Professional Networking

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Overview

• What is networking?
• Why is networking important?
• How does one networks?
What is Networking?

• Making Professional Connections
  – Leave a positive impression
• No substitute for doing quality work
  – The better your work, the more people will want to network with you
• Different styles of networking
  – Informal: take advantage of situations that arise
  – Deliberate: plan what you want to achieve and how to achieve it
Why Networking is important

• Makes you known
• Makes your work known
• Both are important
Networking can further your research career

- Letters of recommendation from respected letter writers
  - Most important part of the tenure portfolio
  - Senior researchers only have time to write letters for researchers whose work they know (and respect)
- Job interviews
- Getting funding
- Invitations
  - present talks
  - Serve on program committees
- Edge in getting papers accepted
Deliberate Networking

• Make a concerted effort to meet and talk to people who can help advance your career
  – Established researchers
  – Program directors
  – Your contemporaries
  – People who can provide good technical advice
  – People who can introduce you to any of the above
Do your homework ahead of time

• Be prepared to describe your work
  – 30 second, 2 minute, 5 minute versions
• Find out who will be at an event
  – Look at author and pc lists
  – Plan what you want to talk about
  – Use the web to see what they look like
• Send email and ask to set up a meeting
Work a conference!

• Ask questions
• Talk to speakers/authors after their presentations
• Talk to the person sitting next to you
• Talk to people in the halls
• Most people are grateful to have someone approach them
Homework to do afterwards

• Follow up!
• Send papers
• Ask for papers
• Read their papers and send comments/questions
• Plan another meeting
  – At the next conference
  – Ask to visit
  – Invite them to visit
Some don’ts

• Don’t just hang around with your graduate student friends
• Don’t go everywhere with a “buddy”
• Don’t interrupt a private technical conversation
• Don’t just stand there--speak up
  – Introduce yourself
  – Ask about their work
Where to Network

• Conferences
• Workshops
• Visit program directors at funding agencies
• Meet with department visitors
• When interviewing for a job
• Industrial internship/visits
• Pre-tenure tour
Selecting where to network

• There are MANY SE events
  – SEWorld

• Choose a conference based on
  – the quality of the technical program
  – who is likely to attend

• Choose a workshop based on who might attend
  – evaluate the program committee
  – Opportunity to spend considerable time with a small group of people

• Choose an activity based on
  – How it will further your career
  – Who you will meet
Quality versus Quantity

• Being a big fish in a small pond will not help you get tenure
  – Better to be a growing fish in a fast moving stream

Time is one of your most precious resources, so choose your activities (networking) carefully
Be honest, critical, inquisitive, and gracious

• Honest
  – SE is a small, interconnected community
  – Don’t tell one person you like one approach, and then tell someone else you don’t

• Critical
  – People love to be praised, but they respect a well-thought out argument/counter point
Be honest, critical, inquisitive, and gracious

- **Inquisitive**
  - Well thought out questions can demonstrate a deep understanding, raise issues, and lead to future interactions
  - (but don’t ask a question, just to be seen/heard)
  - **ASK** a question, don’t give a monologue
Be honest, critical, inquisitive, and gracious

- Gracious
  - Most good work is built upon past work
    - "If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants." scientist Sir Isaac Newton
  - Extending, improving, advancing someone’s approach is flattering if you acknowledge their work
  - Let them know that you were inspired by their work and what you were able to accomplish
Acknowledgements

• Many of these slides were based upon the slides presented by Susan Eggers at the CRA Career Workshop, February 2002