Building Your Professional Network

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**Research:**
- Virtual Reality
- Robotics
- Human-Computer Interaction
- Physically-based Modelling, Simulation & Animation
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• 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
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

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

2400+ students & PhDs a year
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
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
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

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

*Be yourself!! Don’t “cover”*
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
Three key concepts

1. Networking starts with you!

2. Networking is a skill!

3. Networking is an ongoing activity!
1. Prepare for an event
2. Talk to those around you
3. Elevator Speech
4. Volunteering
5. ...
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
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
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!
Elevator pitches

• An elevator pitch should be a space-filling curve
  • 5 second version: Your basic area (e.g., systems, HCl, 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
“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!
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
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
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!
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

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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 . . .”
    • ...
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!)
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
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
• Questions?

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