New Researcher Symposium
SIGMOD 2010

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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