



# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

## **Perfecting Your Elevator Pitch**

VA Partnered Research Training Program  
Monday, March 15, 2021





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## Why Important?

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/S0m4iDiTeto?start=82&end=151>



# POSSIBLE ROADBLOCKS





# US Public's Knowledge of Science (NSF Survey)

- The earth goes around the sun (True) 73%
- Human beings developed from earlier species of animals (True) 52%
- Antibiotics kills viruses as well as bacteria (False) 51%
- Lasers work by focusing sound waves (False) 45%
- Lasers work by focusing light waves (True) 36%
- A mosquito, corn, an apple, and salmon can all be genetically modified (True)

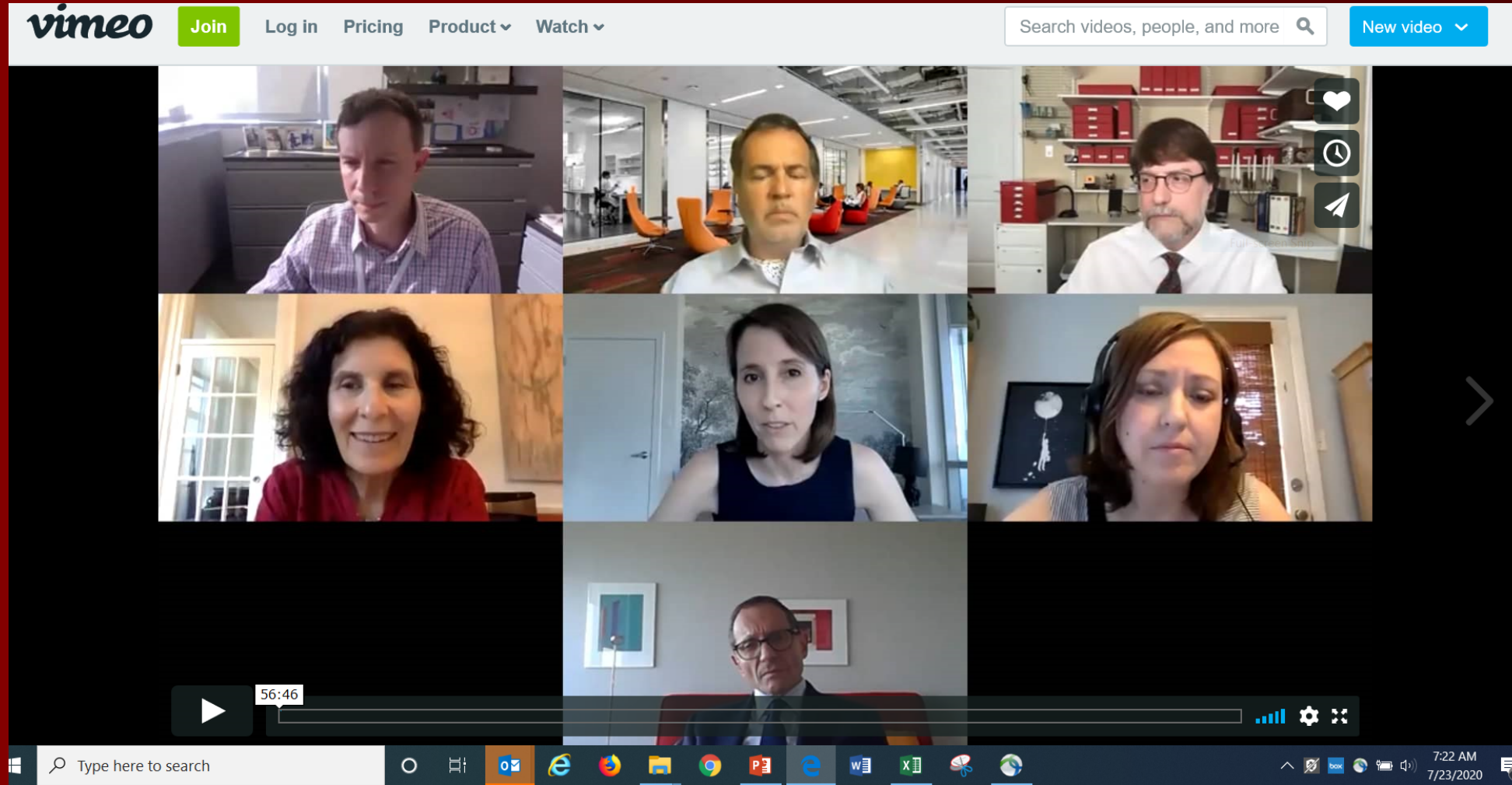


# The Curse of Knowledge

“There are an estimated 650,000 protein:protein interactions (PPIs) within the human proteome. Peptides synthesized in the likeness of their native interaction domain(s) are natural choices to target PPIs due to their fidelity of orthostatic contact points between binding partners. Our laboratory has designed nanostructures called peptide amphiphiles in an effort to overcome topographical flatter and geographically larger expanses.”



# An New Form of Communication





# THE SOLUTIONS



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**Start with a “Trailer”**



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# TRAILER EXERCISE





## A few “trailers”

- I am fighting the financial toxicity of cancer treatment (Russ Szmulewitz)
- I have created a ‘surgical playbook’ to improve coordination and patient outcomes in the OR (Alex Langerman)
- I have created the worlds largest ‘data-scope.’ It helps us see new ways to treat cancer. (Robert Grossman)





**Tell a Story**



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# Two Story Templates

Beginning = Set-up

Beginning = Problem

Middle = Conflict

Middle = Solution

End = Resolution

End = Benefit





## Story Example (Problem/Solution/Benefit)

### Trailer:

*Tackling the financial toxicity of cancer*

