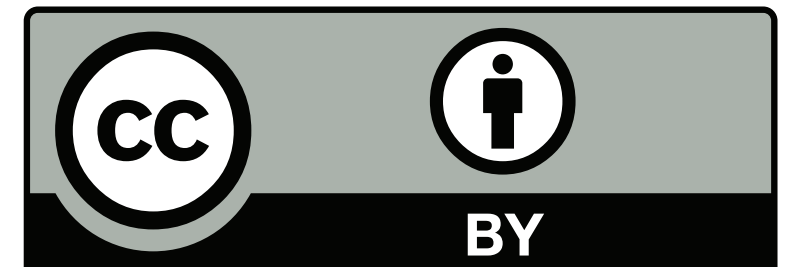


# networking for career development

**Thursday 5th November 2015, 14.00-15.00**  
**DKFZ Postdoc Retreat**  
**Naturfreundehaus Bruchsal, Germany**

**Aidan Budd**  
**Senior Project Manager for Bioinformatics**  
**Gibson Team, EMBL Heidelberg, Germany**

Networking for career development (presentation) by  
Aidan Budd is licensed under a Creative Commons  
Attribution 4.0 International License.



**what is networking?**

# what is networking?

activities that help me meet new people and stay in touch with those I already know

aiming to find, together, things we can do with and for each other that are valuable for both

# what is networking?

activities that help me meet new people and stay in touch with those I already know

aiming to find, together, things we can do with and for each other that are valuable for both

## **for example**

going to a poster session, meeting new people,  
exploring possible collaborations with them

# what is networking?

activities that help me meet new people and stay in touch with those I already know

aiming to find, together, things we can do with and for each other that are valuable for both

## **for example**

phoning my former PhD supervisor, asking them for tips on writing a good application for a job

# what is networking?

activities that help me meet new people and stay in touch with those I already know

aiming to find, together, things we can do with and for each other that are valuable for both

## **for example**

e-mailing the author of an article you found very interesting, asking to chat with them about it, maybe you're considering working with them

# what is networking?

activities that help me meet new people and stay in touch with those I already know

aiming to find, together, things we can do with and for each other that are valuable for both

## **for example**

Tweeting a link to an article or event or talk someone gave that you liked, mentioning them

# what is networking?

activities that help me meet new people and stay in touch with those I already know

aiming to find, together, things we can do with and for each other that are valuable for both

diverse media

many different kinds of activities

focused on mutually-beneficial actions



# **networking and career development**

# networking and career development

your success in STEM depends on **both**:

- delivering excellent output: articles, talks, patents, etc.
- networking so people know about you and your work, and help you find opportunities to develop your career

making both happen is a challenge - don't neglect or ignore either or them!

# networking and career development

most jobs are not advertised

**networking can help you learn about them**

many advertised jobs are easier to get if you know the  
people doing the hiring

**networking can help you get to know them, and  
build a relationship that means they want to help you**

many career-developing opportunities aren't advertised  
(e.g. editorial or committee positions, collaborations)

**networking helps you learn about and get them**

**networking and me**

# networking and me

I used to feel it was about exploiting/using/getting things from people/friends/colleagues

so I was anxious and uncomfortable about doing it, indeed didn't want to do it/thought I shouldn't

but now I see it as a positive thing that I enjoy (even if sometimes stressful) which is not about exploitation

# networking and me

**how I've come to think about and do it**

*for me it means*

building and maintaining a set of relationships

with other professionals

based on mutual respect and pleasure in collaborating

# networking and me

**how I've come to think about and do it**

*for me it means*

being open and friendly to new people I meet

finding people with whom it would be mutually useful  
for us to work together - best is when I really like them  
and **enjoy** working with them

enjoying helping out people, and knowing they too  
enjoy helping me

# networking and me

**how I've come to think about and do it**

*my key revelation*

I enjoy helping people I like

when I ask for help from people I like, and they like me,  
they enjoy helping me too

so no need to be shy asking for help from people I like



# networking and me

**how I've come to think about and do it**

*how has it helped me?*

people I've met in my workplace/university, conferences, courses, workshops have gone on to become:

- co-workers
- co-publishers
- co-grant applicants

# networking and me

**how I've come to think about and do it**

*how has it helped me?*

people I've met in my workplace/university, conferences, courses, workshops have gone on to become:

- my boss (i.e. it got me several jobs)
- dear friends

# networking and me

**how I've come to think about and do it**

*how has it helped me?*

I think **all** my most important (and enjoyable) work relationships are the result of active networking by me

**networking and you**

# networking and you

## raise your hand...

who actively networks?

