10 random thoughts you should remember to make great career mistakes in research

Luca Costabello | @lukostaz | ESWC-21 PhD Symposium
Hello,

knowledge graphs, graph machine learning, explainable AI

- Accenture Labs (Research Scientist)
- Fujitsu (Research Scientist)
- Inria (PhD Student)
- Telecom Italia Lab (Research Engineer)
#1 Your Mileage May Vary

Every university is a unique ecosystem!

Every “Company R&D team” is a unique ecosystem!

- Big corp? Startup?
- Industry sector?
- Business model?

Teams quality and scope vary wildly

Geography matters
#2 Rank Your Priorities

Come up with personal priorities:

- Life-work balance?
- Financial stability?
- Freedom to investigate?
- Real-world problems to work on?
- Flexible hours?
- Career progression?
- Remote vs on-site?
- Academic publications
- ...
#3 Compensation Matters

- Assess your finance situation.
- Your work is valuable. Make sure it is rewarded.
- Shop around.
- Ask about retention & performance review policies!
#4 Academia vs Industry: a False Dichotomy?

- Boundaries are more and more blurred
- Why not both?
  - hybrid research teams
  - research staff with dual affiliations
#5 Down with Big Corp! I want Academic freedom!

- Don’t agree with intellectual property (IP) protection in industry?
- Some universities have very aggressive IP strategies
- Industry contribution to open source landscape is massive
#6 "I don't want to chase fundings in academia!"

Surprise! Industrial projects also need sponsorship, financial support, etc.
#7 “Teaching duties are not my thing”

Some degree of “teaching” required in industry as well:

- Interact with colleagues that do not come from research
- Educate clients
- Make the case with your line of management
#8 “Academic networking & cross-institute collaborations are harder in industry”

- Again, your mileage may vary
- Spontaneous collaborations may be harder
- Instead: targeted projects, student co-supervisions, hybrid multi-partner projects.
Industry is richer with data

- This is most likely correct...
- ...but do not underestimate academic licenses!
#10 In a nutshell: it's up to you!

- Academia and industrial research bare have lot in common...
- .. but they also have substantial differences.
- Do a lot of interviews. Pick up "signals"
  - Understand the company/institute culture.
  - Is this the right place for me?
- Unhappy? → why not trying both!
  - Academia -> Industry
  - Industry -> Academia
  - Be conscious of lock-in factors!