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A Celebration of Achievement

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I spent almost 20 years as an imaging scientist at HP, transferring technology from research labs into products, so my main research areas were image processing (restoration, editing, and enhancement). I hit roadblocks trying to advance up the technical ladder, so I made a big career change. I now work for Intel as a platform applications engineer, providing technical customer design support to ensure successful platform launch, including support for server board, chipset development, and debugging. My current research interests are e-textiles and computer science education.

**TIPS:** For undergrads, look into opportunities for undergraduate research. It is a great way to explore the wide array of computing areas, including interdisciplinary work. Attend a conference in STEM (GHC, SWE, SHPE, NSBE, CAHS, Tapia, Grace Hopper, Regional Consortium, SACNAS, Great Minds in STEM, etc.). It will open your eyes to the possibilities, including presenting at a future conference! You don’t have to pay for grad school. There are a number of resources available for minority women in STEM, including the GEM Consortium, which hosts free GEM GRAD Lab Workshops around the country, and CRA-W, which hosts an annual Grad Cohort Workshop and has a great resources page, including a grad student info guide. Keep your career options open as long as possible. Industry, academia, and government research labs are all great places for technical women in computing.

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Ann Quiroz Gates
PhD in Computer Science
Professor and Chair
Department of Computer Science
University of Texas at El Paso

**TIPS:** Follow your passion. Identify opportunities to deepen your expertise and sharpen your professional and communication skills. Take courses outside of your program of study and seek workshops that can develop your skills. Attending and publishing at competitive conferences provides an opportunity to discuss your research with leaders in the field and establish relationships; seeking critical review of your work is essential for being accepted in top publications and receiving funding.

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Mirkeya Capellan
DPS, Doctorate of Professional Studies in Computing
IT Training, Resource Management, and Strategic Projects Specialist
Mercedes-Benz USA & Adjunct Professor Pace University, Computer Science Department

**TIPS:** Be persistent, know what you want, and go for it. Don’t let anyone tell you that you’re not good enough. There will be moments that you want to give it up but don’t let any obstacles step in your way. Find a mentor and/or support group to help you in the journey. Join professional social networks such as LinkedIn and Twitter and use them as a platform to brand yourself. Attend conferences/professional events to expand your knowledge base, improve your skill sets, and network with others in the field. The journey won’t be easy, but it’ll be worth it. Believe in yourself, be determined, and focused.

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“**Identify opportunities to deepen your expertise….**” - Dr. Ann Gates
I am a researcher in the Laboratories at Oracle where we identify, explore and transfer new technologies that have the potential to substantially improve Oracle’s business. My area of research focuses on VLSI CAD algorithms and alternative methods to parallelize CAD tools in java. Our work does help researchers in hardware to innovate in circuit designs and wire optimization by providing them with solutions tailored 100% to their needs. The majority of our algorithms are open source and therefore they are being used for educational purposes as well.

TIPS: No matter where you are, whether in grad school or industry, always be ready to adapt quickly to new situations. Acting fast and looking for advice if needed can overcome challenges. Don’t get overwhelmed by the potential difficulties ahead. Refine your options and take actions. As we say in Spanish, “No hay mal que dure 100 años” – Nothing lasts forever (and it will last even less if you solve it right away)!
TIPS: Perseverance is a precious value. Do not give up. Some days are cloudy, but eventually the sun will shine. Part of your success depends on the mentors and peers who will accompany you during the voyage, so be selective.

I am a Software Development Engineer at Microsoft. My research has involved analyzing data from Bing, Twitter and Facebook in the context of News Media. As part of my responsibilities, I have developed algorithms to identify and rank trending topics in various signals as well as extending these to be location and affinity based. As people are relying more and more on online media to provide them with the latest news and the increasing number of news sources, there are really interesting algorithmic challenges in providing users with one place with aggregated content.

Rosa Enciso
PhD in Computer Science
Software Development Engineer
Microsoft

TIPS: In my career I have found that mentorship and networking are really key. Mentors can provide a fresh view on issues we may have as well as provide feedback and direction on where we are going with our career or what we need to accomplish a goal. Actively maintaining my network has provided me with great mentors as well as opportunities that have helped me grow professionally and technically. I would also suggest to never being afraid to reach out to researchers, professors, and/or executives that are well-known in the field. There is so much to learn.

