Career stuff I learned after grad school…
My career path so far

1. Berkeley EECS B.S. ‘99
2. Stanford CS PhD ’03 [customary jeers]
3. CMU assistant prof: ‘03-’05
4. Yahoo! Research scientist: Jan’06-now

- Research areas:
  - data management, e.g. processing web-scale data
  - web search, e.g. crawling to populate search index
Standard questions:
Why leave CMU?

• I left academia, not CMU

• Reasons:
  • Real problems, real data, real systems, real users
    • Felt I could do better work, have more impact
  • Research vs. meta-research:
    • Getting money, training students, (later) committees

• Downsides:
  • Forgo impact via production of students who have good careers
  • Job situation more dynamic (few stay at one lab for whole career)
Loss of freedom?

• Before: work on anything NSF, DARPA, etc. will fund
• Now: work on anything Yahoo cares about …

  • Every data-related problem under the sun:
    • Collect, analyze, curate, serve petabytes
    • Structured, unstructured, semi-structured
    • Raw data, derived data, inferred data

  • Many other areas: ML, Algorithms, IR, HCI, Econ
Has my external impact/visibility suffered?

- Not a controlled experiment, but:

- **2.5 CMU years:**
  - 9 top-tier pubs *(w/students + academic collaborators)*
  - Served on 4 top-tier PC’s

- **2.5 Yahoo years:**
  - 8 top-tier pubs *(w/Yahoo collaborators)*
  - Served on 10 top-tier PC’s, plus assoc. editorships
When I graduated, I thought:

- Academia is where all the good people go
- Hence if you are good you should go there
- I didn’t even apply to industry when I graduated!

Keep in mind:
- In school our mentors are mostly academics
- Try to have industry mentors as well
- (Even if you go to academia, industry connections will help a lot!)
Lastly …

- Obviously I’m giving a one-sided perspective.
- A lot depends on personality, research area.
- Was my time at CMU worthwhile? Yes!