# Building Your Professional Network

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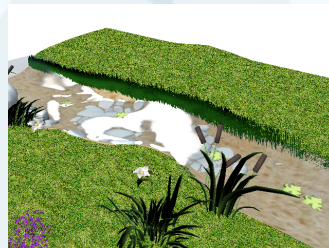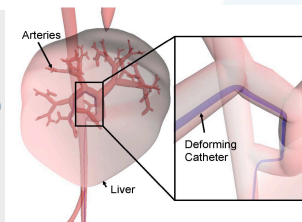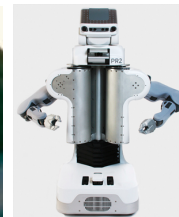Computing Research Association
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# Ming C. Lin

- B.S., M.S. Ph.D. in EECS, University of California, Berkeley
- J.R. & L.S. Parker Distinguished Professor Emeritus, UNC-CH
- Elizabeth Stevinson Iribe Chair, UMD, College Park
- *Research:*
  - ✓ **Virtual Reality**
  - ✓ **Robotics**
  - ✓ **Human-Computer Interaction**
  - ✓ **Physically-based Modelling, Simulation & Animation**



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# Jaime H Moreno

- Originally from Chile
- Current role
  - Senior Manager, Distinguished Researcher
    High-Performance Data Centric Systems
    IBM TJ Watson Research Center, NY
  - Recent completed project: IBM benchmarks optimization for Summit and Sierra supercomputers (#1, #2 in Top500)
- Previously
  - Faculty Member, University of Concepcion, Chile
- Computer Science, PhD, MS, UCLA
- Electrical Engineer, University of Concepcion, Chile







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# What is CRA-WP?
# *Individual & Group Research Mentoring*

**Undergrads:** Undergraduate Research Experiences (CREU & DREU), Research-Focused Scholarship opportunities at GHC (GHC Research Scholars)

**Grad Cohort:** Group Mentoring of Graduate Students (Grad Cohort for URMD & Grad Cohort for Women)

**Grad Students & Academics/PhD Researchers:** Mentoring Tracks @ GHC, Returning Scholars @ GHC, Group Mentoring for Early & Mid Career @ CMW



Undergraduates → Graduate Students → Academic careers / Industry/government labs

**2400+ students & PhDs a year**

*Stay in touch: cra.org/cra-wp,*
*Twitter: @CRA_WP,*
*Facebook: CRA-WP,*
*Linked-in: CRA-Widening Participation*



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# How do you define networking?
# Why network?

*Take 2 minutes and write down your thoughts*

# What is Networking?

- *Networking* is a deliberate activity to build, reinforce and maintain relationships of trust with other people
  - Many different networks exist in every-day life
    - Clubs, Church, Sports, Arts, Books, Hiking, Classmates, …

- *Professional Networking* is simply networking focused on furthering professional goals

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# Benefits of a Professional Network

- Discover opportunities that you would not have otherwise
  - Collaborations, inside and outside discipline
  - Invited to talks, conference committees, ..
  - Internships, job leads, ..

- Direct promotion of yourself and your work
  - Promoting your technical expertise and opinions
  - Introducing/reminding others of your technical work and skills
  - Allow others to recognize your achievements (eg., awards, …)

- Be part of a supporting community
  - A sense of belonging

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# Three key concepts

1. Networking starts with you!

2. Networking is a skill!

3. Networking is an ongoing activity!

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# Your in-person personal brand

- ***Appearance***:
  Your body language, clothing attire and overall posture

- ***Communication skills:***
  Confidence, attitudes toward people

- ***Competencies:***
  Your special skills in the current context

- ***Differentiation:***
  What separates you from others and leaves a lasting memory in minds of others

Be yourself !!

Don't "cover"

*Use your personal brand to differentiate yourself and make a positive impression*

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# Your on-line personal brand

- On-line ➜ your public image

- Remember:
  - You are not there to interpret what others view/read

- Remember:
  - Your presence online is archived and will always be available to anyone, employer or social group, who search for it

*Clean up your E-persona*

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# Three key concepts

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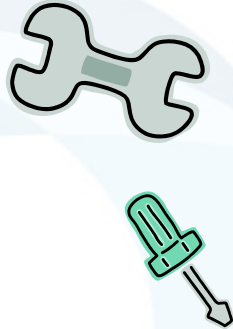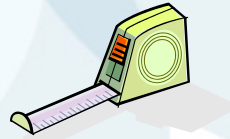3. Networking is an ongoing activity!

