

## General information about the concepts

The main aim of these concepts is to provide 3 *different* (and this is important) approaches to the design which can be tested. Do not see these as final concepts for the system we are trying to design, they are simply tools or content, which can be put before prospective users and tested. The design goal is to have a mix of these (a final design approach), and the proportion of each of these concepts are determined by the user testing and the evaluation of user testing. Also on the paper prototypes we implied or visualised some features which could be a representative of each concept, but there wasn't any conscious effort on these as we were not concentrating on features, the concepts and the approach is the most important thing here. Now being at the stage of moulding these together for a more refined design iteration, we identified some underlying structures which drive these (for example the relationship between people, events, and resources, or the fact that in order for people to connect or communicate they need a facilitator which can be an event or a resource etc...).

### Concept 1: **Go Outside!**

*“Building a real life academic relationship by showing you what’s happening.”*

This concept is based on the idea that real world relationships are the driving force behind any sort of digital networking. This concept encourages “getting out” of the system, and gives triggers and pointers on how real life relationships can flourish, and from these real world relationships build a digital network. The main means to do this is with events. This concept helps creating and participating in real world events, and more or less everything is based around these. Network building is based on people being together at events and acknowledging this relationship digitally. Resources and people are concentrated around events, and the system facilitates meetings by constantly offering events to go to, and showing who will be there. The primary persona for this concept is an outgoing fresher who would like to expand his/her network quickly. This concept also tries to acknowledge that most of the information exchange will happen in more intimate “tea room” like situations.

## Concept 2: The Boardgame

*“Guiding you on your academic career by providing you with first steps and connecting you to go beyond that. Showing you how you can help others.”*

This concept is based around the idea of help. It is aimed for a persona who needs help, and needs clear instructions in terms of what the next step is in achieving their goals. The metaphor of a board game implies a clear visual representation of “official” steps required to achieve a goal, and giving contextual information about other people or resources which can aid this process (the unofficial way). The target persona can view similarities with other people and can get relevant information around people, events and resources. A secondary idea behind this concept is the metaphor of “ballroom dancing” where 1 on 1 relationships become important: coaching, pairing people with different levels of expertise within a field can be a way of giving assurances and help for a user. Network building and profiles are based on similarities and helps to surround an individual with other people who are in the same situation.

### Concept 3: The Switchboard

*“Managing and building your network the way you like and making communication more effective.”*

This concept is based on efficiency, time saving and relevance. It is trying to define a system which can be customised and tailored to the exact needs of an individual user. The primary persona of this concept is somebody who is more senior and does not have very much time, thus wants only relevant information, presented in a way which suit his/her needs. The concept can be seen as a “iGoogle” type widget system which has exactly those elements which are relevant to the user with maximum customisability. Network building is more traditional here, and features are geared towards providing and managing resources and outgoing information. The metaphor of traffic sign is prominent here: traffic signs are artefacts which are put out by somebody more senior or experienced to guide others (imagine things which give you instructions where to find particular resources, BEFORE contacting me etc...). The other part of this metaphor is “the spy” who is the primary persona of the board game concept. He is the one who will scan the available traffic signs to get help or guidance. This concept gives tools to realise the relationship between the traffic signs and the spies.