

PITCHING TIPS FROM PETER THOMSON, ENVIRONMENT EDITOR, *THE WORLD* (BBC WORLD SERVICE/PUBLIC RADIO INTERNATIONAL)

October, 2012

Whatever you're pitching, to whomever, and in whatever medium, the bottom line is the same:

- Make your pitch clear, concise and compelling
- Answer the question, Why this story, why now?
- Make a strong case for why the story will engage the outlet's particular audience
- Lay out how your piece will advance the topic beyond what's been reported elsewhere
- Tell them why you're the best person to do the story

With the first of these, distil your pitch to one short lead paragraph. You can follow that with more elaboration, but if that first graf doesn't grab them, it's likely they won't stick with you for the details.

The second thing is really important—research the outlet you're pitching to, what their target audience is, and how the outlet appeals to that audience. Find out what that outlet has done on the topic or related ones in recent years. And tailor your pitch—don't write a long, discursive pitch to an outlet that trades mostly in short items. On the other hand, don't write an overly brief pitch to an outlet that publishes longer, more in-depth items.

Also, as much as possible, have the style of your pitch reflect the style that you'd use in writing up the story—especially if you're a stranger to the editor. The editor wants to know not just what you'd be writing but how.

**Re: Pitching our program and other radio outlets: if you've never produced for an outlet before, briefly describe your experience in the medium and provide links to some of your best and most relevant stuff.