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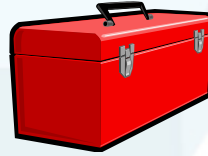Computing Research Association
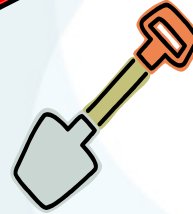Widening Participation

# Networking Tools

1. Prepare for an event

2. Talk to those around you

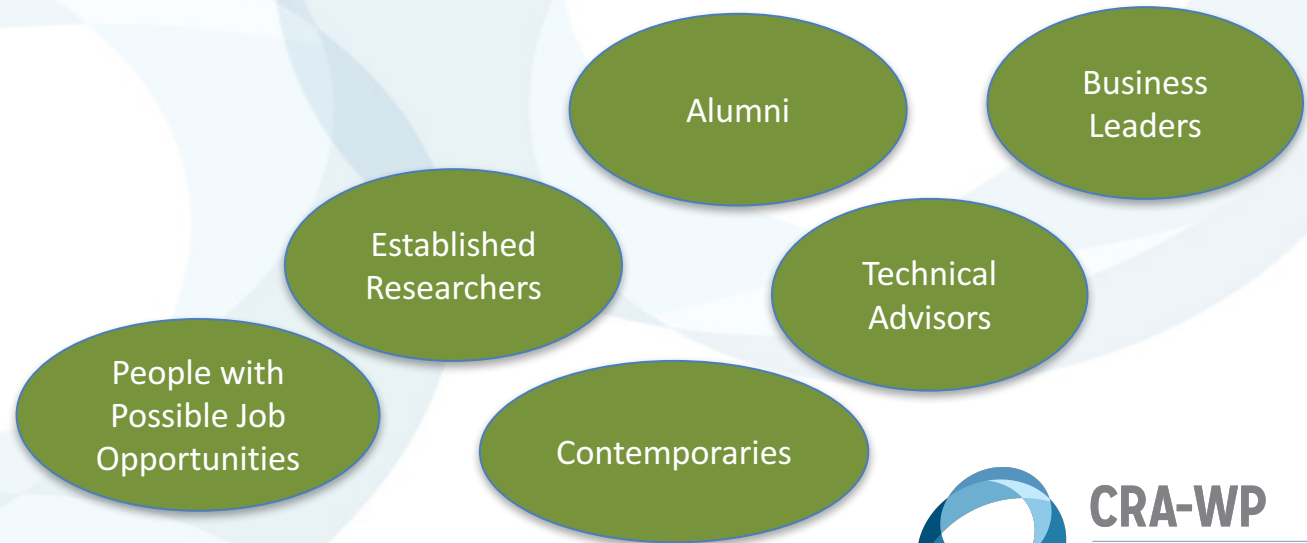3. Elevator Speech

4. Volunteering

5. …

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# Prepare for an event

- Deliberately target your networking
  - Get to know who they are before you attend the event
- Leverage networking opportunities as they arise

Alumni

Business Leaders

Established Researchers

Technical Advisors

People with Possible Job Opportunities

Contemporaries

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# Set networking goals

- Long-term goals
  - How do they fit with your career goals?

- Short-term goals
  - How do they fit with a specific event?

# Talking to those around you

- Where do you start?

- What do you share?

- How do you respond?

- How do you avoid … the silence?


- Instead, how about asking yourself "what do I want to know about that person"?

# If talking doesn't come easy

- Write down questions you would want to ask
- Join a group that is casually talking and introduce yourself.
  - More than 2 people is better, because 2 might be having a private conversation
- Practice
  - Meet new people
  - Sit down with people you don't know

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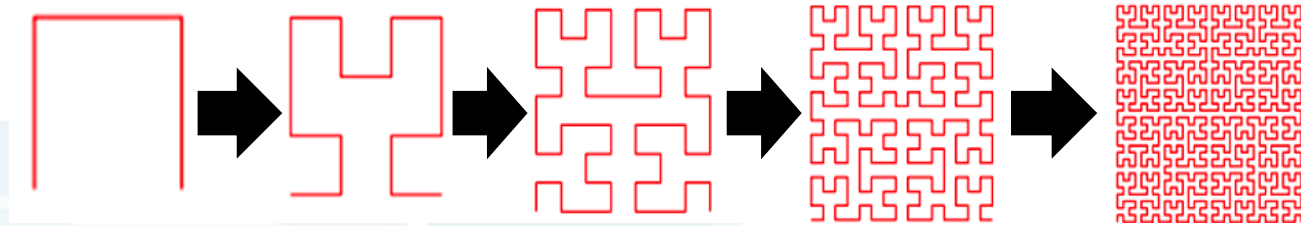
# Activity – 5 minutes

- Change sits
- Find someone near you that you don't already know and introduce yourself

- Practice this activity at least 50 times at GHC!

