

# Strategies for Working Remotely: Virtual Onboarding and Mentoring

## A Panel Discussion

Approved for public release



### Panelists:

Helen Cademartori, LBNL – Deputy of Operations, Computational Research Division

Marcey Kelley, LLNL – Computing Workforce and Scholar Program Manager

Jay Lofstead, SNL – Principal Member of Technical Staff, Center for Computing Research

Beth McCormick, LLNL – Director of Strategic Workforce Development, Engineering Directorate

Raj Sankaran, ANL – Experimental Systems Specialist, Waggle Edge-Computing Co-lead

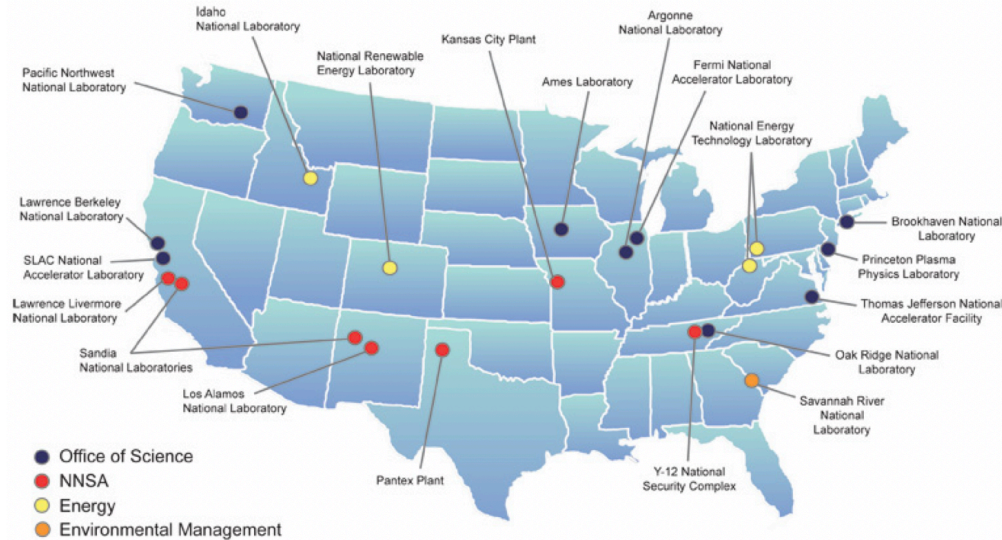
Guest Moderator: Rebecca Hartman-Baker, LBNL – User Engagement Group Lead at NERSC

Series Moderators: Elaine Raybourn, SNL – Site PI IDEAS-ECP, Ashley Barker, ORNL – ECP CAM

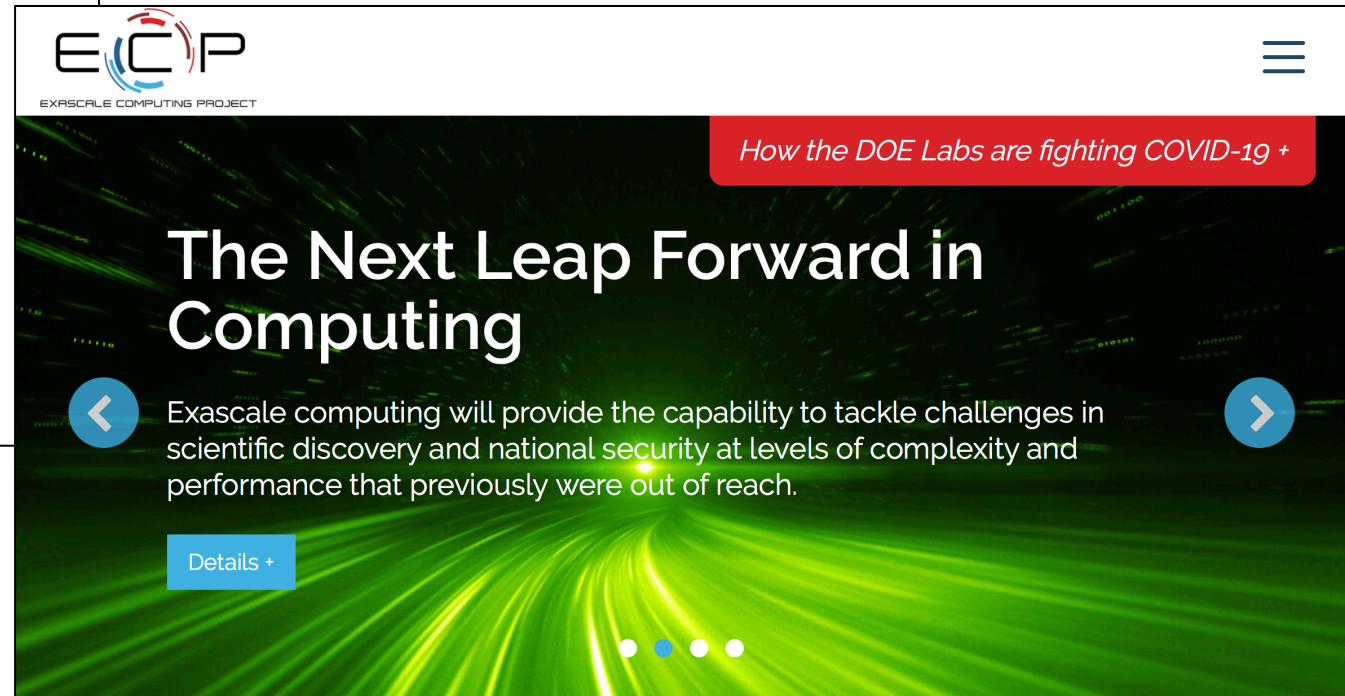
# Who are we?

