New Researcher Symposium
SIGMOD 2010

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Yahoo! Research

About Me

- Research interests:
  - large-scale data management
  - web crawling and monitoring

- Career so far:
  - 99-03: PhD @ Stanford (advisor: Widom)
  - 03-05: Asst. Prof @ CMU
  - 06-??: Researcher @ Yahoo!

Answer to Standard Question: Why leave CMU?

- I did not leave CMU; I left academia
- Main reason: Felt I could do better work in industry lab:
  - Problems, data, doing research (vs. meta-research)
- Also: tech transfer, fun!
- Not:
  - California (believe it or not I like Pittsburgh)
  - Salary (compensation x 2.5; housing cost x 8)
- Downsides: have a boss, less stability

Some lessons I've learned:

- Mentorship is REALLY important
  - Don't go to a place if it isn't clear who will mentor you, or if you don't get along with that person ☺

- Be open-minded
  - When I graduated I only looked at academia

- Learn to say "no"
  - Don't accept commitments if you don't have time to do a good job

- To gain insight, be a reviewer (conferences, NSF)

- Try before you buy (for switching jobs/roles)

Other Advice

- How to create visibility:
  - Be "the person" associated with a topic ("isn't that Joe Shmoe, the cheese-grater algorithms guy?")

- How to recognize chance of success in Job X:
  - Talk to many people in Job X; find out what they do, exactly

- When to buy a house?
  - After you're pretty sure you will stay there a while ☺

- How to make "friends":
  - Lend a hand
  - Share credit (err on side of being inclusive)
  - Don't play games (e.g. ask for their data set, and don't reveal that you have a data set they want)

Take-Away

- Go to a place that lets you:
  - Do your best work (resources, colleagues, mentorship, inspiration, ...)
  - Be happy