**The Heilmeier Catechism**



**Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency**

DARPA operates on the principle that generating big rewards requires taking big risks. But how does the Agency determine what risks are worth taking?

George H. Heilmeier, a former DARPA director (1975-1977), crafted a set of questions known as the "Heilmeier Catechism" to help Agency officials think through and evaluate proposed research programs.

* What are you trying to do? Articulate your objectives using absolutely no jargon.
* How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
* What is new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
* Who cares? If you are successful, what difference will it make?
* What are the risks?
* How much will it cost?
* How long will it take?
* What are the mid-term and final “exams” to check for success?

Steve Smith’s Additional Question to Consider:

* What makes you, your team and/or your University uniquely qualified to address the particular problem?

<https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/heilmeier-catechism>