- Staff at U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) laboratories

## DOE national laboratories: Leaders in science and innovation



- Involved in the DOE Exascale Computing Project (ECP)
  - <https://www.exascaleproject.org>
- Currently working remotely



# Panel Discussion Format

- Brief introductions from panelist addressing prompts:
  - *Advice you would give to someone just getting started.*
  - *Challenges you have experienced.*
  - *Unforeseen benefits.*
  - *Opportunities to look for from this experience.*
- Q&A:
  - Type your question in Zoom chat box, please indicate your first name and affiliation if possible
  - Moderator will ask if you'd like to unmute to ask your question, or if you prefer the moderator can ask on your behalf.
- We value your feedback
  - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BWFJYSP> fill out anytime after panel
- Slides, video, and bios from today are available:
  - <https://www.exascaleproject.org/event/virtualonboarding/>

# Strategies for Working Remotely: Model concern for safety

**Piled Higher and Deeper** by Jorge Cham

[www.phdcomics.com](http://www.phdcomics.com)



title: "Fall outbreak" - originally published 9/8/2010



# Helen Cademartori – Opening Remarks

- **Advice**

- In addition to the work meetings, we have found it very valuable to add social events to the remote internships programs this year. We rely on Zoom and use the breakout rooms feature.
- Create a slack channel for the summer interns so they have multiple ways to interact with each other and get to know others interested in their research topics

- **Challenges**

- Zoom break out rooms 😊
- Many of the social activities– ice cream social, summer picnic can't really be replicated.

- **Unforeseen benefits**

- We haven't had the serious issues of trying to find affordable summer housing in Berkeley.
- We are developing a number of new resources, virtual tours, tutorials that we expect to be able to use for many other situations.

