

# Networking and Finding Advocates

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Inria*

*Lori Pollock  
University of Delaware*



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# Introductions

## *Lori Pollock*

PhD University of Pittsburgh 1986  
Sabbatical consulting: ABB Inc &  
Army Research Lab  
Rice University 1986-1989  
University of Delaware 1990-present

Research in Software Engineering  
and Optimizing Compilers

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CS10K Partner4CS in Delaware  
WeC4Communities  
Comp Thinking in University Gen Ed

## *Christine Morin*

PhD University of Rennes 1  
1990 (Computer Science)  
Researcher at Inria French  
national research lab in CS  
since 1991

Associate professor (on  
leave from Inria) 2000-2002

Sabbatical at LBNL  
2011-2013 and still affiliate  
Research in system design  
and implementation



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# Outdated Assumptions

“If you do good research or work,  
fame, funding, promotions,  
and graduate students follow”

**Today's functional idea:** Networking is about relationships and nurturing them. Benefits will follow.

# Networking is ...

*Cultivating productive relationships:* interacting with other people to exchange information and develop contacts especially to further one's career



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# First Activity: Reflection

1. Individually, write answers to:
  - a. How have I networked so far in my career?
  - b. What are the benefits of networking to me?
  - c. Who else should I network with?
2. Turn to your neighbor and discuss
3. Share one insight with whole group



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# Christine's Story: How did I build my US research network

- I went to conferences in the US & co-located visits to American universities during my PhD (and later)
  - Initially I benefited from my PhD advisor's network
  - For example, I met top level researchers at UW, CMU, MIT
  - Still in touch with some of the people I met at this early career stage



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# How did I build my US research network

- I gave talks/tutorials at workshops & conferences
  - I got interesting (not easy) questions from a UIUC professor at ISCA
    - Joint common interests, he became a supporter of my work
  - I went to workshop series – met the same people every year
    - Built friendship with people working on the same topics
  - I met an assistant professor from Rutgers and a senior researcher from ORNL
    - We identified common research interests
    - I visited them in their work place
    - We started a collaboration (Inria funded exchanges – associate team)
      - ✧ I sent my PhD students to their lab for research internships
      - ✧ Some of my PhD students were later hired as postdocs (and then researcher)
    - We co-organized workshops and conferences
  - Got to know a researcher from LBNL
    - Was useful when I was looking for a team to host me during my sabbatical in the bay area

I have been pro-active in establishing connections.



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# How did I build my network

- I was involved early in international workshop and major conference organization (thanks to my PhD advisor)
  - European SIGOPS workshop 1990
  - Workshops on invitation on focus topics (fault tolerance)
  - SOSP 1997

I was exposed to top level researchers early in my career and stayed in touch  
As simple as happy new year emails and chats during conferences



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# How did I build my US research network

- It takes time – some connections are productive years after the first contact
- Sometimes you don't have any expectation in terms of networking but you get an opportunity to establish a valuable connection
- Several face to face meetings including mutual visits invaluable to establish strong connections and keep them alive
- Make your (best) PhD students take advantage of your network to reinforce it

International collaborations are an enjoyable part of my work as a researcher



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# Networking Establishes Your Brand

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Source for new  
ideas,  
collaborations,  
feedback

Proposals,  
grants, projects,  
papers accepted

Invites to talks,  
Job interviews,  
Program  
committees



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# Networking is *not* ...

- A substitute for quality work
- Using people



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# How to Network

# Networking happens naturally when...

*You simply take the opportunities already offered you*

## Conferences

- Volunteer

- Find someone alone and start a conversation

## Talks

- Ask a question

## At school/organization

- Eat and hangout with your colleagues

- Meet with visitors coming to campus

- Participate in committees



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# Networking happens naturally when..

*You are **passionate** about something*

The future of your research field

The importance of your research

The state of ...

The need for...

