

Networking

Building Your Research Village

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&

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Thursday, February 22, 2024, 9:15-10am

Rough Agenda

- 9:15 Welcome + our propaganda
- 9:35 Small group discussion
- 9:50 Q&A
- 10:00 Adjourn for break

Part Zero

WHO WE ARE



James Allan

- PhD Cornell 1995, with Gerard Salton
- UMass Amherst
 - Postdoc, 1995-1996
 - Research Faculty to 1998
 - Assistant Professor to 2003
 - Professor 2008
- Graduate Program Director
- Masters Program Director
- Chair then ADR, College of Information and Computer Sciences



- Research on search engine technology
 - Reviewer, conference PC chair, general chair...
 - Past Chair of SIGIR executive

Divesh Srivastava



| Time | Affiliation | Role | Topics |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1987-1993 | UW Madison | Ph.D. | Deductive DB |
| 1993-1999 | Bell Labs → AT&T Labs | MTS | Query processing, data inte |
| 1999-2020 | AT&T Labs | Head: DB Research | + data streams, XML, respo data (quality, privacy, expla |
| 2020-now | AT&T CDO | Head: DB Research | + responsible AI (... + unfair |



Professional Activities, Awards

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1993-now | PC, GC, AE, Managing Editor | DB conferences, journa |
| 2011 | ACM Fellow | For contributions to qu |
| 2018-2025 | VLDB VP → President | Promote, exchange sc |
| 2019-2025 | CRA Board Member | Uniting industry, acade |
| 2021-2025 | ACM Pubs Board Co-Chair | Preferred publisher in computing ... |



Part One

NETWORKING IN THEORY



Networking is ...

- Building and sustaining professional relationships
- Participating in a research community



Networking is not ...

- Using people
- A substitute for quality research



Examples of networking

- Moderate a newsgroup (or whatever it is “you kids” call them these days)
- Volunteer to do publicity or other jobs for major conferences
- Attend talks and meet with the speaker (do some homework on them)
- Serve when asked on NSF panels, National Academy studies, etc.

Networking ...

- ✓ Makes *you* known
- ✓ Makes your *work* known
- ✓ Source of new research ideas & different slants on old ideas
- ✓ Feedback on your research
- ✓ New collaborations
- ✓ Letters of recommendation
- ✓ Professional opportunities

It takes a village ...



And you get to create your own.

networking

Creating your own village

- All villages need elders
- All villages need regular Joes
- All villages need diversity
 - Learn different strokes from different folks
- All villages need uniformity
 - Similar folks have similar issues

John S. Davis, IBM, 2003

Mentorship vs Sponsorship

Mentorship

- Talking with you
- A sounding board
- Offers advice, skills, *maybe* a shoulder
- Mentors help you, but do not promote you
- They *care* about your success but that isn't the same thing as being *vested* in your success
- You will need to navigate advice received from different sources -- mentors love giving advice!

Sponsorship

- Talking about you
- A sponsor is an advocate with influence – a champion!
- Typically senior and in your community chain
- They provide opportunities
- Vested in your progression (that's both good and bad)
- Many successful folks have powerful sponsors and continue to benefit from them throughout their career

Networking up & down

- Go to talks, go to conferences, ...
- Introduce yourself to
 - Established Researchers
 - Researchers in all areas!
 - Researchers junior to you
 - Peers!



Conference networking

Prepare a research talk (write it down, practice)

- ✓ “Elevator talk” (1 & 3 minute versions)
 - Why is it an interesting problem?
 - Why is it important?
 - Why is your solution unique?
- ✓ Prepare
 - Who will be there? Who do you want to meet?
 - What do you want to ask them? Read their papers.
- **Take notes!** Who you met, plan next steps

At the Conference

- ✓ Don't only hang around with your friends
- ✓ You all have CS in common
- ✓ Reconnect
- ✓ Make sure your nametag is visible
- ✓ Don't interrupt private conversations
- ✓ Be open and ask questions
- ✓ Move on to the next conversation
- ✓ One conversation is not enough
- ✓ Find people you connect with

After the conference

- ✓ Follow up!
 - Read their work! Send comments
 - Send pointers to your related papers
 - Share software and workloads
 - Share/borrow teaching resources
 - Do joint work together
 - Invite them to give a talk
 - Ask to give a talk there (as appropriate)

Informal networking

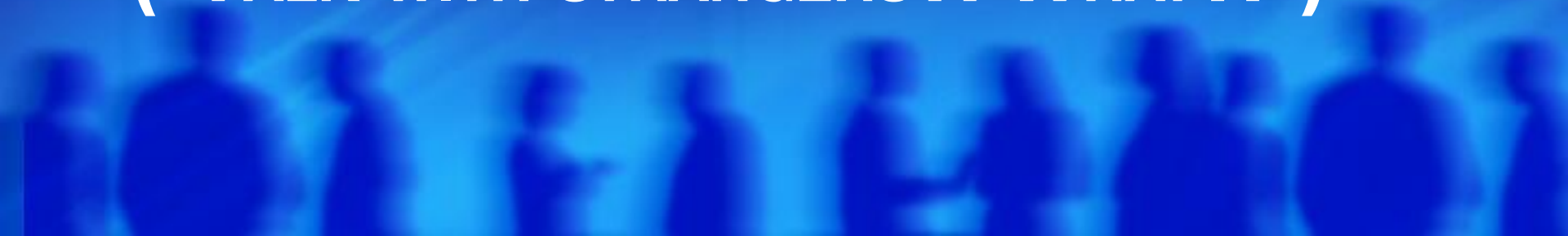
- ✓ At conferences, at meetings, at talks, in groups...
- ✓ Serendipity happens: Talk to people you meet by chance. Talk to people you like. Keep it simple.
- ✓ Convey excitement about your research and theirs.
- ✓ Talk to people about their lives as well as their work.
- ✓ Be authentic (“To thine own self be true ...”)
- ✓ Ask questions & listen!