**Problem:** *The astronomical, rising cost of cancer care*

**Solution:** *Found that when taking particular drug with food, only need  $\frac{1}{4}$  of dose*

**Benefit:** *Savings of up to \$300K per patient*



# Story Example (Problem/Solution/Benefit)

## Trailer:

*Using machine learning to predict cardiac arrest*

**Problem:** *200K patients suffer cardiac arrest in hospitals each year*

**Solution:** *Created eCart, a tool that calculates a risk score for each patient*

**Benefit:** *Detects patients at risk 24 hours earlier than clinicians and saves lives*





## Story Example (Set-up, Conflict, Resolution)

### Trailer:

*Regulate the use of vape pens*

**Set-up:** *Vaping products turn liquid nicotine into a cloud of vapor that users inhale*

**Conflict:** *Rising epidemic in high schools, yet no studies on whether they help smokers quit*

**Resolution:** *Found they boost desire to smoke, could lure new generation into addiction*



## Story Example (Set-up, Conflict, Resolution)

### Trailer:

*Paving the way to a bionic arm*

**Set-up:** *Much progress in creating bionic arms that can be controlled by thought*

**Conflict:** *To work well, however, these arms require a sensory system*

**Resolution:** *We helped the first patient experience the sense of touch through a robotic arm*



# STORY EXERCISE





# Ten Tips

- Start with a “trailer.” Distill the impact of your work into one attention-getting sentence.
- Tell a story. A story has a beginning/middle/end, as well as conflict.
- **Tell us why it matters. Answer the questions, “So what?” What does it mean for society?**
- Keep it short.
- Avoid jargon. Use clear, simple, everyday language.
- **Use examples, comparisons, and analogies.**
- Engage. What is surprising or mysterious about your work?
- **What differentiates your work? What makes it unique?**
- **Get personal. What inspired you? What motivates you?**
- Practice, practice, practice.



# Zoom Tips

- Make sure that your light source is in front of (not behind) you.
- Position the camera at eye level and an arm's length from you. Your eyes should be one-third the way down the screen.
- Wear solid, bright colors
- Bring energy to your talk, be expressive, and use good body language and gestures.
- Please make eye contact by looking directly into the camera.



**GET PERSONAL EXERCISE**





## A Success Story



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