

Networking



James Mickens
Harvard

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?

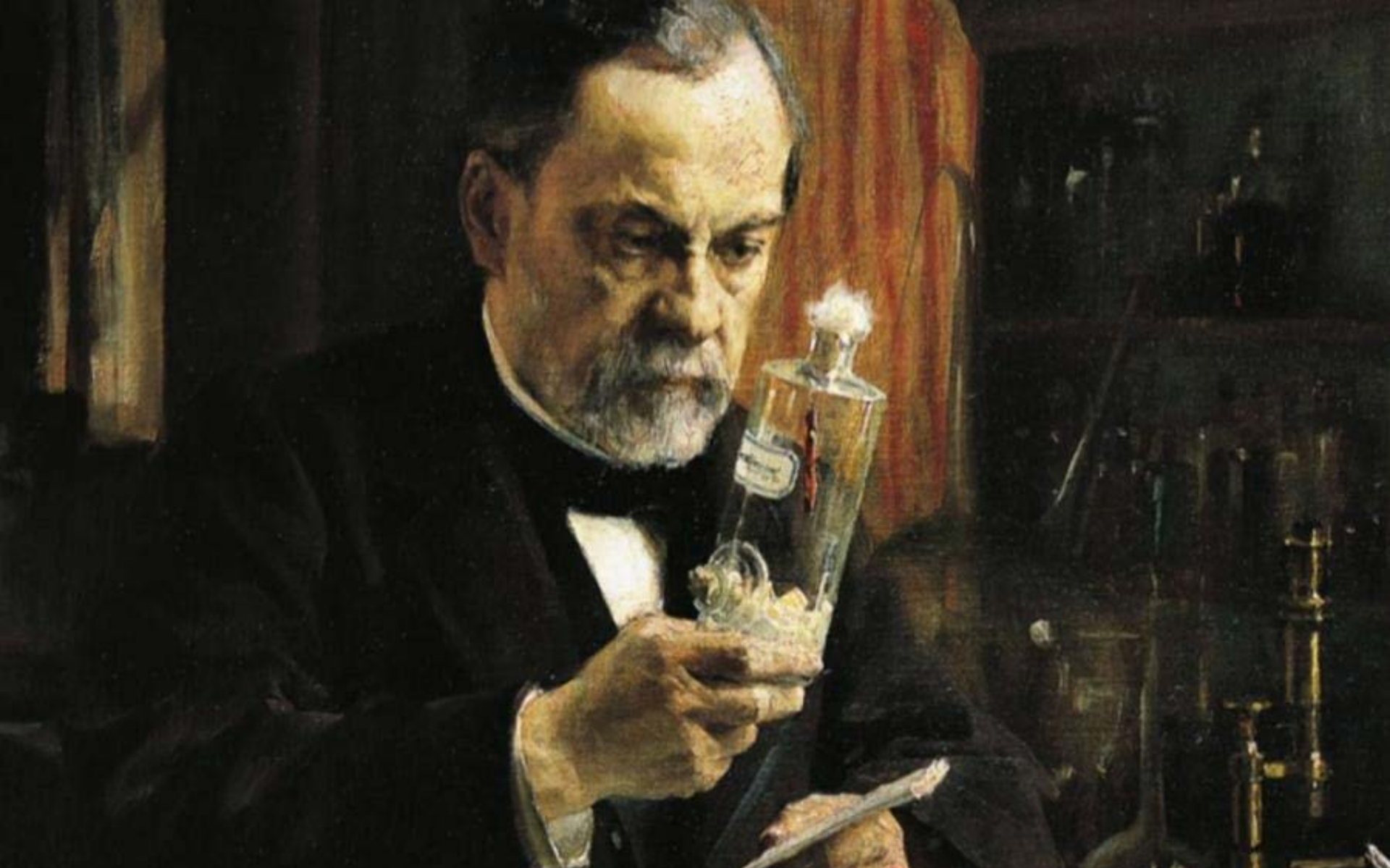
- High-level goal: Building a supportive community
- Professional benefits:
 - Discover opportunities for scientific collaboration
 - Identify internships and full-time jobs
 - Enable access to helpful service roles (e.g., program committees, invited talks)
 - Find letter writers (and general advocates for you)
- Emotional benefits:
 - Receive congratulations when things are good
 - Get consolation when things are bad
 - Enjoy a sense of belonging