Dilma Da Silva
PhD in Computer Science
Principal Engineer & Manager at Qualcomm Research

I explore ways of advancing system software so that computers can help society to tackle challenging problems. It’s a thrill to pursue novel ideas to improve computing efficiency and resilience while also reducing complexity and cost. Currently I lead the Mobile Cloud Computing area at Qualcomm Research, exploring ways to improve mobile apps. I love that my day-to-day routine involves collaboration with engineers and academic researchers who are building new paths to advance what computing can do for society. Most of my activities involve learning and exchanging ideas, while guiding a team towards success. I also write code, run experiments, write papers, and contribute to the organization of conferences and workshops.

TIPS: I feel successful because I get to do work I love with people I admire. People can leverage their time in grad school to know more about what makes them feel passionate and energetic, and what brings them down. On the technical/scientific side, try to learn new things every day and exercise curiosity. Aim for excellence and accept you may fall short sometimes. Identify your comfort zone and actively work to expand it.

Eliana Valenzuela-Andrade
PhD in Computing and Information Sciences and Engineering
Assistant Professor
University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo

I teach mainly undergraduate computer science courses including programming I, programming II, Java Programming, Database Design, Software Engineering and IT Project Management, among others. In the past two years, I have been involved in the study and development of innovative tools to increase the interest of young people in Puerto Rico about Computing Science. Alliances as CAHSI, FEMPROF, CDC, Latinas in Computing and CCCE have been a mainstay in my profession.

“Perseverance is a precious value” - Dr. Eliana Valenzuela-Andrade
As a consultant, I assist clients with the specification, analysis, verification, and documentation of their products in accordance with applicable industry standards and other relevant guidelines. As a researcher, I am interested in software engineering, in the use of formal methods during model-driven development, and the analysis and verification of safety critical systems (e.g., systems embedded in automobiles, planes, medical devices, etc.). In general, I am concerned with the creation of correct and safe systems.

TIPS: Having a support network is key, not only for successfully navigating graduate school, but also to keep you grounded and balanced during the process. This network is also likely to advise on career decisions and to help professionally and personally, if necessary. The path to graduate school can be long and strenuous, but try looking at this path as an opportunity to meet inspiring people that become part of your network.

Alma L. Juarez-Dominguez
PhD in Computer Science

A big part of what I did at Google involved performance testing. This was an exciting area to work on because any product Google launches will immediately have millions of users.

TIPS: I would say find a mentor and do not be afraid to ask them questions. Having mentors made a huge difference and really helped guide the first few years of my career.

Gaby Aguilera
MS in Computer Science
Google, from 2005-2012
Currently, Medical Student
Brown University
(Class of 2016)

The early years of my career were spent architecting mechanical packaging solutions to server systems. On a daily basis, this involved juggling product design with team leadership and project management activities. This position enabled me to develop and utilize my leadership skills while doing detailed technical work involving design, analysis, and testing of mechanical and electrical components and assemblies. One of the most satisfying aspects of working in product development was being able to see an entire product progress from an idea to a physical, tangible system that is utilized by people around the world. Currently, I am exploring new opportunities in the field of sustainable development, and I’m enjoying seeing how my engineering background can be an asset in trying to solve pressing socioeconomic issues in developing countries.

Cecilia R. Aragon
PhD in Computer Science
Associate Professor
Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering
eScience Institute
University of Washington

My research lies at the intersection between computer science, social science, and visualization. I focus on visual analytics of very large data sets, analysis of affect in text communication and social media, and how influxes of vast data are changing scientific practice and collaboration. Human centered design and engineering is an exciting and ever-changing new field that encompasses human-computer interaction, scientific collaboration, social computing, and data science, among other areas.

TIPS: Make sure you find ways to sustain emotional support throughout your career. As a trailblazer, it is easier to navigate new territory if you have a solid support system. Volunteering to help others in the area of your passion can be a great source of emotional sustenance and may also lead to career benefits.

Nadia Anguiano-Wehde
MS in Mechanical Engineering

The biggest piece of advice I can give for successfully navigating a career is to never be afraid of personal and professional reinvention. The world is dynamic and individuals should be also. I recently went on work assignments to Kenya and Bolivia doing work that I was completely unfamiliar with. However, stretching and “reinventing” myself has been what has kept me consistently invigorated by what I do.