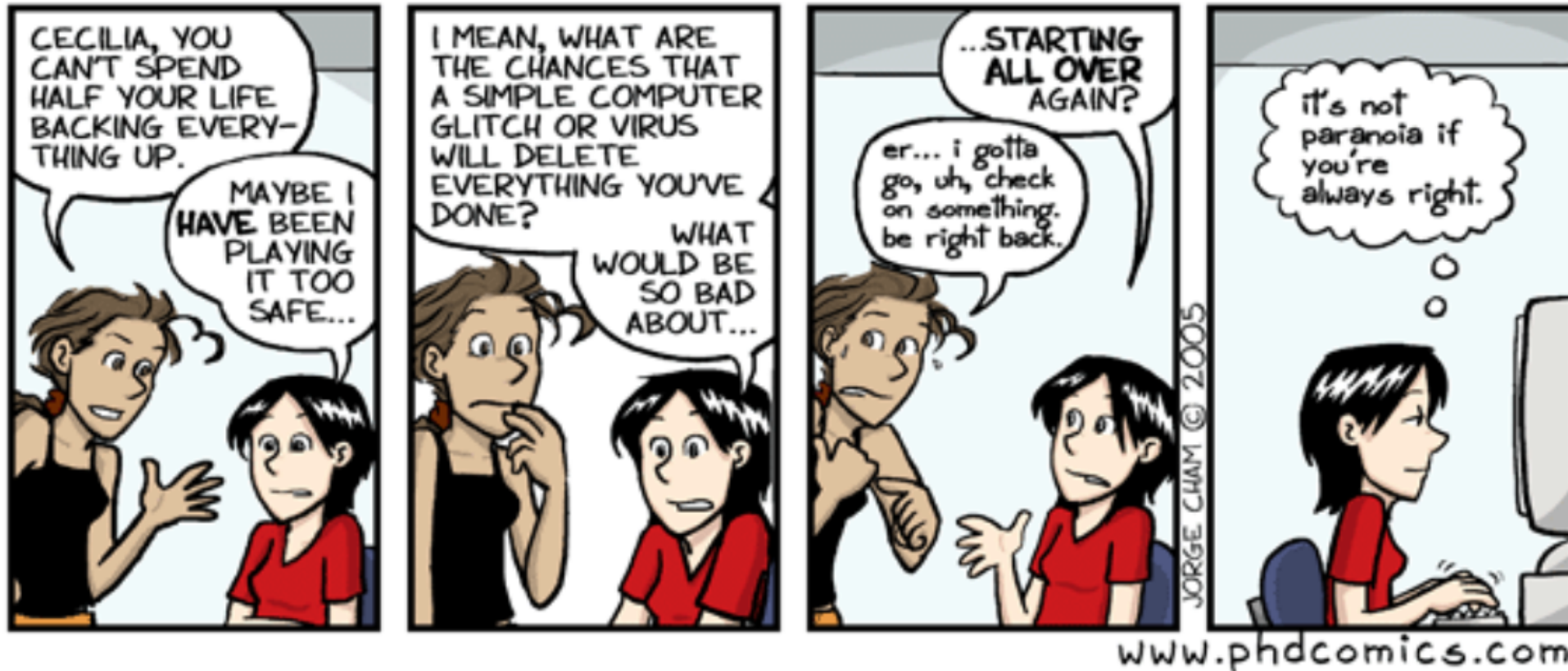
- **Opportunities to look for from this experience**

- We are planning ahead for more opportunities for summer interns to be introduced to one another virtually ahead of them coming on-site.
- Similarly, we have developed several tutorials especially for how to use HPC, that will be very helpful for students to take ahead of coming on site. This is especially valuable considering how quickly 10 weeks go by.

# Strategies for Working Remotely: Engender best practices

**Piled Higher and Deeper** by Jorge Cham

[www.phdcomics.com](http://www.phdcomics.com)



title: "Save" - originally published 10/17/2005

# Marcey Kelley – Opening Remarks

- ***Advice***

- Try to stick with a standard program, don't allow too many “customizable” IT solutions
- Automate the process as much as possible
- Set standard business practices

- ***Challenges***

- First time we have ever had remote students, no one knew how to do this
- Each Directorate does on-boarding, IT provisioning differently
- Many manual business practices, still using a lot of paper, in-person processes

- ***Unforeseen benefits***

- Culture/stigmas around telecommuting are changing
- Forces us to look at limitations in on-boarding experience

