



## Ballspenden: Filling Your Domain User Dance Card

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## What Kinds of Dances/Domains?

- pick one: foxtrot
  - learn language and problems of one domain deeply
    - become an expert yourself
    - easier to connect with and be found by people in that domain
  - many upsides
    - Bill Lorensen, medical imaging
  - some downsides
    - how to have fun at 4am when ballroom is closed and you're at a rave?
- choose between many opportunistically
  - my model: waltz, tango, polka, slamdancing, ...
    - who to dance with?
    - how and when to choose?
    - how can both dancers be happy?
  - challenges
    - learning each others' language
    - finding right people/problems where needs of both are met

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## Keeping Both Dancers Happy

- holy grail: full project culminates with fabulous new technique paper and tool they use
  - what if looks like they need engineering not research?
- larger space of possibilities
  - you write a different kind of research paper
    - design study
    - evaluation of existing techniques/tools through field study
  - you're an initial/occasional consultant
    - point them to existing tools/techniques
  - you build them a tool that's purely engineering
    - maybe you do discover research issues once you dig in
    - takes you minimal time, use rest of money for real research
    - big timesink but hope for future goodwill/payoff
  - you decline the dance

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## Picking Dance Partners

- look broadly, gradually winnow
  - don't commit too soon!
- eye contact with many
  - initial meeting
- exchange words with some
  - further discussions
- continue bantering with a few
  - get feet wet with start on real work
- try a first dance
  - do a project
- multiple dances
  - do another project

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## When to Choose

- ideal: maintain mix at any given time
  - limited number of active projects
  - some preliminary work
    - may lead to dance if(f) banter phase pans out
  - steady stream of low-cost initial meetings
    - keep an eye on the whole room even when dance card is full for this particular evening
- premature commitment can be the wrong thing
  - avoid full dance card with wrong partners
    - joining grant at last minute with people you've never even met
    - don't assume "can't say no", consider more deeply

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## Four Process Questions

- ask them early in dance/negotiation!
- what is the role of my (potential) collaborators?
  - real end users or fellow tool builders?
- is there a real need for my new approach/tool?
  - or are existing tools good enough?
- am I addressing a real task?
  - how central is it to how many people for how long?
- does real data exist and can I get it?
  - now vs "real soon now" - what are probabilities?

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## More Variations on This Theme

- 15 min version (Dagstuhl infovis, 2007)  
*When To Walk Away: Questions To Ask In Infovis Projects*
- hour-long version (VIEW, Leiden 2007)  
*Research Cycles, Collaboration, and Visualization*
- 10 minute version (Dagstuhl scivis, 2009)  
*Visualization Process and Collaboration*  
<http://www.cs.ubc.ca/~tmm/talks.html#dagstuhl09>
- paper: postmortem of how/why collab went wrong  
Reflections on QuestVis: A Visualization System for an Environmental Sustainability  
<http://www.cs.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/tr/2009/TR-2009-24.pdf>

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