Networking

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2018 CRA URMD Grad Cohort Workshop
Who is James Mickens?

- Poet, scientist, philosopher, foosball expert
- BS in Computer Science: Georgia Tech
- PhD in Computer Science: Michigan
- @MSR: 2008—2015
- @MIT: Fall 2014
- @Harvard: 2015—now
What Is Networking?

The deliberate act of creating and maintaining professional relationships with people in your field.
Why Network?

• High-level goal: Building a supportive community

• Professional benefits:
  – Discover opportunities for scientific collaboration
  – Identify internships and full-time jobs
  – Enable access to helpful service roles (e.g., program committees, invited talks)
  – Find letter writers (and general advocates for you)

• Emotional benefits:
  – Receive congratulations when things are good
  – Get consolation when things are bad
  – Enjoy a sense of belonging
Building a Personal Brand

- Appearance: Body language, attire
- Communication skills: Clarity, confidence, ability to listen and to read other people
- Technical competencies: A particular set of scientific skills and insights

- Differentiation: How do you stand out from everyone else?
“Luck favors the prepared mind.”
Building a Personal Brand

• Online:
  – Web pages
  – Social media

• In-person:
  – Conferences
  – Workshops
  – Poster sessions
  – The hallway track
Online Persona: Social Media

- YouTube
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Medium
- LinkedIn
- WordPress
Online Persona: Social Media

• Social media moves faster than traditional academic publishing channels
• Ideas can be quickly publicized through
  – Blog posts
  – Tweets
  – Facebook updates
• Social media also useful for building a sense of community with other professionals in your field
• But . . .
The Internet Never Forgets
Online Persona: Your Professional Webpage

• Should list your:
  – Research interests
  – Publications + posters + talks
  – Code artifacts
  – Media coverage
  – Contact info
  – Link to your CV

• Update incrementally and often!
In-person networking
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 can make you feel more confident
Learn About Vocal Tone

• Watch your favorite comedians, politicians, and scientists on YouTube
  – What do they do well?
  – What do they do poorly?

• Watch recordings of yourself presenting
  – This is brutal . . .
Prepare and Practice

• Preparation can remove the fear of gametime 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
MODERN OPERATING SYSTEMS
SECOND EDITION
Andrew S. Tanenbaum
Elevator Pitches

- 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 it!
Networking at Conferences
What To Do

• Wear your badge visibly
• If you hear a talk and think of a good question, ask it during Q&A
  – Use the microphone
  – Preface question with your name and affiliation
• Talk to speakers after their presentations
• Talk to other grad students
• Ask advisor to introduce you to people
• Attend social events
What To Do

• Re-connect with people that you’ve met in the past
• For new connections, add calendar events to remind yourself to follow-up
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
Networking

Jeanine Cook, Sandia National Laboratories
Jeanine Cook, Sandia National Laboratories

- BSEE, MSCS, University of Colorado
- PhD EE, New Mexico State University
- Faculty Member NMSU ECE, 2002 - 2012
- Principal Member Technical Staff, Scalable Architectures, SNL, 2012-present
- Presidential Career Award (PECASE) from President George Bush
Key Ideas

• #1: Networking starts with you
• #2: Networking is a skill
• #3: Networking is a relationship
Network starts with you!

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
Networking starts with you!

• Your in-person personal brand
  – For a person with a visible disability, you don’t want your brand to be your disability
    • You really need to have it together in terms of appearance, communication skills, and competencies
    • People you meet will remember you forever whether for good or bad reasons
Key Idea #2: Networking is a skill

Networking Tools

1. Prepare for an event
2. Set networking goals
3. Talk to those around you
4. Elevator Speech
5. Volunteering
1. Prepare for an event: Deliberately target your networking

- Established Researchers
- Alumni
- Business Leaders
- Technical Advisors
- People with Possible Job Opportunities
- Contemporaries

Get to know who they are before you come to the event!!
2. Set networking goals

• Long-term goals
  – Do you want to be embedded in a certain community?
  – Do you want a strong mentoring network
  – How do these fit with your career goals?

• Short-term goals
  – How do they fit within a particular event?
  – Who do you want to meet?
  – Who do you need to catch up with?
3. Talk to those around you

- People are people (famous or not so famous)
  - What do you want to know about them?
- Starting casual conversation is OK and sometimes breaks the ice for deeper technical talk
- Everyone has a story
  - What’s your story?
4. Elevator pitch

- An accessible overview of your research/expertise
- Tailor to your audience
- It will change over the years
- Practice, practice, practice, so it comes out naturally and automatically
5. Expanding your network via volunteering

- Contribute to your community
  - Get involved on conference organizing committees
  - Volunteer to give a colloquium talk at another institution
  - If you’re still a student, volunteer to work a conference
  - Volunteer to be a panel reviewer for a funding agency
  - Review papers
  - Man/woman a booth

Your service will give you positive visibility and open up more networking and other types of opportunities
Key Idea #3: Networking is a relationship

- Establish relationship
  - In person, email, skype
  - Follow through
    - Deliver what you promised
  - Follow up
    - Follow up on business cards and contacts
  - Keep in touch
    - Periodic updates
      - Are you going to event X?
      - I’ll send you my latest paper on Y
  - Plan to meet again
Summary

• Key Idea #1: Networking starts with you
• Key idea #2: Networking is a skill
• Key idea #3: Networking is a relationship

• Networking is really, really important to your career
  – May be second only to quality, ethical work