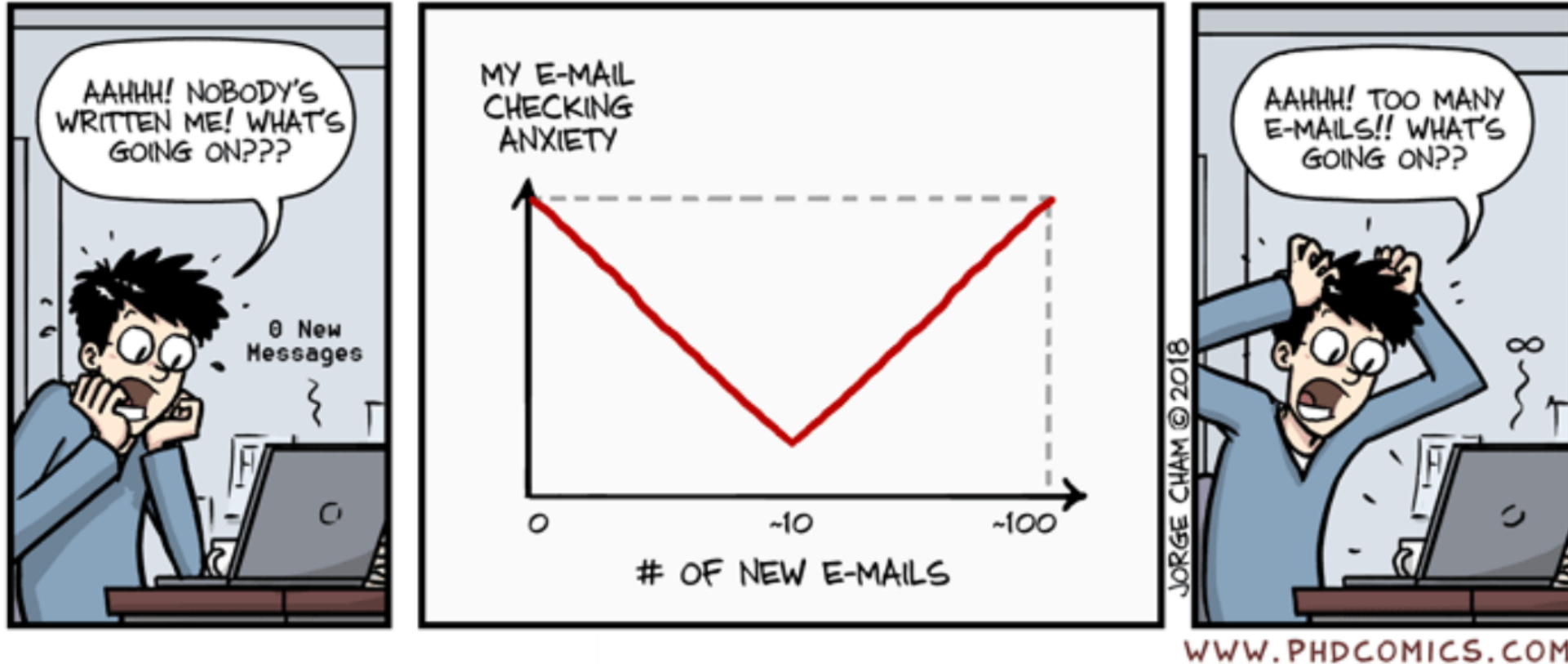
- ***Opportunities to look for from this experience***

- Providing a better on-boarding experience for our students
- Giving students a summer internship experience when they had very few opportunities this year

# Strategies for Working Remotely: Manage expectations

Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

www.phdcomics.com



title: "Inbox Anxiety" - originally published 3/30/2018



# Jay Lofstead – Opening Remarks

- ***Advice***

- Separating work life and home life crucial, but can be really hard
- Don't think of it as working remotely as much as working with a globally distributed team while on travel

- ***Challenges***

- Scheduling meetings
- Team building/bonding
- Reading body language through video, when available
- Dealing with personal and family care

