

Life after the PhD

Frédo Durand
MIT CSAIL

Options

- Faculty
- Research scientist
- Industrial research lab
- Industry
- Start up

Faculty

- 3 jobs in one:
 - Teach
 - Research, advise
 - Raise money
 - Management
- Pros: teaching, grad students, flexibility of subject, long-term stability (if tenured)
- Cons: crazy workload, teaching, fundraising crap

Tenure

- Between 6 and 9 years
- Mostly based on external letters
- Other criteria
 - Teaching
 - Service
 - Fund raising
 - Relevance of area
 - Politics
- A place like MIT has roughly a 50% rate
- Failure does happen
- If denied tenure typical options are
 - Industry
 - Tenured position in lower-ranked university

School Hierarchy

Life outside the US

- Canada
 - Similar to US, friendlier tenure, less money but more steady and less fundraising
- Europe
 - France
 - UK
 - Germany
 - Switzerland

Research scientist

- A.k.a “Soft Money”
 - i.e. you need to raise enough for your salary + students + other lab money
 - e.g. Antonio Torralba, John Fisher, Tom Knight, Chris Terman
- Common at MIT, CMU, UNC
- Pros: no teaching, access to students, can go back to faculty
- Cons: no teaching, huge pressure to raise money, not as stable

Industry research

- E.g. MERL, MSR, Adobe, IBM, Intel, NVidia
- E.g. R. Szeliski, M. Cohen, H. Pfister, W. Matusik, R. Raskar, H. Hoppe
- Pros: no teaching, little fundraising, can go back to Academia if publish papers
- Cons: no teaching, harder to get grad students (interns only), sometimes pressure to make the company happy, uncertain future (see IBM, bell Labs & MERL)
- Careful with hierarchy of academia friendliness
 - Are papers the main evaluation criterion?
 - Old MERL > MSR > Nvidia > Nokia

Industry

- E.g. Emil Praun, Eric Veach
- Pros: Money, could be less work, no teaching
- Cons: no teaching, not as much freedom, no going back

Start up

- E.g. Mok Oh, Ren Ng, Matt Pharr, Chris Buehler