HotMobile 2018

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



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

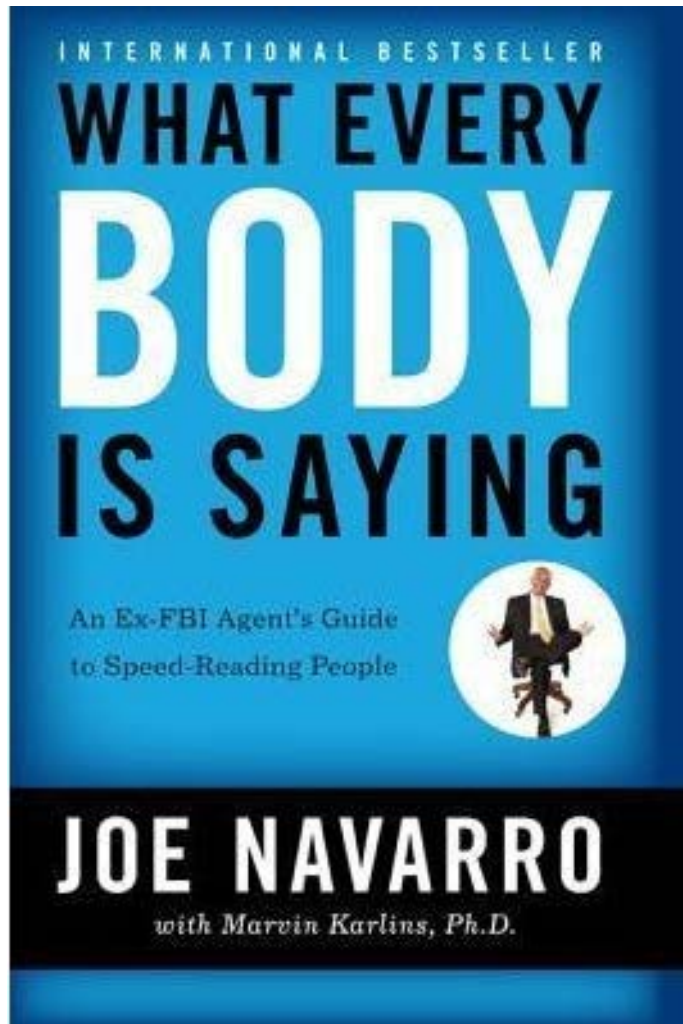
Online Persona: Your Professional Webpage

