

Assignment 9: Resources for PhD

John Giacomoni

2006.11.26

1 Jones et. al.: Giving a Talk

An interesting note is that they advocate not using an outline slide early in the talk as it takes time. I used to try this, however I found that without one it is very easy to confuse one's audience even when they are part of the local research group. I believe it is useful to be able to flash both a 'standard' and 'non-standard' outline up so that the audience knows when the talk is straight forward or when there will be deviations. The deviations seem to provide an early forward reference so that when a confusing part of a talk occurs they can know if it is likely to be addressed in the future and thus not need to interrupt the talk with a question.

Also I found it very interesting that the talk focused so much on the technical details of using transparencies rather than the core principles of a good talk such as 'don't distract the audience' and "don't clutter the presented material.'

2 Fisher: Gerhard's Advice for PhD Students

There is a lot of useful advice in this document that perhaps would've been helpful to discuss earlier in the semester. However, there seems to be some information missing that perhaps could be integrated into a future revision. Primarily the information here seems aimed at a student who also already selected a research advisor and is beginning to do research. The critical piece that I think is missing is advice on how to select a research advisor. I would include topics beyond the obvious one of related research, and include topics on stages of an advisors development (assistant, associate, full, ready to retire) and how that might impact the advisors work style. Does an potential advisor work hands on with a project? Somewhat removed? Distracted by too many different projects? Ask the student to seriously evaluate how they fit with an advisor, do they need space to think or do they need to assistance in learning how to work on their own? Are they willing to work on their own or do they expect to work closely with their advisor?

Also perhaps a section on fellowships and internships? Specifically fellowships for early work and dissertation writing, and internships to make contacts. Are there competitions with awards for students?

Finally, it would be useful to have a section to help students think about how to juggle the job search post doctorate. How to juggle finishing one's dissertation with respect to difference job types: academia, industry, government organization, and non-government organization. Should one consider a postdoc and how does one apply? Should one become an instructor while looking for a job?

3 Online Resource

I use a collection of online resources in my research at this point. First and foremost I use a combination of <http://citeseer.csail.mit.edu/> and <http://scholar.google.com/> to quickly locate relevant material/prior work. However since there aren't always online versions of the papers, I then use the various site licenses to the ACM, IEEE, and USENIX digital libraries. Additionally I use the site license for <http://oed.com/> when a word that seems familiar is used in what I think is an unusual context.