Career Choices: Industry vs. Academia

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My Own Path

- 2001, B.S. Peking University
- 2006, PhD. Carnegie Mellon University
  - 2004, M.S. CMU
- 2010, IBM TJ Watson Research Center
- Now, USC
1) What career path did you consider most during your Ph.D., and what influenced any changes to this over time?

- **Stage 1: Clueless**
- **Stage 2: Some idea**
- **Stage 3: Yes, I want it**
- **Stage 4: No, I cannot do it**
2) What does it take to succeed in academia versus industry, and where can one make the most impact?

- **Best virtues in all jobs**
  - Hardworking
  - Good attitude
  - Communication skills
  - (and some luck)

- **Different impact**
  - Academia: your own research achievement and many many students
  - Industry: you are on board of a big ship that makes a lot of impact
3) What compels you to pursue a career in academia now given your past experiences in industry? Can you share a personal in industry versus academia?

- Life is full of changes ..
4) What are lessons learned and tips (advantages and/or disadvantages) from working in industry prior to pursuing a career in academia?

• **Advantages: Yes, you’re ready!!**
  – More mature
  – Research better motivated by real applications
  – Better academic networks
  – Better management skills

• **Disadvantage**
  – You are not one person any more 😊
5) What key things should one do during Ph.D. studies to determine whether a career in industry or academia is best for achieving one's career goals?

- Doing an internship
- Talking to senior students in your group
- Visiting a top research lab in your area from other top universities
- Most important: know what you’re good at and what you want to be.