BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PERSONA

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Thanks to presenters from previous years!
Andrea Danyluk

- Mary A and William Wirt Warren Professor of Computer Science, Williams College
- Previous:
  - Acting Dean of Faculty
  - CS Department Chair
  - Cognitive Science Program Chair

- Research:
  - Machine Learning (Applications, Feature Selection, Systematic Error)
  - Previous: NYNEX ML & AI Researcher
  - ICML 2001 co-Chair
  - ICML 2009 General Chair

- CRA-WP co-Chair
- ACM Education Board & Ed. Advisory Committee
- ACM Data Science Task Force co-Chair
- Previous:
  - Inaugural Global Director of Align, Northeastern University
  - ACM/IEEE-CS CS2013
Ayanna Howard

- Chair, School of Interactive Computing (IC)
- Linda J. and Mark C. Smith Endowed Professor
- CTO/Founder, Zyrobotics
- Previous: NASA Robotics Researcher
- Research: Human-Robot Interaction and AI
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
What is a Professional Persona?

“Persona”
– Role that one assumes or displays in public or society

“Professional”
– Exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike and technical manner

“Professional Persona”
– A presence that is effective in giving others a positive perception of you & your abilities
Perceptions

How might others describe you?

– based on your web page
– based on your interactions, one-on-one or in a group
Perceptions

How might others describe you?
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- based on your interactions, one-on-one or in a group

How would you like others to describe you?
- What qualities would you like to project
Share with your neighbor

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Qualities I want to project:
Qualities that were most important when I was finishing grad school
– Intelligent, competent, organized, have potential
Qualities I’m concerned about
– Too abrupt/direct, fitting in (imposter syndrome, small talk)
Qualities I now understand are very important
– Supportive, collaborative
FOCUS:
DEVELOPING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PERSONA
Why is a Professional Persona Important?

Instrumental in achieving your goals:

- Job opportunities
- Invitations to speak, participate, lead
- Award nominations
- Media opportunities
- Visibility of your work within your org and communities
Use your personal brand to differentiate yourself and make a positive impression

How?

Develop your personal brand

Four components:

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

– **Personality:**
  Your behavior, communication skills and attitudes toward people

– **Competencies:**
  Your special skills fulfilling task requirements

– **Differentiation:**
  What separates you from others and leaves a lasting memory in minds of others
Developing a Personal Brand?

• The way you present yourself and act around others shapes your personal brand
• To build a strong brand requires a strong understanding of your true authentic self
  • What are your values and priorities?
  • What are your passions and expertise?
  • Are you consistent in what you say and do?
  • What is the value you provide?
  • What do you stand (or kneel) for?
Developing Your Professional Persona

First Impressions Are Important

Make your best effort:
- In person
- Within a group
- Online - professional and social media
In Person

In just a few seconds, with a brief glance, a person unfamiliar with you will evaluate who you are based upon your appearance and personality.

_**Strengthen your appearance and personality**_
Within Group

Public image critical when addressing a large group, class, audience
People retain ~ 4% of content of any presentation, speech/talk, but …… always remember 100% of how they felt about it

Integrate elements to build your unique personal message
Online/Networking

• Online ➔ your public image
• Outlets: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Wikipedia page, Google Scholar, Web page
• Line between professional and personal
• Remember you are not there to interpret what others view/read
• Remember your presence on Internet is archived and will always be available to anyone, employer or social group, who search for it

Clean up your E-persona
Professional Presence

- Up-to-date CV or bio or LinkedIn or…
- Research interests
- Work Products
  - Publications
  - Software
  - Patents
  - …
- Teaching materials
- Media coverage, photos, awards
Professional Reputation

- The computing / tech community is smaller than you might imagine → Your reputation will follow you
- Behave ethically and responsibly (acm.org/code-of-ethics)
- Grow your technical and soft skills
- Advocate your ideas in strong terms while respecting others’ ideas
- Show willingness to contribute (reasonably and responsibly)
- Show gratitude for others’ work

Be the colleague you want to have
Tip #1: Assess your Professional Persona

Does your perception of yourself match how others perceive you?
Does your professional persona serve you well?
Does your professional persona match your specific goals?
Are you seeing a return on your investments?
  - Recognition: Credibility, expertise, knowledge, visibility
  - Influencing others
  - New opportunity
Tip #2: Don’t forget to showcase your soft skills

• Technical depth and breadth is important, but it may not win you the job or help you advance
• How do you demonstrate that you are:
  – an effective communicator?
  – collaborative and responsive?
  – a strong leader?
Tip #3: Be clear in your communications

- Pre-think through important conversations and posts
- Use clear language
  - Avoid misinterpretation
  - Pat yourself on the back, but don’t overreach
  - Consider how others may interpret what you say
- Follow through on things you say you will do
Tip #4: Practice makes perfect

If you don’t get it right, try again
Solicit actionable feedback
Allow yourself to grow and change over time
Tip #5: When to develop a Professional Persona?

The right time to get to this is…

**NOW!**

Start a checklist and put recurring appointment on your calendar to revisit every quarter (reward yourself for doing it)
Conclusion

• Your persona can serve you professionally
• Make **intentional** choices about how to build and nurture your persona

GO FOR IT NOW!
THANKS

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