Your country

Your children

A sport

The courses you're teaching

*And you can **communicate** this passion to others*



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# If networking doesn't come easy

- Give yourself a goal for an event.
- Read papers ahead and write down questions you want to ask.
- Join a group that is casually talking and introduce yourself. More than 2 people good because otherwise they might be having private conversation.
- Sit down with people you don't know at tables.
- Be friendly but not too persistent



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# Big Questions

- How do we talk to one another?
  - how do you start
  - what do you say
- What do you share?
- How do you respond?
- How do you avoid ... the silence?
- How about asking yourself, “what do I want to know about that person” instead?



# Activity: Short Introductions

- Stand up!
- Find someone near you that you don't already know and introduce yourself.
- If you don't already have the 30 second intro/ elevator pitch this is a good time to practice.
- Practice strong handshake and eye contact.

“Hi, my name is X. I'm from Y and I work on Z.”

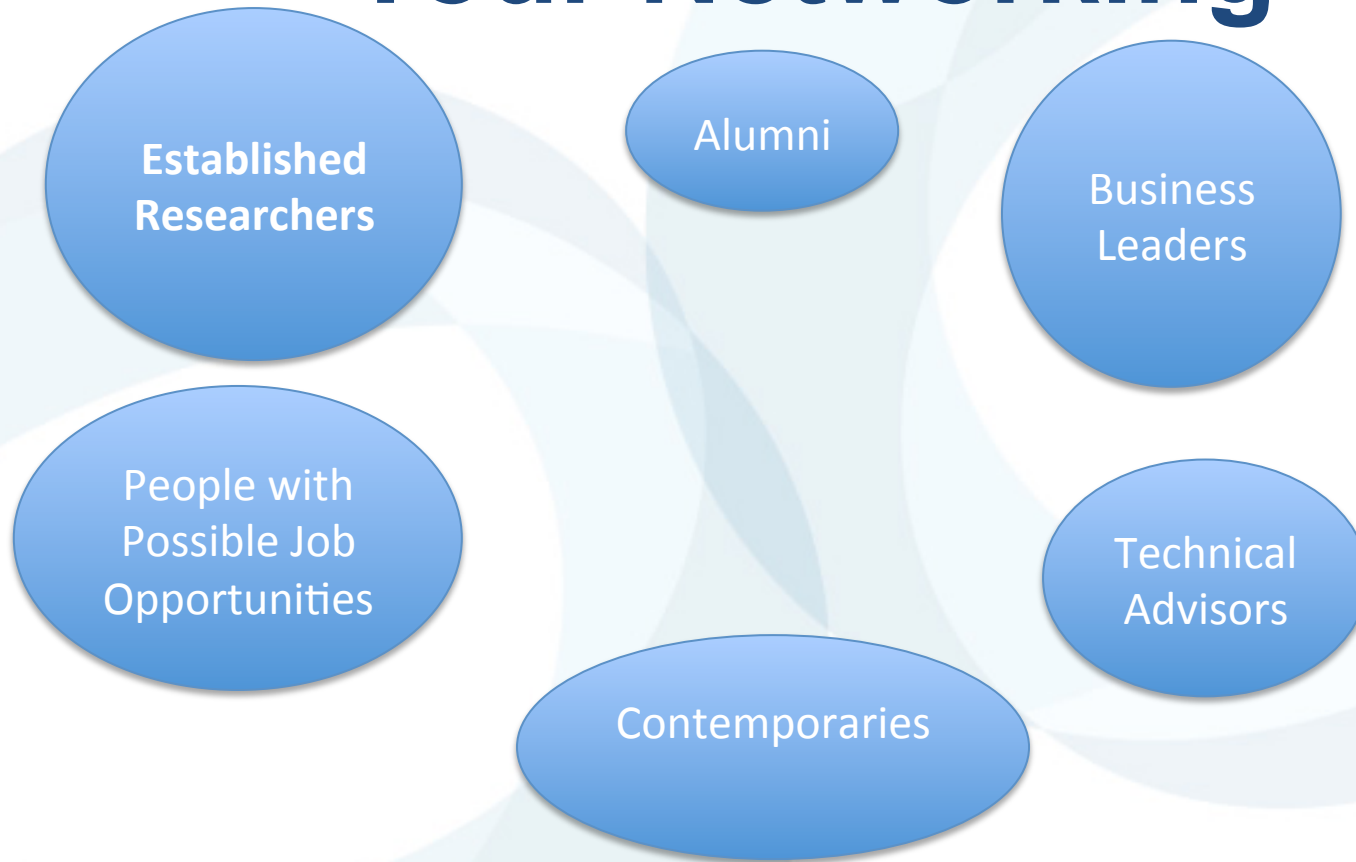


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# Who to network with

# Deliberately Target Your Networking



Get to know who they are before you come to the event!!

# Peer, Peer+, Peer- Networks

- Peers:
  - Super important!
  - Same challenges, same stage
- Peer+ (person at next stage)
  - They can help you know what's coming
- Peer- (person at previous stages)
  - May become your collaborators



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**At Conferences Specifically**

# At the conference: DO's

## ✓ **Be yourself**

- ✓ Wear your badge visibly
- ✓ Speak! (don't just stand there)
- ✓ Use the dreaded microphone
- ✓ Talk to speakers after their presentations
- ✓ Talk to the person next to you
- ✓ Look people in the eyes
- ✓ Make lunch/dinner plans
- ✓ Attend social activities
- ✓ Get your friends/advisor to introduce you
- ✓ Make plans for follow up (write it down!)
- ✓ Re-connect with people you've met before
- ✓ Smile!
- ✓ Be active, **be confident**



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# At the Conference “Don’t”

- ✓ DON'T hang around with your friends
- ✓ DON'T interrupt heavy or private conversations
- ✓ DON'T be overly negative/critical
- ✓ DON'T hang on to a conversation too long
- ✓ DON'T put too much stock in a single, short conversation
- ✓ DON'T get discouraged



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# Activity: Networking Musical Chairs

What you need:

