

My trip towards the PhD

Wei Song

Who am I

- Wei Song 4th year PhD
- Chinese citizen Come to UK from 2007
- Supervisor: Dr. Doug Edwards
- Advanced Processor Technologies Group (APT)

- Asynchronous communication in multi-processor systems (Computer Architecture)
- In UK: 8 publications (1 jour., 4 conf., 3 workshop)
- All: 16 publications (12 1st author, 3 co-author, 1 patent)

What I am doing here

- Tell **stories** of my PhD from the **heart**.
- Personal experiences
- Not verified understandings
- Unfair judgments
- Wrong ideas ?
- **Ignore me!** When you think I am wrong.

The reasons to be a PhD

- Degree
 - I don't have it yet.
 - All the professors have it.
 - I can have better start salary.
- Chance
 - I can go aboard! (int. students)
 - I can learn something!
 - I can change my specialty.
- Experience
 - I am doing real research.
 - Perhaps the worst four years in my life? (I don't think so :-)
 - I am improving the knowledge.

Feelings: *confusing*

In the first month of my PhD, I don't know what I am doing.

- I don't know how to research.
 - It is about new ideas + verify + publication.
- I don't know how to start.
 - What about a small new idea?
- I don't understand those papers.
 - Ask for help, start from review and books.

Feelings: *frustrated*

In the following several months, I am struggling to produce ideas.

- I don't have ideas.
 - Small stupid one is better than nothing.
- Idea is old.
 - Be happy that someone points it out.
 - Be happy that some experts did the same thing.
- Impossible to verify it
 - Ask supervisor. Reproduce the old results.

Feelings: *lonely*

The first year is lonely.

- No one care, even my supervisor.
 - Everyone is busy.
- No one help me. I am on my own.
 - It is your job to verify your ideas.
 - You will be an expert as no one can help anyway.
- Research is boring.
 - Social networking, activities and parties.

Feelings: *defeated*

My first paper submission was rejected.

- Experiments or tests fail.
 - I cannot expect that every try returns success.
 - I will do it better next time.
- Paper rejected.
 - Be happy to have some criticism.
 - A fail rate of 60% is normal. (30~40% accept rate)
 - Start from easy conferences/workshops
 - Do not rush yourself for urgent deadlines.
 - There will be different reviewers 😊

Feelings: *success, bravo!*

- Conference paper accepted.
 - Prepare the presentation and enjoy the trip.
- Journal paper accepted.
 - Success PhD, try better journals.
- Invited paper review (not by supervisor)
 - Recognized by others (editors, authors).
 - Be fair and critical.
- Invited talk
 - Respect from others.
 - More preparation for the presentation.

Short history

- Sep. 2007 come to UK
- Aug. 2008 1st paper submission
- Sep. 2008 1st workshop talk (rubbish)
- Oct. 2008 paper rejected
- Mar. 2009 1st accepted conference (short)
- 2 conference papers in 2009 (short + poster)
- 2 conference papers in 2010 (regular)
- Jan. 2010 1st invited paper review
- Aug. 2010 1st accepted journal

- 5/8 62.5% accepted rate

Words afterwards

- Be yourself
 - Do not rely on your supervisor too much.
 - Every PhD is an independent researcher.
 - Consult to your supervisor but make your own decisions.
- Publish as early as possible
 - Start with easy and fast conference.
 - Improve the quality during the process.

Thanks for your attention.

Hopefully all of you will enjoy the years here...