Getting Started on LinkedIn

Background:

Why do I need a LinkedIn?

- LinkedIn is great for growing your professional network, searching for jobs, reinforcing your professional brand, and communicating your scientific outputs
- Public profiles are also accessible by search engines, so even those without LinkedIn pages can see your work

How does it differ from other social media?

- LinkedIn is all about having a large network - whereas Twitter and Instagram may be more private or selective, you want to think about maximizing reach

Tips:

1. Complete your profile with engaging photos

- LinkedIn search engines are optimized for completed profiles, so make sure you have all the basic information filled out!
- Be sure to have a professional headshot as well as a banner image - it's nice to tie your banner image into your field or expertise, if possible (see examples)

2. Carefully consider your header

- This section (120 characters) is the first place recruiters look!
- Your heading should be specific and include keywords that come up for a recruiter doing a job search you might be interested in
  - For example: instead of “Postdoctoral Researcher” try “Data-oriented geochemistry postdoc research scientist”
3. Don’t skip the about section

- This is another section of prime real estate - be sure to give some highlights here about your specific expertise, again thinking about targeted language to attract recruiters for desired jobs - if you aren’t sure what language to use, it’s a good idea to put some job postings into a word cloud and see what keywords are most prominent
- If you are looking for a job, consider adding your email address or preferred form of contact at the end of the section so recruiters can contact you easier
- Here are two examples of nice about sections from NCEAS residents:

Creating solutions for complex problems and being able to communicate them effectively to diverse audiences are the backbone of my work. I am a data scientist at the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) with a mathematics PhD and over five years of experience in scientific research, teaching and advocacy.

Being an avid bird watcher and hiker, I have become captivated by California’s nature. I am looking to apply my analytic and coding background to environmental science, particularly to ecosystem management and habitat restoration.

For the past 10 years I have also founded, organized and participated in multiple successful programs to make science and mathematics accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. I am committed to the advancement of women and Latinx in science and higher education.

Skilled in: creative problem solving, public speaking, project and program management, R and Python coding, data analysis and visualization, cross-cultural communications.

As a communications and outreach coordinator, I focus on using creative ways to communicate science to the public, and to other researchers. Working for a data repository allows me to work with researchers in the Arctic space, specifically regarding data sharing best practices and Indigenous data sovereignty in the context of open science.

I am passionate about open science, Arctic research, and supporting Indigenous Peoples’ rights and interests. Being Native American, supporting Indigenous Peoples’ rights and interests is personal. I want my work to support capacity sharing, and creating more space for greater leadership and participation of Indigenous Peoples and communities in research. Working in communications for a data repository has allowed me to strengthen my science communication skills, and to practice sharing complex topics.

Beyond communication, I have a background working in GIS and Indigenous protected areas in Canada. My current role also affords me time to continue to practice coding in R and python.

4. Fill in details in your experiences section

- For each relevant experience, list a few bullet points describing the takeaway message,
your role in the project, skills you gained, and important products
- If possible, connect photos or other media for each main project
- For undergraduate or graduate research projects, it’s nice to have the projects in the experience section, not education - a good work around for this is titling a position “graduate student researcher” to create that space on your LinkedIn

5. **Aim for at least 100 connections**
   - This is not a time to be shy on social media! You want to build a lot of connections on LinkedIn - I would recommend aiming for at least 100
   - At 500 connections your profile reads 500+ so that is a good long term goal

6. **Interact with your connections**
   - A good place to start is with giving and receiving skill endorsements (a goal could be for at least 5 endorsements per skill)
   - You can message connections to set up coffee chats or informational interviews
   - Consider making posts on LinkedIn for major job-related events, such as starting a new job, celebrating an anniversary, publishing a paper or report, or welcoming new colleagues
     - Like other social media platforms you can add relevant hashtags, tag organizations (like NCEAS!) and photos
     - Once you have a post or two, it’s a good idea to “feature” a few on your profile by clicking on the three dots at the top right

7. **Join LinkedIn Groups**
   - With so many connections on LinkedIn it can be hard to tailor the content on your feed closer to your interests - joining groups can be a great solution!
   - Consider data science related groups like Advanced Analytics and Data Analysis, Research Methods and Data Science, R-ladies, or Women in Data Science
References:

Jensen, David G. “The Keys to a Powerful LinkedIn Profile.” Science Careers.
https://www.science.org/content/article/keys-powerful-linkedin-profile.

Jensen, David G. “Link up to Jump-Start Your Job Search.” Science Careers.
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