- ***Unforeseen benefits***

- Schedule flexibility may make you more productive and happier

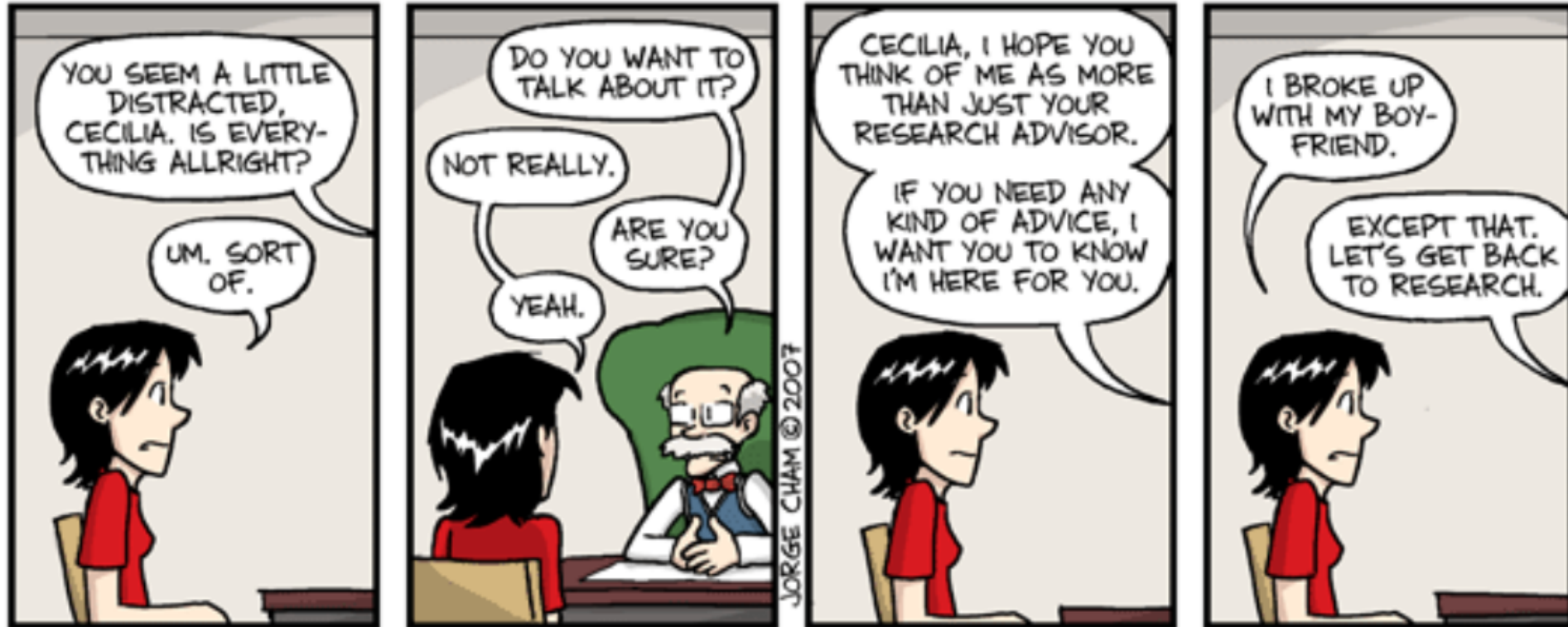
- ***Opportunities to look for from this experience***

- Learning how to run better meetings
- Better organized due to limited, time-shared space
- Get better at using digital tools over paper
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/working-remote-principles-few-things-keep-mind-during-m3-sweatt/>

# Strategies for Working Remotely: Mentor authentically

Piled Higher and Deeper *by Jorge Cham*

[www.phdcomics.com](http://www.phdcomics.com)



title: "Distracted" - originally published 6/15/2007

# Beth McCormick: Student Mentor Relationship Building

- **Advice**

- Ensure to use video option when meeting with students.
- More frequent conversations are a must.
- Your voice plays a stronger roll in remote communications.
- Work on creative solutions to social limitations: socials, scavenger hunts, games.

- **Challenges**

- Students need to read body language or they will easily misinterpret messages to be negative
- Many students feel lonely and isolated.
- Students have high than normal anxiety levels.
- Students have increased concerns about their performance.

- **Unforeseen benefits**

- Students have adapted well to the virtual environment.
- Students enjoy the flexibility of a virtual job.
- Virtual students may be able to work part time during the school year.
- Students have saved \$1000s in housing costs.

