About me

- BSc and PhD Computer Science, University College Dublin
- Post-Doctoral Fellow, Health Informatics, University of Ottawa, Canada
- Lecturer in Computer Science, Aston University, Birmingham, UK
- Senior Lecturer in Health Informatics, City, University of London, UK
- Maternity leave [2014-2015]
- Assistant Head of Computer Science, TU Dublin
- Head of Research, Faculty of Computing, Digital and Data, TU Dublin
- **Academic Lead of the Digital Futures Research Hub, TU Dublin**

Early Career Challenges

- Moving from being a researcher to being an academic is a very challenging time
  - You got the job because of your strong research
  - But your job has exploded in the diversity of tasks you need to undertake
  - Less focus on research
  - High teaching load
  - Administration tasks

Keep a focus on your research

- Block out protected time for research to maintain your researcher credentials

- Develop a clear research strategy for YOU
  – What is your vision for short/medium/long term?
    – Where will you be and what do you want to know in 5-10 years time?
  – What area you are going to do your research in?
  – How are you going to be successful?
  – What infrastructure do you need?
  – How will you manage your research strategy?

Some practical tips

- Networking
- Publications
- Grant writing
- Communication skills
- **Be proactive**

Networking

- Expand your network – don't rely on your existing network
  - Get new ideas and inspirations
  - Meet new collaborators
  - Attend seminars/webinars/networking events
  - Join special interest groups on social media

Publications

- Publish from your PhD
- Get involved in other publications
- Use your network
- Every piece of research can produce a paper
  - You can write about theory, methodology, preliminary results, final results, and problems.
  - Prospective/review/opinion pieces
- PhD co-supervision

Grant Writing

- Become a grant writing expert
  - Take a course or get advice
    - Grant writing is a constant learning process
  - Understand the grant writing process
  - Accept any invitation to be part of the grant writing team/consortium
  - Ask to see examples of successful proposal
  - Understand the odds of success

Communication skills

- At every stage of your career, you can improve your communication skills
- Communication and communication media keeps changing
- Research communication keeps changing
  - Public facing, citizen science, engaged research
- Communication skills build confidence
  - Promote yourself

Say No to Imposter Syndrome

- When surrounded with other high achievers, it can be easy to compare yourself to them
  - Separate feelings from facts
  - Take note of your accomplishments
  - Stop comparing
  - Talk to others
  - Get a mentor
- Fake it until you make it!

Build Resilience

- You will encounter stresses, setbacks and disappointments
- Resilience is the capacity to adapt or recover from stressful situations
    - Building resilience doesn't mean you'll avoid stress. What it means is that you'll be able to cope better and recover from stress more effectively.
    - You need to be able to adapt to often rapidly changing circumstances and to bounce back from disappointments and setbacks

Resilience

- Resilience is:
  - something which can be learned
  - weakened by isolation – build a support network
  - magnified by self-awareness
  - experiencing setbacks and learning behaviours, thoughts and actions that allow you to bounce back from these in a healthy way.

- Resilience is not:
  - putting up with unacceptable work conditions, discriminatory work practices, enduring harassment or bullying

Mistakes

- A huge mistake is not seeking mentorship *early on*
  - Formal mentorship programmes
  - Informal mentors
  - Look out for mentorship schemes and other programs designed to bring you into contact with academics in different stages of their careers

Mistakes

- Overcommittment
  - Only make commitments that will fit into your working week and only commit to things that will work for you
  - Overcommittment causes missed deadlines, paper deadlines, funding grant deadlines are easily missed
  - Become good at time management

Proactivity

- Take opportunities that put in front of you
  - Help you grow and learn

- Get used to feeling uncomfortable
  - The next time you'll feel a little less comfortable

Look after yourself

- Brains work better in healthy bodies
- Control the controllables
- Don't be a perfectionist
- You are only one person!
- You are more than your job