# networking and you

raise your hand...

who feels uncomfortable networking?

...maybe even at the idea of networking?

# networking and you

because some people are anxious/uncomfortable doing it...

...and because some people would like to do it more effectively...

...and because it can be extremely important for career development...

we'll do some activities together to practice and reflect on ways of doing it at an event

# networking and you

**exploring together our networking experience  
(and a chance to practice networking)**

find someone you don't know (or don't know well)

introduce yourselves, find out a bit about each other

discuss your experience of networking:

- benefits it's brought/you hope it could bring
- what you find difficult/how you try to overcome that

end the conversation when I ask you to

anything surprising or important you discussed? **share it**



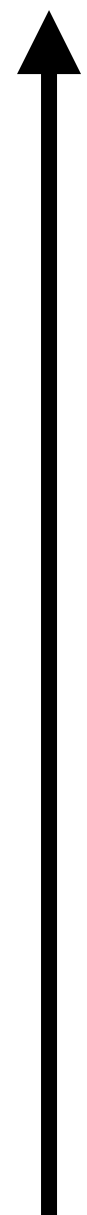
**networking tips**

# networking tips

1. things I do that make my networking more effective
2. advice I've heard and like

# who to ask for what?

it depends on the strength of our relationship



strength of  
your mutual  
relationship

## ***asking for a recommendation***

I'm applying to work with your friend,  
could you recommend me to them?

## ***asking for active help***

could you read through my CV  
to give me comments on it?

## ***asking for advice***

could you recommend a  
lab for me to apply to?

## ***asking for information***

do you know of any companies  
recruiting in the local area?

# what are your goals?

## writing a networking plan

my networking activity depends on my current goals:

- who I focus my networking on
- where I focus my networking
- the kinds of opportunities I'm looking for

to help prioritise my networking, I make notes of:

- my short, medium, long-term career goals
- the kinds of **opportunities**, and **people** I think could help me most reaching these

i.e. I keep an updated '**networking plan**'

# what value can you offer?

people want to collaborate with you if they feel you'll bring something valuable to the collaboration e.g.

- they like you, see you have similar interests
- they have a problem that they think your skills would help them solve

**awareness of special value/skills you can offer** - reasons why you in particular would be good for that collaboration, can help you find these opportunities

# what value can you offer?

many tools to help identify your specific value, the kinds of problems you're particularly good at solving

- UK national careers service “Skills health check”
- <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>
- talk with your careers service (you've got a great one!)

# at networking events

dress a bit smarter than usual

bring your business card, exchange it with people you meet

follow up on your contacts:

- note who you spoke to, what about, before you forget
- get in touch afterwards to say “nice to meet you” and “it’d be great to look into this together”

# in general

**always** be professional

as you network more, helps to keep track of who you're in touch with, how you met

keep your eyes open for ways you can easily help people in your network (let them know about appropriate grants/job ads etc.)

practice your networking

networking well depends on your authenticity



**networking at an event**

# networking at an event

**at a conference, workshop, course?**

a key reason why people have come is to network - they want to do what you're planning on doing

# networking at an event

**introduce yourself to, find something to talk about with, and say goodbye, to lots of different people**

hands up...

...who finds the thought of that intimidating...?

# networking at an event

## starting the conversation

first line:

- are you enjoying the meeting/event?
- is this the first of these events you've been to?
- just say "Hi, I'm [insert your name]"
- etc.

concisely describe what you do - how depends on the context of the event (general public, commercial, etc.)

ask them about themselves, their interests, their goals

# networking at an event

## starting the conversation: an example

first line:

**“Hi! My name’s Aidan. Having a good conference?”**

concisely describe what you do - how depends on the context of the event (general public, commercial, etc.)

**“I’m work on projects building community and delivering training in bioinformatics”**

ask them about themselves, their interests, their goals

**“what do you most enjoy about your job?”**

# networking at an event

## during the conversation

aim to find out if:

- do you get on well?
- **anything you'd usefully collaborate on together?  
that you'd both bring value to?**

do this by:

- asking questions about their interests, the kinds of projects they're working on, their goals
- let them know about your skills, things you've done that show you've got them

# networking at an event

## **ending the conversation**

is there an opportunity for collaboration?

- Good meeting you! Can I get your card? Would be great to follow up on what we talked about
- Thanks for the chat - is there some time later at the meeting you'd be free to follow up on this?

doesn't seem to be something to work on together?