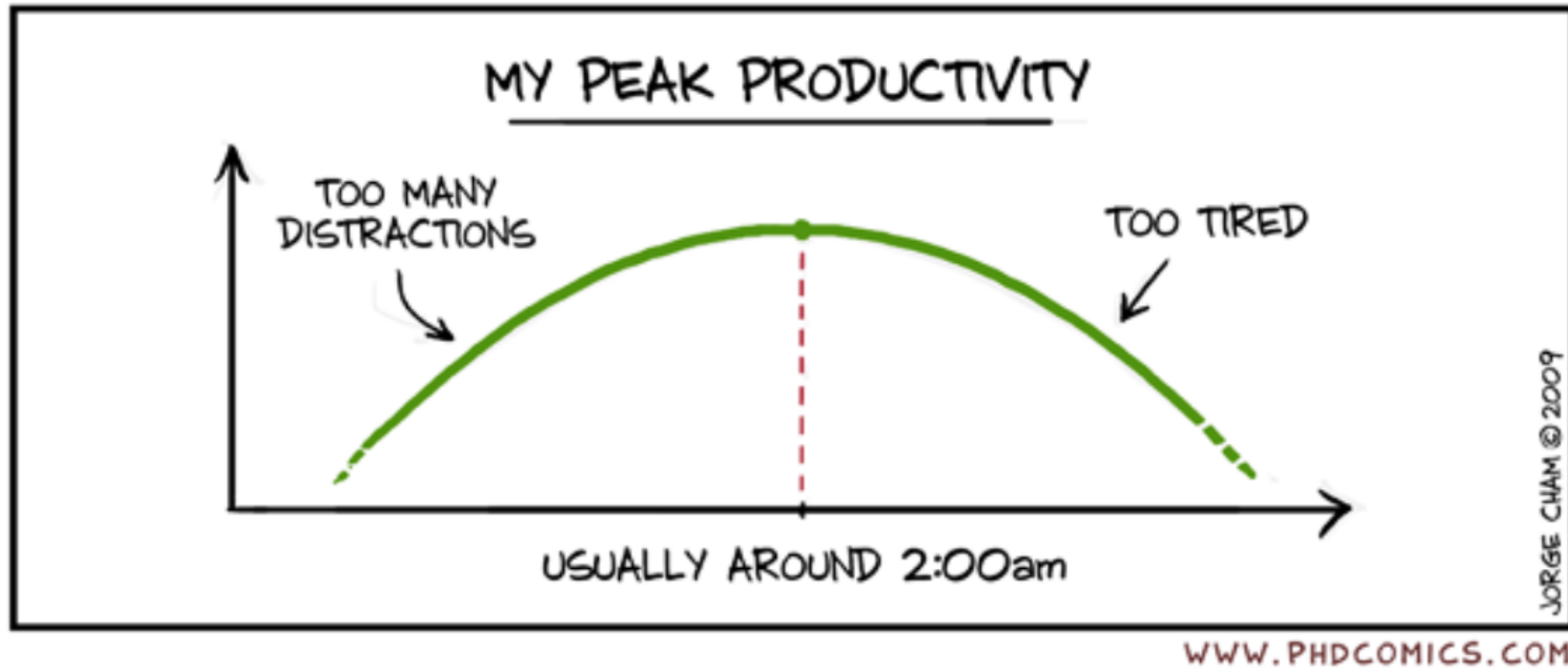
- **Opportunities to look for from this experience**

- Staff are becoming comfortable managing remotely. Lessons learned will create could lead to increased number of virtual projects on campus.
- Virtual intern talks and activities will become the norm on campus. Great opportunity for employers

# Strategies for Working Remotely: Enable team productivity

Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

www.phdcomics.com



title: "Peak Productivity" - originally published 8/31/2009



# Raj Sankaran – Opening Remarks

- **Advice**

- Be ready to move all paper & pen tasks to online resources. Explore available team work resources and pick ones that suit your team.
- Somethings take longer – International Students' approvals, lab approvals and onboarding. Work closely with your edu programs – they are under lot of stress, but they will get it done.
- Students may not have a good setup for working from home – equipment, infrastructure etc. Find creative ways out!

- **Challenges**

- Time zones: It may be hard to find times for meetings, scrums and one-on-one meetings (very important during the lockdown)
- Funding challenges as some soft-funded positions become unavailable (work-study programs)

- **Unforeseen benefits**

- Housing and commuting challenges avoided – less stress. No office space issues on site.
- Creative ways of solving problems, leading to new opportunities for students (cross-domain benefits).

- **Opportunities to look for from this experience**

- With no work related travel and other associated time-costs, can one mentor more students, and also spend more time on one-on-one discussions with students?
- Some hands-on-fields are unable to host interns – explore some cross-cutting/interdisciplinary R&D fronts?

# Panel Discussion

## **We want to hear from you!**

Please type your question in the Zoom chat window, and if possible type your first name and affiliation.

The moderators will ask if you'd like to unmute to ask your question, or if you prefer the moderators can ask your question on your behalf.

Put your settings on gallery view to see all panelists





- **Working Remotely: The Spack Team**

- T. Gamblin, E. Raybourn, 5/16/2020, blog post

- **Remote Working in an Agile World**

- R. Bartlett, 4/12/2020, intro to podcast by BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

- **Resources for Maximizing Remote Working**

- E. Raybourn, 3/18/2020, curated content on:
  - *Remote versus co-located work*
  - *The remote work playbook*
  - *How to lead in the age of newly remote teams*
  - *COVID-19 and the shift to remote work*

- **Clean Your Work Surfaces: One Way to Help Flatten the Curve**

- M.C. Miller, 3/19/2020



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Featured

 **Cleaning Your Work Surfaces: One Way to Help Flatten the Curve**

BLOG POST