- 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

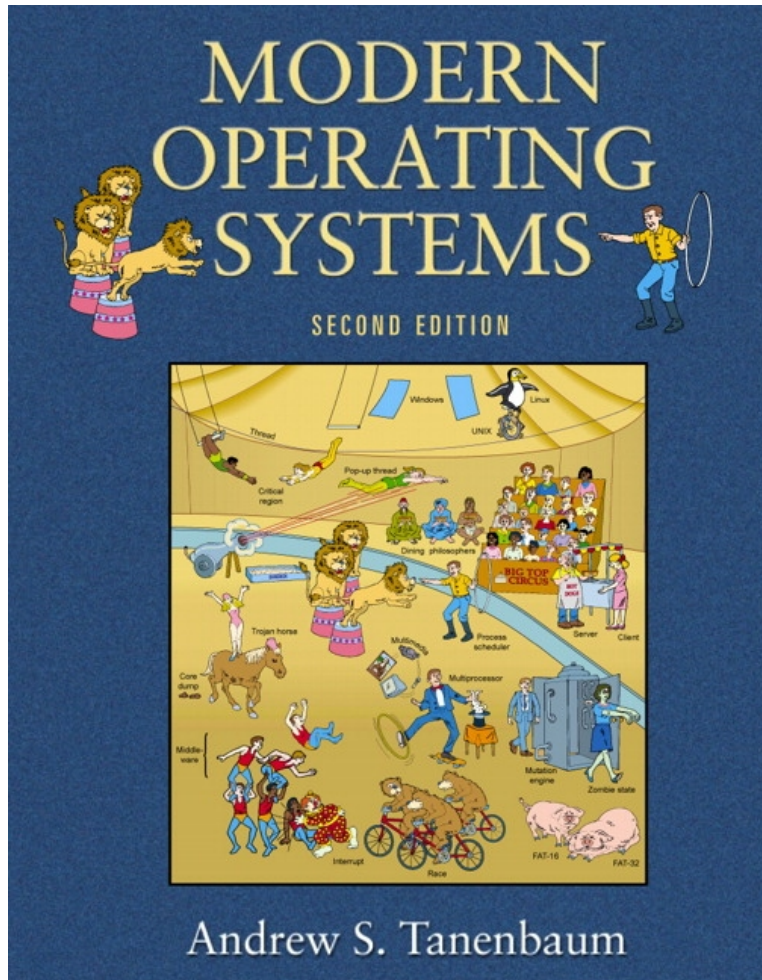
Learn About Vocal Tone



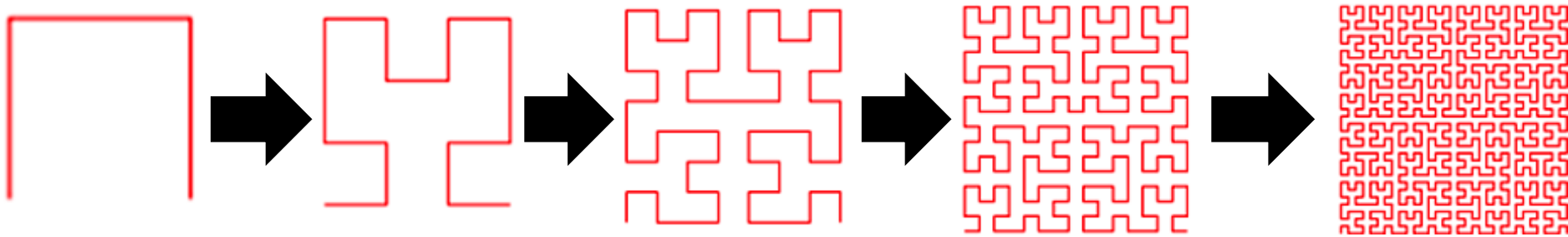
- Watch your favorite comedians, politicians, and scientists on YouTube
 - What do they do well?
 - What do they do poorly?
- Watch recordings of yourself presenting
 - This is brutal . . .

Prepare and Practice

- Preparation can remove the fear of 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



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”)



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

Key Idea #1

Networking 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

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

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**

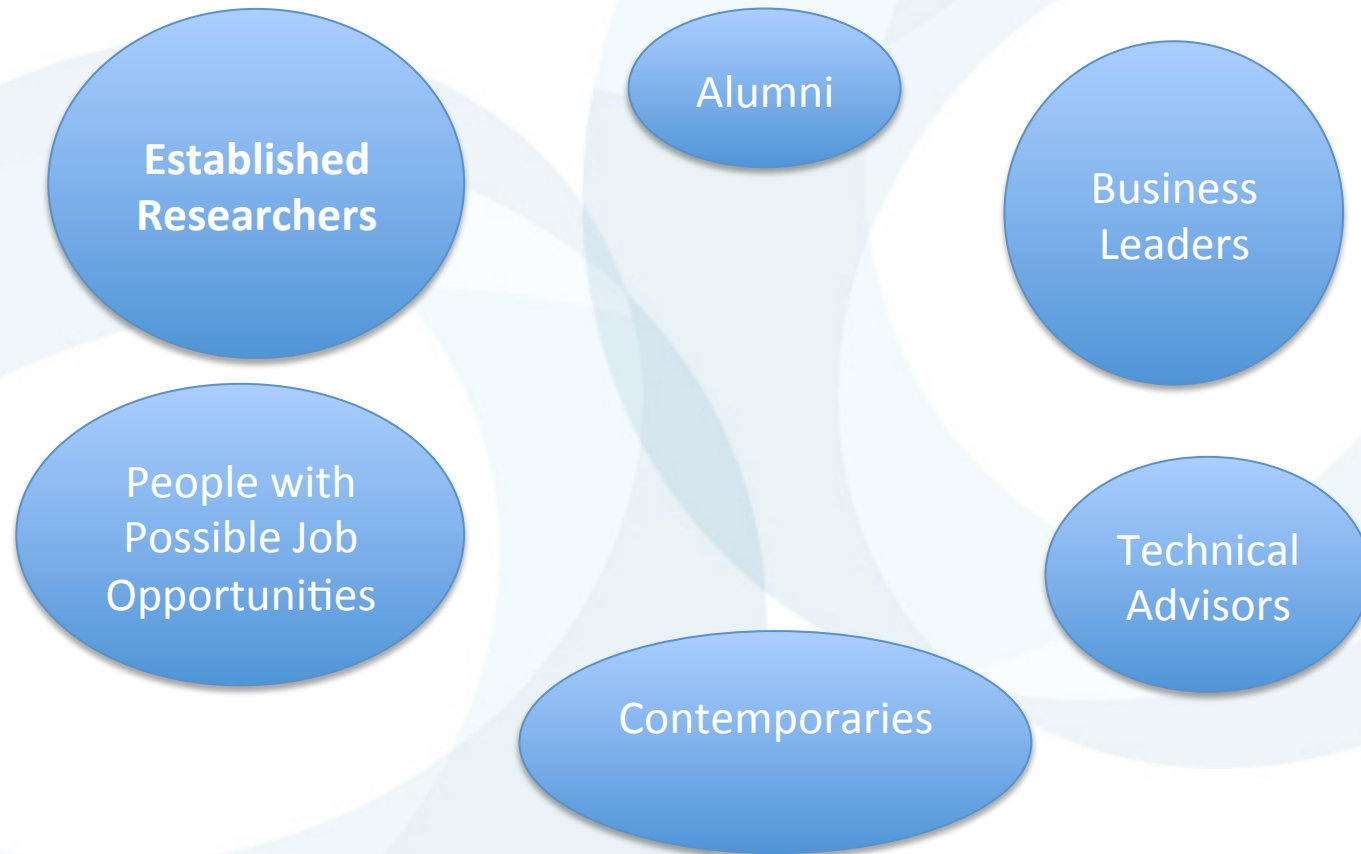
5. Volunteering

4. Elevator Speech



CRA
Computing Research
Association

1. Prepare for an event: Deliberately target your networking



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