be **used a lot!**

every time **you** talk about it +
every time **anyone** talks about it (press))

Ideally, it **pitches the entire project**
allows people to guess **what it does + benefits**
the good and the not so great press articles
3D-printed display lets blind people explore images by touch

By Paul Marks

Blind and partially sighted people often use tactile displays to interact with computers. These raised sets of Braille-like plastic pins work well for reading text and controlling an operating system. But how about for handling visual data?
3D print extra bits for old objects to help extend their life

Patch it up

A similar project from Stefanie Mueller and her colleagues at the Hasso Plattner Institute in Potsdam, Germany, takes the idea a step further. As well as adding to existing objects, it can mill away redundant sections of an object, then print an updated design in its place.

Mueller’s team has used the system to print a new mounting for a smartphone when the old one broke, and to change the mount to fit a larger phone when the phone was upgraded.

“3D printing is on the verge of becoming a mass-market,” says Mueller. Technology analysis company Gartner estimates that about 250,000 consumer printers will be sold in 2015, up from just 35,000 in 2012, but projects that more than a million will be sold in 2017.

Repairing and augmenting, rather than printing a whole new object, saves material and energy. “Since only a fraction of the entire object is refabricated, our approach reduces material consumption and plastic waste,” Mueller and her colleagues write in a paper due to be presented next week at Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology (UIST) in Charlotte, North Carolina.

“Everyone will own a 3D printer in the future, once we have solved the challenges,” says Mueller. “While we are very excited about this future evolution, we are also worried about the potential implications on society, such as sustainability.
Beam me up Scotty: German scientists invent working teleporter of sorts

New system destructively scans objects, transmits them through encrypted communications across any distance and rebuilds it the other side.

Star Trek's transporter sold the idea of teleportation to the masses, but now German scientists have invented a real-life working system that 'teleports' objects from one location to another using 3D printers. Photograph: Allstar/Cinetext/Paramount

Teleportation has been the holy grail of transport for decades, ever since Mr Scott first beamed up Captain Kirk and his crew in the 1966 opening episode of Star Trek. Now the technology can be made to work in real life, at last.
COOL 3-D PRINTING SOFTWARE JUST MAKES THE SKELETONS OF YOUR STUFF

SEEING A 3-D printer in action for the first time can be kind of disappointing. Objects don’t just materialize instantly like you might expect. Instead, they get pooped out layer by layer, a process that isn’t as expected as a print...
Using a laser pointer, the user sets up a Constructable cut.

Photo: Hasso Plattner Institute
3D Printing and Legos: Perfect Together

New software allows designers to "legofy" their prototypes, eliminating hours of time spent waiting for 3D printers to churn out their widgets.

Know who's the audience

Want to receive exclusive insights from The Atlantic—while supporting a sustainable future for independent journalism? Join our new membership program, The Masthead.
One of my favorite journalists...
keep good contacts!
I send him material again..

Many equate the 3D printer as being the earliest form of a real-life teleporter—or transporter, if you prefer to get your science from Star Trek. The only problem
3D Printing Just Wireframe Models Can Vastly Speed Up Prototyping

and again..
Replacing Parts of 3D-Printed Models With Lego Speeds Up Prototyping and again..

Before '3D printing' became a catch-all term, the hardware, which has been in use for decades, was referred to as a rapid prototyper. But even waiting five hours for a 'rapidly' printed part can be a waste of time. And that's what inspired Stefanie Mueller and researchers at the Hasso Plattner Institute to...
how to reach out to press folks
Submit Project

Before submitting your project please note that due to the high volume of emails we receive we are unable to respond to all submissions. If we require additional information, we will get in touch. Please try to fill-out all fields providing as much information as possible. Where relevant, please state necessary credits, attributions, links, etc. Thank you.

Your Name (required)

Your Email (required)

Your Website (required)

URL to Project (required)

Project Description (required)

‘submit form’ never works in my experience
you can try to **google** a journalists name but they never have their email address on their websites
the only thing that worked for me is to talk to somebody who has press contacts

you could talk to me and I get you in touch if the project is interesting
On Fri, Oct 23, 2015 at 12:48 PM, Mueller, Stefanie <Stefanie.Mueller@hpi.de> wrote:

Hi Andrew,

we have a new fun project out called ProtoPiper, which allows users to quickly prototype large objects. The key idea is to use tape as a building material that is rolled up into pipes using our custom prototyping device.

Here is the video: (password: hpihci)
https://vimeo.com/142118199

A few images are attached. Let me know if you like to cover it, then we can send more images in better resolution and will also upload the video to youtube.

The project page is here:

Main contributors are Harshit Agrawal and Robert Kovacs with support from our head of the human computer interaction lab Patrick Baudisch.

