Fiona McNeill

Computer Sciences, Heriot Watt University

What is your research about?

I work in automated data interpretation, developing techniques to allow data from different sources to be mutually comprehensible, even though people use different words, different terminologies and different formats, when creating their data. I particularly look at the application of this in emergency response and crisis management where fast, efficient and reliable data sharing from multiple sources is essential so that responders have the information they need at the time they need it.

What do you think was crucial in making your career successful?

Having a great PhD supervisor who focussed a lot on my career development, introduced me to a lot of interesting people and formed my ideas of how to be an effective researcher was crucial in my career. Furthermore, working on large projects allowed me to collaborate with different people in different laboratories, even though I was always mainly based in Edinburgh. Having a partner who is both willing and able (in terms of flexible working arrangements) to take an equal share of childcare once we had children and to cover for me when I needed to travel for work has been a huge help.

What aspects of your career have you found challenging?

Succeeding in pursuing an academic career and especially making the transition from researcher to lecturer when I was very inflexible geographically (because my partner is based in Edinburgh) was tricky and stressful – but in the end possible because of great support (and luck!) Keeping on top of academic commitments is a struggle for everyone, but especially so when you have to leave early to do the school run and balance the needs of all the family..

Currently

Both children now at Primary School

2016

Moved Institutions and Elected

For a permanent Lecturer appointment and elected to Young Academy of Scotland

2013

Programme Committee

On Programme Committee for major conference

First Grant

First research grant success

2012

2011

Second Child

Birth of second child

2009

Promoted and work Part Time

Promoted to Research Fellow and started working part time

2008

First Child

Birth of first child

2007

PhD and Academic Contract

Graduated with PhD and then first fixed-term academic contract

First Service

To disciplinary community (learned society committee)

2005

2002

Graduated

With first degree

1998