

Opening Doors

Suggestions for introducing yourself and your research to a mixed audience

- Focus less on the details of your research and emphasise on the nature of collaboration you are looking for to attract the right people.
- Interact with the audience; ask questions or tell jokes or get them to stand up.
- Be personable and enthusiastic – it's contagious if you convey how interesting you find your work.
- Find something that everybody can relate to and start with this.
- Don't use jargon!
- Talk about the skills you have as these may be valuable for other projects or ideas.
- Design simple visuals, but invest time in them so they are clear, appealing to look at and explain your work to a broad audience.
- Be concise in what you say and what is on the slides. Too much text or details are distracting especially if they are inconsistent with what you're saying.
- Be open-minded about who is listening as you might find collaborations in unexpected places – don't close down possibilities with assumptions about who will or won't be interested.
- Imagine you're explaining your research to someone on the bus, who's getting off at the next stop.
- Encourage your audience to act at the end by asking for questions, ideas or collaborations.
- Use themes to interest people from adjacent fields.
- Mentioning topics you are interested in. Research can be very specific and it can be hard to extrapolate the research project to wider skill areas or interests if these aren't highlighted.
- People are interested in people, so share a personal moment with something about yourself; a joke, or being really passionate, or a little fact eg "I can't draw!"; "I won the three minute thesis!"; "I'm excited to X!"
- Think about what you want to achieve with your introduction and design it with this end in mind. What do they need to know to take the action you want them to?
- Using keywords (such as data mining etc.) to help others connect to you and remember you faster
- Practice your introduction with people from other fields so they can help you see what might spark an idea in someone else.
- Keep in mind the impact of what you do and why you do it instead of technical details about how you do it.
- Have a few versions ready so you can adapt your introduction to the public and the room if you learn more about them before you present.
- Use your slide as a visual aid – design it to reinforce the key points you want people to remember.

