

# Advice for Young Jedi Knights and PhD Students

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## ABSTRACT

This talk will look at the task of pursuing a PhD with both a humorous and a serious eye – while checking Facebook with yet another one. The goal is threefold: to give practical advice, to take a step back and look at the meaning at it all, and to entertain in doing so.

We will give tips on how to choose an advisor and a thesis topic. We will look at different successful approaches to doing research and to publishing. In all of this the “human angle” is not lost and we will analyze common psychological hurdles [6]. The practical advice will be based on a mix of personal experience [16], books on the topic [14, 5, 7] and a multitude of web resources<sup>1</sup>. Zooming out, we will look at whether education can contribute to personal happiness [17, 8, 13], and at financial incentives from the job market [11, 3]. Also “from a distance”, we will look at studies of PhD attrition rates to better understand potential obstacles [15, 2]. Finally, there will be plenty of infotainment including the scientifically proven benefits of chocolate [10], per-occupation divorce rates [12] and the affect of too much time spent on Facebook on your GPA [9]. And, for the case that none of the advice is helpful for you, we will close with productive ways to procrastinate [4, 1].

## Categories and Subject Descriptors

K.3.2 [Computers and Education]: Computers and Information Science Education—*Computer science education*

## Keywords

phd advice, jedi knights, serious, very serious

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.eeb.yale.edu/stearns/advice.htm>,  
<http://www.cs.unc.edu/~azuma/hitch4.html>,  
<http://hypervision2.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/phd-advice-possibly-best-advice-one-can.html>,  
<http://public.randomnotes.org/richard/PhDtalk.html>