Best,
Stefanie
content of a press article
What is the objective of the writer of an article? Write something that readers will enjoy reading/buy.
what is your objective, why do you give interviews?

advertise

(your work, your work place, yourself to get a better job, make mom proud, in my case attract students + promote the lab…)
your objective & the writers objective can often be aligned, thus allowing for a symbiosis between your and the writer

and sometimes there is no win-win interview is a “negotiation/fight” over what will be written
what determines the contents of a press interview article?
what determines the contents of a press interview article?

the questions the reporter asks? — nope

it’s whatever you say
while commonly (mis)understood, an interview is not about answering questions instead, it is about getting the most favorable article written (= the next best thing to writing the story yourself)
the next best thing to **writing the story yourself**...:

**this means:**
before talking to the press **lay out the article you want written** at least in your head
so now that you have your story, how do you get your story across?
#1 pitching
#2 flagging
#3 bridging
#1 pitching
your goal is to make the reporter write your “story”

(again you need to have a story to write before you talk to the press)
elevator pitch: give it a try!

find somebody who is not your team mate:

1. tell the other person in **three short sentences** what is cool about your project

2. say it back to the first person, just shorter and more concise

3. first person, say it again, even more concise

4-6. switch roles and repeat

<5 min>
ok, so you pitched the story.

how can you make sure the reporter writes down your main statement / pitch?

<30sec brainstorming>
#2 flagging
flagging:
say something “quotable”
then make a long pause…

long enough to be really uncomfortable,
unless the reporter fills the time by writing it down
flagging: give it a try!

in teams of two:

1. tell the other person in your elevator pitch and one additional fact (e.g. a great side story, a big benefit).

2. Flag that additional fact.

3. switch roles and repeat <5 min>
#3 bridging
you are pitching your startup, the press person says:

“Wow your presentation was great, the business plan for your startup looks really fantastic, and it’s great to see you have such a vast network of collaborators.

How come I always hear MIT is only about nerds sitting in a basement?”
Reporter: “How come you are such a wimp?”
Interviewee: “I am not a wimp”

Next day headline:
“I am not a wimp”
another example:

“Stefanie, what is it like to be one of the few female faculty among only males.”

how do you respond?
if you have a top tier research project to talk about, do not allow the science reporter to waste your main story to talk about the fact that you happen to have two X chromosomes.

(there are other outlets for promoting diversity)
“I did not want this to go into the article, but the reporter asked me. What was I supposed to do?”

really? how do you prevent that?

<30sec brainstorming>
do not **answer** the question
do not **repeat** the question either

instead, use the magic words

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“that’s not how I tend to think of it” (non-quotable)
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then talk about **what you** want them to write
(e.g., repeat your pitch)

it feels weird at the beginning, but it works like a charm!
Often times you don’t even need the “that’s not how I tend to think of it. <repeat pitch>”

If the answer to a question would not be favorable instead answer the question you would have liked to get.
press:  
“Stefanie, how was it when you started at Hasso Plattner Institute as one of the few female students?”

what I said:  
“When I started at Hasso Plattner Institute I really enjoyed the research opportunities the institute offered. In my first research project I developed XX.”

= bridging
example question:
In an email interview I get asked “When will I be able to buy <research project of your choice> in the stores”

bad answer:
“We are a research lab, our research aims 10 years. The technology is huge and clunky… but in 5 years”

is it true? absolutely!
but what contents in the article did you just produce? ‘technology is huge and clunky’
example question:
“Does the depth camera in prototype X allow for reliable tracking?”

good answer:
“Yeah, the Time-of-flight camera was a really important aspect of our design, because it works in bright daylight. We think of this as being key to making imaginary phone truly mobile and ubiquitous.”

awesome!
bridging: give it a try!

in teams of two:

1. Interviewer: try to make the other person say something negative that is quotable. Interviewee: bridge.

2. switch roles and repeat.

<5 min>
additional things...
for topics you are not an expert on
(such as purpose of MIT,
the purpose of the research lab you are in)

refer to the person who is
(your advisor, MIT administration)
there is no "off-the record"
if you say it, chances are they will write it
get even more control over the article:
images: if you have pictures you like, send them
text: try to review the article before they go into print
keep your sponsors happy
mention “MIT” (or whoever your sponsor is)
say it repeatedly
limitations...
you know the techniques, but they also know them

can lead to weird situations.
but again you don’t have to answer.

always make a friendly face and just say another
sentence. never look annoyed - they might just cut this
into the interview somewhere.
#1 pitching
before the interview,
write down the story that you want printed

#2 flagging
a long pause after the main fact
makes sure reporters write it

#3 bridging
“that’s not how I tend to think of it.
<return to your pitch>”
end.