pad of paper, a pen, your brain,  
and a SMILE!

put everything else away

6 minute rounds



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# The Basics

- ✓ Quick Intros
  - Shake hands (cultural caveat),
  - Look person in eye, and smile
  - “My name is **Lori** ...Happy to meet you, **Christine**”
  - Write down person’s name on your paper
- ✓ 2 minutes
  - Speaker talks about herself
  - Listener listens **actively**, makes eye contact
  - Listener **mirrors** what she has heard
- ✓ Swap Roles. Lather, Rinse, Repeat!



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# What to Talk About

Where are you from?

What are you passionate about?

How far along are you in your career?

What research problem are you working on right now?

What do you enjoy doing outside of CS?

What is your greatest challenge right now?

How do you enjoy working? Alone? A single partner? A big group?

What is your biggest concern about your career?



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# Round 1

Even rows, sit tight

Odd rows, turn your chair around.

If you are not facing a lovely woman whom you do not already know, move to a seat where you are.

LISTEN FOR CLAP!



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# Round 2

Odd rows, sit tight

Even rows, move one chair to YOUR right.

If at end of row, go to row behind you (on left).

Person in back right → front left.

If you are not facing a lovely woman whom you do not already know, move to a seat where you are.

LISTEN FOR CLAP!



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# Homework

Practice today and beyond

Meet at least 10 people here

Sit with different people at each meal

Introduce yourself with

handshake (caveat), smile, and your name

Write down their names and something to remember them

Network Forward – network your network

Follow-up with email, Linked-In, or Facebook



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# Summary:

## Networking Opportunities

- Get a chance to talk to visitors in your lab
  - Attend seminars
  - Ask questions/meet with speaker after the talk
- Go to conferences
  - Social events
  - Poster sessions
  - Talk to people at coffee breaks, lunch time
- Talk tours co-located with conferences
  - Self-invitation (“I’ll be in the area”)
- Go to events on topics related to your research interests even if you don’t have a presentation
- Publish papers, give talks
- Read papers and you may sometimes get in touch with authors
- Participate in committees (in your lab, TPC, organization committee...)
- Get the help of your colleagues to get introduced



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