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# Elevator pitches



- An elevator pitch should be a space-filling curve
  - 5 second version: Your basic area (e.g., systems, HCI, ML)
  - 10 second version: +Your specialization (e.g., "In particular, I study X and Y, with a focus on Z")
  - 30 second version: +An insight from your research (e.g., "My work exploits the fact that a foo might be a baz on Wednesday")
- Practice is your friend!

# The Importance of Practice

- Preparation can remove the fear of game-time spontaneity or creativity
    - Ex: For a conference, read papers ahead of time and generate potential questions before meeting speakers
    - Ex: Before going to a professional event, prepare a list of who you want to meet, and how you'll introduce yourself
- Most people who seem "naturally" good at something have practiced a lot, and are not improvising as much as you might think

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"Luck favors the prepared mind."
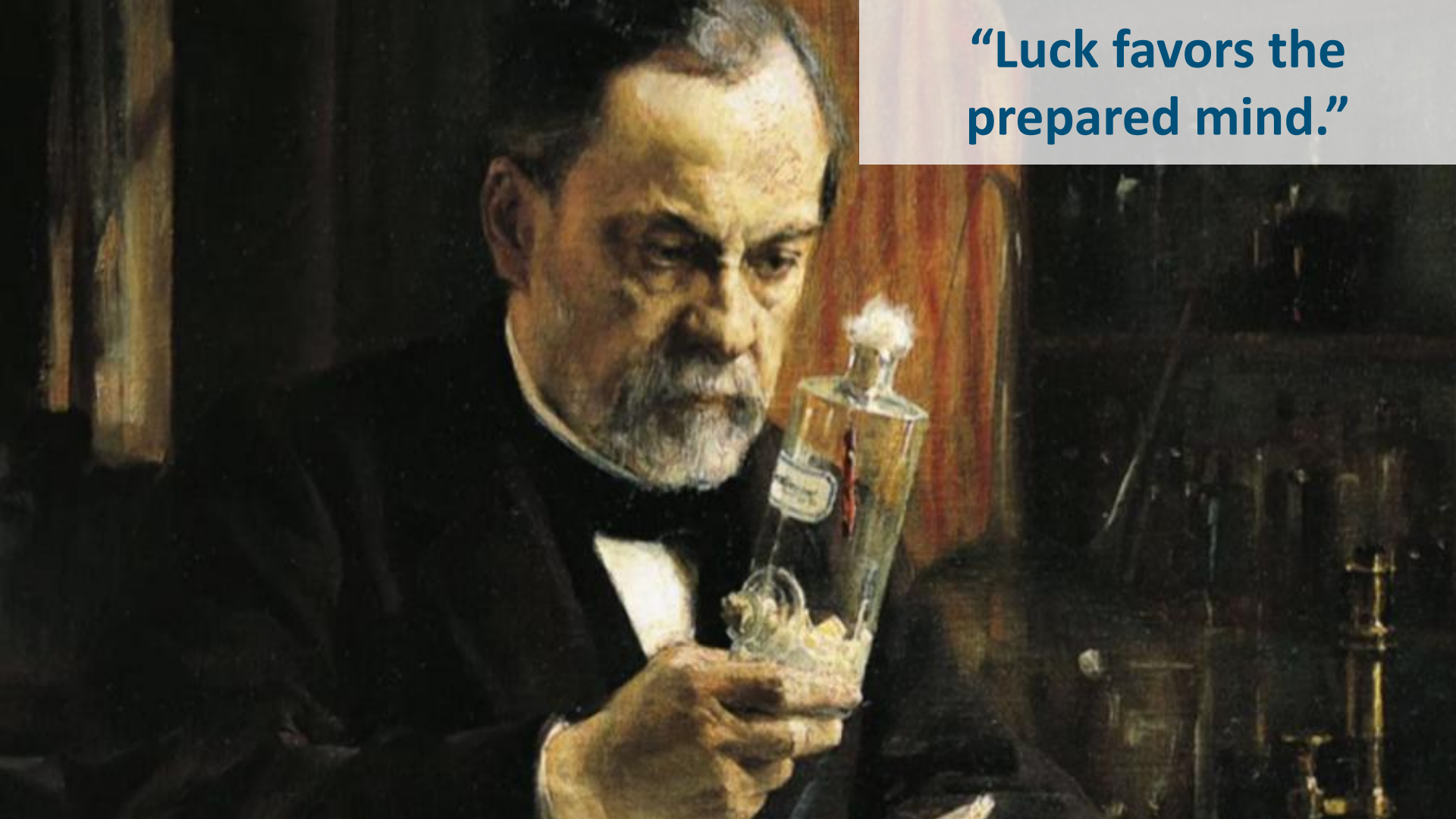
# Learn about Style, Vocal Tone, Pacing

- Watch successful colleagues, politicians, even comedians
  - What do they do well?
  - What do they do poorly?