- Thanks for the chat - have a great time at the meeting!

# networking at an event

## **ending the conversation**

you find them unpleasant/they make you feel uncomfortable? i.e. you're sure you won't usefully work together on something

- you'll notice this quickly
- don't bother finding out more about them
- wait for a slight pause
- end the conversation politely e.g.:
  - Thanks for the chat. I'm off for a drink. Enjoy the meeting.



# networking at an event

**form groups of 3 people, ideally all “strangers”**

one person for each role: [I]nitiator [O]bjective [W]atcher

[I] approaches [O] at a conference, to start talking with them, to see if this is someone they'd like to know better

[I] initiates, carry out, and ends, the kinds of conversation we just discussed - aiming to find out if there's something useful (for you both) to do together

[W] is watching from the side

4 minutes chat, then give feedback on how it went in the order: [I]nitiator [O]bjective [W]atcher

# networking at an event

## **questions [I] could use during the conversation**

What are you working on?

What are you interested in doing next?

Are there any projects you're really keen to get moving?

What are the main challenges you have at the moment?

# networking at an event

## issues to consider for feedback session

What impression did [I] make?

confident? nervous/shy? friendly? interested? trying too hard? relaxed?

What did [I] do that they should do again, the next time they do this exercise (i.e. what did they do “well”)?

Any ideas for things [I] could do differently to improve the experience?

# networking at an event

practice during this event!

