Networking

Mary Jean Harrold
ADVANCE Professor of Computing
College of Computing
Georgia Institute of Technology

Outline

• What is networking?
• Why is networking important?
• How do you perform different types of networking?

Throughout
– give examples of personal networking experiences
– answer your questions anytime
What is (is not) Networking?

• Networking is
  – making professional connections and using them wisely
  – systematically seeking out and becoming acquainted with people in the service of professional goals
  – informal or more formal (deliberate or planned)

• Networking is *not*
  – a substitute for good quality work
  – using people

Why is Networking Important?

• Improves your visibility
  – makes you and your work known (*example*)
Makes Your Work Known

Early in my career: Industry/academic conference on testing

Session chair was Boris Beizer:
Well known testing speaker / organizer / author

Continued to support my work:
• Recommended me for talks at conferences
• Talked about my work in his tutorials, keynotes
• Included my work in his books, lecture notes
• Recommended my work to industry folks

Liked my work:
• Discussed it at conference
• Introduced me to others

Back

Why is Networking Important?

• Improves your visibility
  – makes you and your work known (example)
• Improves your research
  – provides feedback on your research
  – gives you a different slant on old ideas
  – provides a source of new research ideas
  – form new collaborations
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  - makes you and your work known (example)
- Improves your research
  - provides feedback on your research
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  - provides a source of new research ideas
  - form new collaborations
- Helps you get
  - good letters of recommendation
  - invitations to give talks
  - invitations to serve on program committees
  - an edge on getting papers accepted
  - funding for your research (example)

Helps You Get Funding

Early conference:
  - Industry/academic conference on testing
  - Gave an invited talk on regression testing
  (Boris recommended me)

In the audience, Roger Sherman:
  - Director of Test, Microsoft
  - Liked my work
  - Talked to me afterward

Ended up at Roger’s office:
  - He invited me to give talk
  - Microsoft provided industry funds for all five of the NYI grant years

I received an NYI award:
  - Required industry match
  - My university sent letters to industries to request match

Back
Why is Networking Important?

• Improves your visibility
  – makes you and your work known (example)
• Improves your research
  Result: Networking can make you
  • more effective, more productive
  • more likely to succeed
• Helps you get
  – good letters of recommendation
  – invitations to give talks
  – invitations to serve on program committees
  – an edge on getting papers accepted
  – funding for your research (example)

Why is Networking Important?

• “Networked with” is a transitive relation

• It takes a village—and you have to create your own!!
• All villages need
  – Elders ➔ Learn from those who came before you
  – Diversity ➔ Learn different strokes from different folks
  – Uniformity ➔ Learn similar issues in your community

John S. Davis, IBM, 2003
Informal Networking

• Follow your personal style
• Serendipity happens
• Talk to people about their lives and work
• Talk to people you meet by chance (example)

You Never Know

Early in my career:
• Met senior researcher/faculty member through colleague (my peer)
• Discussed my work

For a new research project:
• He had become the CTO of a major company
• He provided
  – industry letter of support for NSF proposal
  – industry funding match

Throughout career:
• Informal interactions with him at conferences, meetings
• Discussed his work, career changes; updated on mine

In 2002:
• He became the Dean of my College
• Rich DeMillo
Informal Networking

• Follow your personal style
• Serendipity happens
• Talk to people about their lives and work
• Talk to people you meet by chance (example)
• Talk to people in your own organization—not just researchers!
• Offer to help out when you can
• Ask for help when you can use it
  – most people are glad to help, if request isn’t large
  – be clear on what the person can do for you

Deliberate Networking

• Who should you meet?
  – established researchers
  – people who could hire you
  – people who could give you good technical advice
  – your contemporaries
  – funding and program directors

• Where could you meet them?
  – at your university
  – at local companies and other universities
  – at conferences
Deliberate Networking at Conferences—Before

• Write down & memorize two descriptions of your work (and practice with others)
  – “elevator talk” (30-60 sec)
    • why is it an interesting problem?
    • why is your solution unique?
  – 5- to 10-second introduction
• Practice firmly shaking hands
• Make business cards
• Prepare specific and generic questions

Deliberate Networking at Conferences—Before

• Decide who you want to meet
• Decide what you want to talk to them about
  – read papers, and write down questions
  – ask why/how they started project, got problem
  – integrate your work and interests into conversation
• Find out about them
  – find picture beforehand
  – find out how to pronounce names
Deliberate Networking at Conferences—During

**DO**
- Engage in hall talk, join group discussions
- Get your friends, advisor, others to introduce you
- Speak—don’t just stand there
  - introduce yourself using 5-10-second talk if it seems appropriate
  - *but* be prepared to adjust to situation
- Read body language
  - respond to people, if they are in a hurry, be quick, give them your card, ask them for their cards
- Get business cards, if possible
  - write notes on back of card to remind you of discussion
  - *don’t* lose cards
- Learn names (many tricks to remembering)
- Talk to person sitting next to you, people who come up to you, someone new
- Make lunch/dinner plans

**DON’T**
- Hang around with your graduate student friends or people from your own department
- Interrupt heavy or private technical conversations
- Wedge yourself in a heated argument or private conversation

Deliberate Networking at Conferences—During (2)

**DO**
- Think strategically about where you’ll sit at talks
  - if you want to talk to speaker after the talk, sit where you can get to her/him quickly
  - sit near an exit if you think you might walk out of a talk early
- Ask questions, especially if you’ve prepared for the talk
- Use the microphone—even if you’re fearful
- Engage in questions, discussion with speakers after presentations

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Remember
You don’t just want to make an impression, you want to make a **GOOD** impression

Deliberate Networking at Conferences—Follow-up

- **After meeting them**
  - Write down the next step
  - Write down technical tips
  - Write down what you owe whom/what they owe you
- **After getting back home**
  - Send them your related papers
  - Ask for theirs, read them, send comments
  - Share software and workloads
  - Do joint work together
- **Later in your career**
  - Invite them to give a talk
  - Ask to give a talk there
Deliberate Networking—Other Opportunities

- Go to workshops
- Sign up to talk to seminar speakers in your department
- Send cold email
- Use your contacts to get new contacts
- Find an indirect path to program committees
- Take the tenure tour
- Visit program directors

But I’m Horrible at Small Talk

- Making good small talk is a skill you can learn
- Much written about making good conversation with anyone
- Practice

Leil Lowndes
How to Talk to Anyone
92 Little Tricks for Big Success in Relationships
Final Thoughts

You will have great opportunities to network here, *USE THEM!*

And don’t forget the *FOLLOW UP!*

When you are connected … *REMEMBER* to connect others who aren’t.

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