Computer Society 2010: Innovation, Leadership, Community, and Careers

The Computer Society’s business is to help members access the right resources and technical information, support them in their careers, and facilitate relationships with like-minded professionals that offer opportunities for mentoring and collaboration.

Colleagues, it is an honor and challenge to take on the role of Computer Society (CS) president for 2010. Our Society’s business is to help you access the right resources and technical information when you need them, to support you in your career, and to facilitate relationships with like-minded professionals that can be used for mentoring, collaboration, and simple enjoyment. As a CS member, you have the opportunity to increase your innovation, build leadership skills, take advantage of vital technical communities, and develop your career. However, these opportunities do not result just from having a membership card and receiving Computer. You need to become engaged to get these real benefits.

IN VolVEMENT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Your most immediate chance to become involved is with your local section or chapter. Your IEEE section meetings provide a place where you can interact with a wide range of technical professionals. The perspectives of these individuals can provide insight into challenges you have in your own work and be the catalyst for innovation that leads to new features, products, and companies.

Our relationship with IEEE provides you with connections to folks in power systems telecommunications, consumer electronics, biomedical systems, and many more areas. In today’s world of complex integrated systems, collaborating across these boundaries can be the key to the next big thing, from the smart grid to robotics. To pursue “out of the box” thinking, you need to get out of your office, and the activities of your local section and chapter provide a way to do this.

If there are no activities close by, consider arranging some—a first step on the leadership ladder that our Society provides. Chapters annually seek new officers and typically are looking for speakers and volunteers to coordinate events or help out with programs already in place. The same is true of your section. When you pursue your interests in this context, you start making contacts with like-minded individuals and can increase both your leadership skills and your competencies.

The Society has a wide range of technical and professional activities in which you can become active and connected. Opportunities include participating in technical committees or conferences, serving as a publication peer reviewer or author, or volunteering for standards working groups, accreditation visits, or certification activities. There are also groups promoting student contests, in-service training for precollege teachers, computing history, and awards.

The collaborative and technical skills you acquire via CS activities will increase your value to your employer. Few companies provide leadership training internally, and taking on roles in the CS can demonstrate your leadership experience when management considers your capabilities. Cross-boundary interactions, such as your contacts with other professionals in the IEEE/CS, provide insight into prospective customers and suppliers.
and offer a potential source of new hires.

When you can associate individuals with the users of your products and services, the quality and ease of use of those products and services improves. And of course this interaction operates both ways. Nine out of ten of my employment advancements were the result of networking via professional activities and workplace colleagues (my initial job out of college was the only transition initiated via a résumé and the human resources department). Please go to the President’s Corner at www.computer.org/presidentscorner for links to Society resources that can help you, as well as additional insight on how being active can benefit you.

INSTANT COMMUNITIES

A new path for engagement is being developed. We will be providing instant communities in the first quarter of 2010 (http://communities.computer.org). As a CS member, you will be able to create a new community, and any individual with an IEEE Web account (membership not required) can join the interaction. For those who are already using similar capabilities such as Yahoo and Google, these communities provide the benefits of a focus on technical discussions with other professionals. Here is a medium to initiate a discussion of Web tools, multicore device design, data mining, security challenges, and so on as you see fit.

We encourage the development of communities associated with technical tracks at conferences, standards use, papers in publications, emerging technology, precollege contests, policy issues, grant opportunities, and the business of coordinating chapter, student, conference, and other activities. Communities can point to the foundational materials relevant to a specific topic: recent papers, tutorials, webinars, workshops, and so forth—helping interested professionals find their way to the best resources while avoiding the relevance and quality issues that emerge from Googling keywords.

CAREER CHALLENGES

Communities are one step into the 21st century, and we are taking others. Helping you in your career in challenging economic times coupled with rapid technological change is essential. It is likely that the job you will have in 10 years does not exist now—consider the role of search optimization 12 years ago, before Google, or 15 years ago, before Altavista.

The way to manage your career to achieve goals that are literally beyond our event horizon is to stay on top of your interests along with emerging technologies. CS publications, conferences, and events are all part of your toolkit. Our Build Your Career Web portal is also focused on this topic (http://careers.computer.org). You will find career-oriented articles and educational webinars that help you explore all phases of your career life cycle.

Combine these resources with our free online courses and free access to technical books, and you have the foundation for your future at your fingertips. But don’t ignore networking at the chapter, conference, and even committee meeting level. Once you want, or need, a career change, you will waste critical time if you have not already started making these connections.

PERSONALIZATION OPTIONS

Our online future will be dominated by personalization—from recommender systems like Netflix to the facial recognition technologies portrayed in the movie Minority Report. With tens of thousands of peer-reviewed papers published each year, and many other sources of information as well, it is impossible for an individual to keep track of the rapidly growing body of knowledge. Search helps a bit, and the instant communities will be an additional asset. However, we need to find ways to automatically identify what may be of value to our members based on both their expressed and implicit choices.

As a not-for-profit organization, the CS has obligations to respect your privacy, and as a professional society, we have ethical standards that apply as well. In short, the Computer Society will be a trustworthy and trusted partner in your professional evolution.

Currently, a company is using AI technology to evaluate a digital library and user selection, and then, based on this information, identify potential job matches. Similar technology is needed to help you find new articles, workshops, webinars, whitepapers, and so on that are of real value to you. A key CS strategic goal in this area is that “the IEEE CS will develop personalized profiles of participating professionals, presenting them with the most relevant information, communities, networking opportunities, information exchanges, and materials”—a journey we have just begun.

Notice that some of the connections we provide may relate to high-quality paid content such as...
Where Are We Headed?

More than a dozen leading experts give their opinions on where the Internet is headed and where it will be in the next decade in terms of technology, policy, and applications. They cover topics ranging from the Internet of Things to climate change to the digital storage of the future.