i.e. go up to someone you don't know, try out the questions

**what do you want to do  
next?**

**A. start planning your networking?**

**B. more event networking practice  
(speed dating)?**

**C. discuss in small groups your  
own networking**

# **planning your networking**

# planning your networking

**what are your current/mid-term career goals?**

**what unusual/special value do you have? what kinds of problems are you particularly good at solving?**

**what have you done that shows you have this value?**

**who could help you achieve these goals - who would find your special value particularly useful?**

**how and when do you want to start contacting them?**

take 5 minutes to make notes about these on your own

discuss and refine them, together, with someone else here



**speed dating**

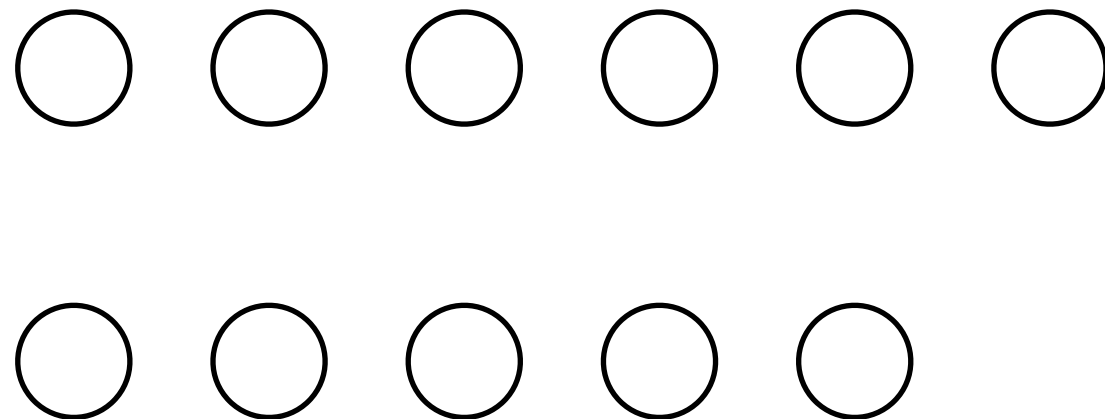
# Speed Dating: Format

Practice event networking in many 1-on-1 chats

Stand, awkwardly, in two rows

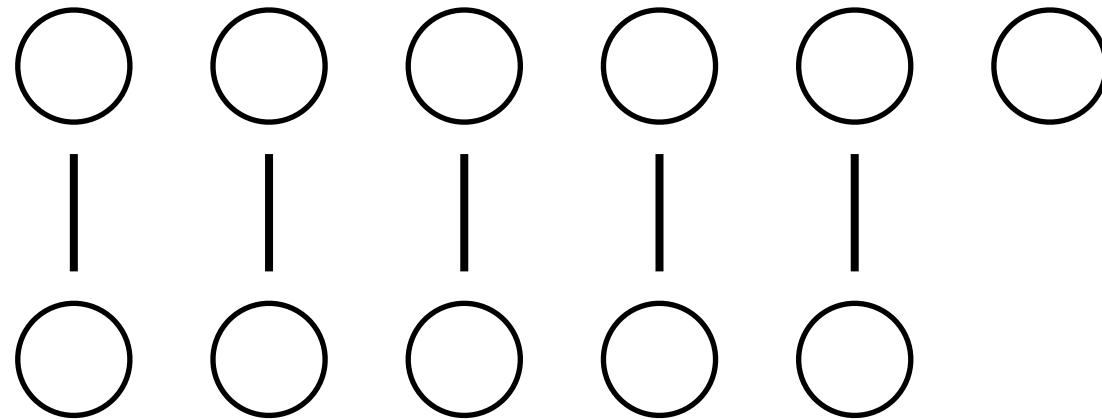
Face one person in the other row

If there's an odd number of you, one person stands alone at one end



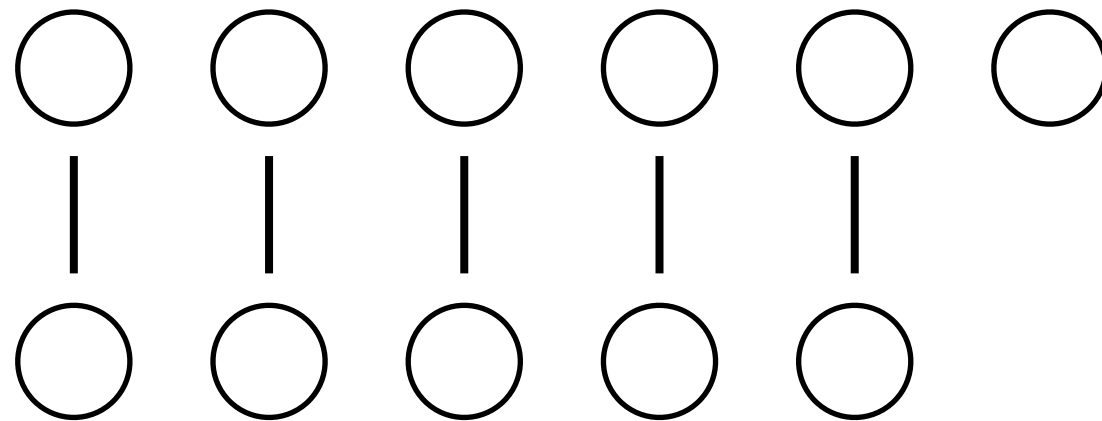
# Speed Dating: Format

**Chat!**

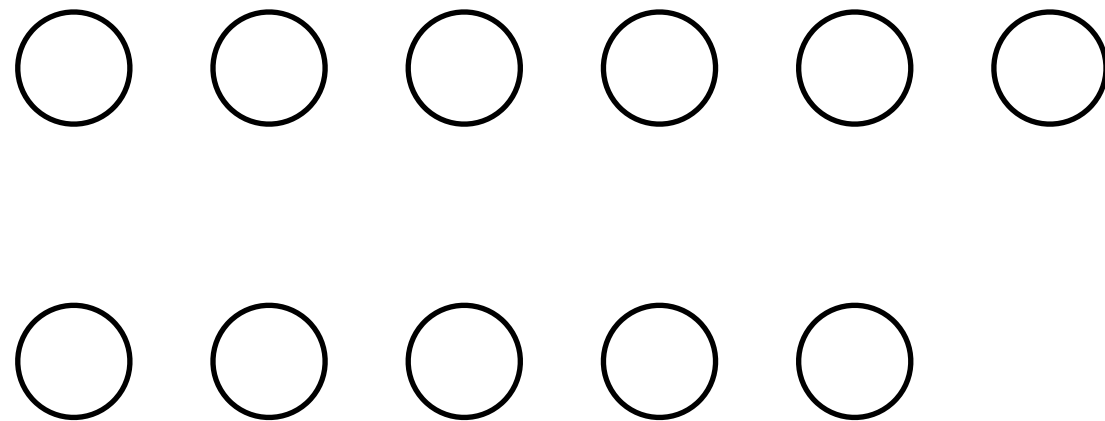


# Speed Dating: Format

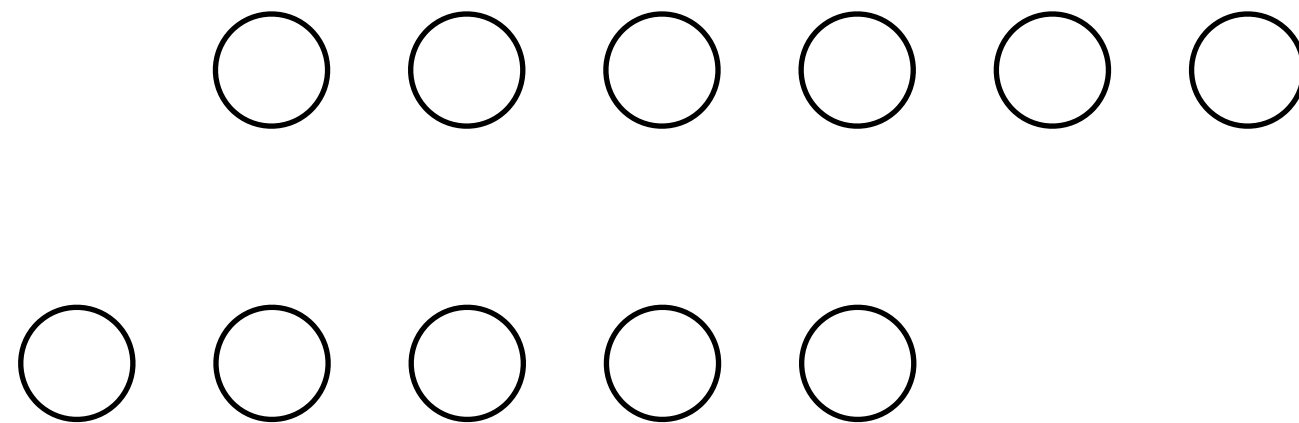
**Change!**



# Speed Dating: Format

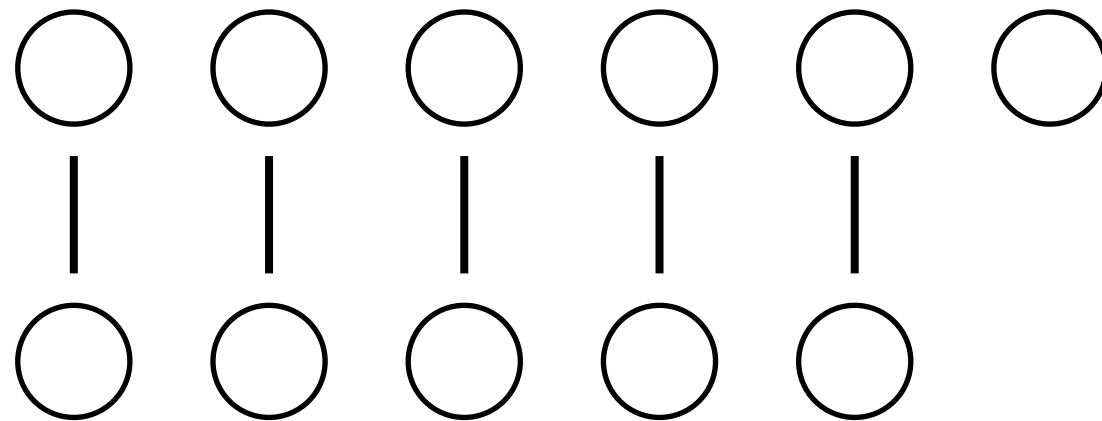


# Speed Dating: Format



# Speed Dating: Format

**Chat!**



and repeat until you've met everyone in the other row...

**discuss in small  
groups your own  
networking**



# **a book on networking for scientists**

# “Networking for Nerds”

**Alaina G. Levine**

many ideas in my presentation inspired by or informed by the book

I borrowed it from the library recently - just bought a copy for myself, I found it so useful

more detail, other topics covered, and some different viewpoints, on what I've described here (~200 pages)

# “Networking for Nerds”

**Alaina G. Levine**

sections of this presentation where the book was particularly useful for me (i.e. where I used ideas directly from the book, or where the book’s perspective significantly changed how I presented the topic):

- **networking and career development**
- **networking tips** - several of them are straight from the book
- **networking at an event** - suggestions on what to do during your conversation, and on ending it
- **planning your networking**

**thank you**

**thank you**

**to the organisers for the invitation and their hospitality**

thank you

**to you for your attention**

**thank you**

**to my great colleagues**

thank you

**to de.NBI for my funding**



**thank you**

**to my great bosses Toby Gibson and Peer Bork**

**they encourage me to do this kind of work, it's thanks  
to them I can be here and do this with you**