Part Two

NETWORKING IN PRACTICE

(“TALK WITH STRANGERS?! WHAT?!”)



**But most of us feel we're horrible at
small talk!**

You have Computing in common

Networking is not genetic

It is a research skill

Practice

Meet people Learn Go places

Volunteer!

Plus... we'll give you a structure

Breakout discussion

- At your table
- 15 minutes
- Share networking, mentoring, supporting success and failures
 - As either a mentor or mentee
- Write comments/questions in Google Doc:
<https://bit.ly/CMWnetworking>
 - One person in the doc per table, please

What to talk about?

- Where are you in studying? Grad? undergrad?
- Why are you studying CS?
- What is your research area? What attracts you to this subject area?
- What research problem(s) are you working on right now?
- What is your greatest (professional or personal) challenge right now?
- What is your biggest concern about graduate school?
- What kind of career path do you want to pursue?
- What is your next step in your career?
- What do you hope to get out of this meeting?
- What was the most important lesson you learned from your advisor?
- What do you enjoy doing when you're *not* doing CS?
- What are you *passionate* about?

Pretending to Have Social Skills: How Have We Done It?



I like your poster... um... how about this weather?



Homework

- Practice this week with your peers & beyond
- Meet at least 10 people in your institution this month
- Introduce yourself, smile, and mention your name
- Write down their names
- Network Forward – network your network
- Follow-up with email, Linked-In, or Facebook
- ***Network Forward*** Make connections “You should meet Hermione Granger from Hogwarts...”

Part Three

COLLABORATIONS



Building & Managing Collaborations: How Have We Done It?



Let's pick an easy one: author order on papers

Part Four

YOUR QUESTIONS

FROM THE DOC OR ASK AT MIC

(PLUS WE HAVE SOME EXTRAS IN RESERVE)

Some questions

- How to make connections that will be tenure letter writers
- How to network with potential tenure letter writers and maintain the relationship over years?

Some questions

- For your funded proposals, did you already have a good connection with the program director before submitting the proposal? If yes, can you suggest some specific and actionable ways to connect with program directors and, more importantly, maintain the connection?
- How to meet program managers and introduce ourselves?

Some questions

- Who should be in the networking group?
Established faculty, industry practitioners?

Some questions

- How many people do you actively collaborate with? Did you pursue collaborations or did they happen more organically?

Some questions

- How to build it from the very start point if I am a really shy person?
- Networking with senior people seems intimidating. What are some useful suggestions?
- How do you get from just meeting someone once, and then they forget about you, to building a relationship (without doing a publication together)?

Some questions

- Should you ever not work with a colleague because they would be a perfect tenure letter writer for you?
- How much networking should I be doing? (i.e. How many visiting talks should I give a year? How many lunch/coffee dates at conferences?)
- What's a good "work within institution" vs. "work with other institutions" ratio? Is that important?

Some other questions

- What are some practical ways to start networking over conferences?
- Can you invite yourself to visit a colleague (to potentially start a research collaboration) and how do you do it?
- How to network with people from other disciplines?
- What are the different components that make a complete research village?
- How do we follow up with the people who said they'll be research mentors? What concrete tasks do we ask them to do?
- How do you manage multiple research villages/conferences (especially for people that are interdisciplinary)?
- To maintain research networking, what are the most steps I need to do?
- Should I hire a postdoc?
- Is there any advice about collaborating for people who usually work self-contained and on-own-schedule?"
- I understand one can build connections with other researchers via community services. But how would you maintain your whole research network when you know more and more people? Any specific and actionable suggestions?



Thank you!

**And best of luck for an exciting
career ahead of you in the CS
research community!**

Acknowledgements

Thanks for sharing presentations

- Vivek Sarkar, Georgia Tech
- Charles Isbell, Georgia Tech
- Greg Morrisett, Cornell
- Kathryn McKinley, Google
- Jan Cuny, NSF
- Susan Eggers, University of Washington
- John Davis, IBM
- Mary Jean Harrold, Georgia Tech
- Valerie Taylor, Texas A&M

Whom did they thank?

Susan Owicki, Joan Feigenbaum, Judy Goldsmith, Naomi Nishimura, David Johnson, Peter Shor, David Applegate, Richard Beigel, Fred Schneider, Susan Eggers

Vivek Sarkar

Research areas: Parallel computing, programming models, compilers, runtime systems, debuggers/verifiers



PhD Thesis: "Partitioning and Scheduling Parallel Programs for Multiprocessor Execution"
Advisor: John Hennessy



Senior Manager, Programming Technologies
Member, IBM Academy of Technology,
Mentor: Fran Allen



Professor & Chair,
Department of
Computer Science
E.D. Butcher Chair



Professor & Chair,
School of Computer Science
Stephen Fleming Chair



ACM Fellow Citation:
for contributions to
technologies for
parallel computing.



Member, DOE
Advanced Scientific
Computing Advisory
Committee (ASCAC)



Member, CRA
Board of Directors
& Co-chair,
CRA-Industry
Committee



IEEE Fellow Citation: for
contributions to compiler
technologies for parallel
computing and dynamic
compilation



AWARDS & RECOGNITION
Vivek Sarkar Recognized with Ken
Kennedy Award [↗](#)

Citation: For foundational
technical contributions to
the area of programmability
and productivity in parallel
computing, ...