- Watch recordings of yourself presenting or even just talking
  - This is brutal . . .
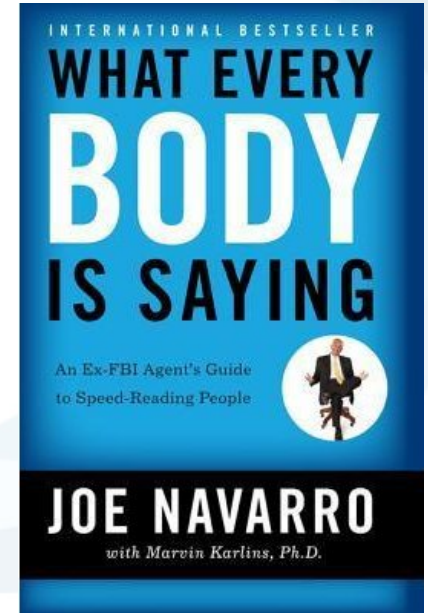  - . . . but invaluable!

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# Learn about Body Language

- Learning to read people will help you to detect when you're saying the right/wrong thing

- Learning how to project confidence will help you "fake it 'til you make it"

# Activity – 5 minutes

- Practice your 30 second elevator pitch

- Find someone new near you that you don't already know and practice

# Expanding your professional network via volunteering

- Contribute to your community
  - Sitting at a booth
  - Preparing a web site
  - Contributing to open source
  - Reviewing papers


- Naturally follows: service will give you positive visibility, and open up networking opportunities

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**Networking at Conferences**

# What To Do

- Wear your badge visibly

- Ask questions during Q&A sessions

- At large events, preface question with name and affiliation

- Talk to people sitting next to you

- Talk to speakers after their presentations

- Talk to other grad students

- Attend social events

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# If you are presenting at a Conference . . .

- Put photos on the title slide (yourself, co-authors)
  - This helps attendees to find you afterwards and ask you questions
  - It also reminds the audience that underrepresented groups are making contributions to the community!
- Use the presentation as an icebreaker/excuse to start conversations
- Remember:
  - A good presentation can change your career trajectory!

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# What NOT To Do

- Don't only talk to your friends
- Don't interrupt heavy and/or private conversations
- Don't be overly negative
- Don't linger in a conversation for too long
- Don't get discouraged

# Three key concepts

1. Networking starts with you!

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# Preserving your network

- For new connections:

  - Exchange contact information

  - Remind yourself to follow-up

    - Ex: "Are you going to event X?"

    - Ex: "What was your take-away from event Y?"

    - Ex: "Any news on the work you told me about at event Z?"

    - Ex: "You might be interested in a new paper of mine . . ."

    - …

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# Preserving your network

- Re-connect with people that you've met in the past
  - At professional events
  - Through social networks
  - Through direct communication


- Remember:
  - Professionals are busy, so they may need to be re-pinged (politely!)

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**Key Idea #1: Networking starts with you!**

**Key Idea #2: Networking is a skill**

**Key Idea #3: Networking is an ongoing activity**

# Homework

- PRACTICE!
  - Introduce yourself
  - Give your elevator pitch
- Set a goal of meeting 10 people everyday at GHC
- Follow-up through social media


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# CRA-WP Events at GHC

- Visit the CRA-WP Booth in the EXPO to learn more

- Attend other CRA-WP Sessions, such as
  - Finding Your Dream Job with a Ph.D.
    Thursday 9:45-10:45 am, OCCC W308D
  - Mid-career: Stay, Change or Retire
    Thursday 12:45-1:45 pm, OCCC W308D
  - Building Your Professional Persona
    Thursday 4 – 5 pm, OCCC W308D

*Stay in touch: https://cra.org/cra-w/, Twitter: @CRAWomen*
*Facebook: CRA-W, Linked-In: CRA-Women*



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- Questions ?


- Please rate and review the session in the mobile app!