

Dr. Bhavani's Diary (Working from Home during COVID-19) – Part 5

August 28, 2020 – October 9, 2020 (6 weeks)



This is a continuation of Dr. Bhavani's Diary series. Dr. Bhavani's Diary (Working from Home using COVID-19) – Part 1 was published on April 24, 2020 after working from home for six weeks. During the first part it was about getting used to working from home, establishing a routine/schedule, giving a keynote address at CyberW, starting the second half of the Spring semester and more importantly organizing the 2000-person virtual IEEE ICDE 2020 and also the WiDS Dallas Event. In the second part of Dr. Bhavani's diary I discussed my work during the next six weeks (April 24 to June 5) about the keynote talks, starting the YouTube videos and also completing the Spring Semester and starting the Summer Semester. The third segment of Dr. Bhavani's Diary Part 3 discussed mainly the continuation of my work and some details of my summer class and taking care of health. Part 4 discussed about the end of the summer session, start of the Fall classes and some other activities. This is the fifth segment of Dr. Bhavani's Diary (Part 5).

Today is October 9, 2020 and we have been staying home for almost seven months and looks like we will continue to work from home for most of next year. Back in Part 4 I said while we are getting used to working from home, it is also quite frustrating as one day is just like the other. While COVID-19 was not good in August, it has now gotten much worse with no end in sight. We now have over 210,000 deaths in the US and well over 1 million in the world. While I had hope that we will get back to normal by Fall 2021, I am not sure now. Some vaccines have had negative reactions in human trials and we don't know when we will have a viable vaccine. The frustrating part is not everyone is wearing masks and social distancing. Therefore, I was feeling quite hopeless about the situation the last two weeks of September. Then on October 1st 2020 I made a resolution. I have to be positive and so I decided this is the way life is going to be from now on until the end of my life. I have handled major changes in my life – the first 20 yrs. in Sri-Lanka, the next 5 years in UK in an arranged marriage and getting my graduate education and becoming a mother. The next 40 yrs. another major change moving to US, establishing my career, raising our son and becoming a grandmother. So now another major change in 2020 living in the COVID Era possibly for the next 20 years. That is, COVID living is normal now. We can give up or look at the bright side of life and I have chosen the latter. So, I have been quite happy in October accepting reality.

So, what is the bright side of COVID. First, there is no stress driving and rushing here and there traveling dragging my luggage and spending money on clothes and cosmetics. And it is great that I don't have to wear any nail polish any more and use makeup not more than 1 or 2 days a week. Having worn nail polish for 30 years 24x7 and even worse using the dangerous nail polish remover, my nails have become hard and brittle. So now I am trying to make them healthy again. After using almost daily makeup since 1972 January, who knows with all that lead in the makeup not using it now might save me from getting cancer. And I have so much time now that I can spend on learning new technologies

Work is continuing to go well and I am very pleased so far with the new course I am teaching on Big Data Security and Privacy. IEEE Computer Society did a feature article on me in September. I was also recognized as one of 12 women in technology over two centuries (which also includes Countess Ada Lovelace and Adm Grace Hopper). I continue to give webinars, podcasts and keynote addresses. I have a very busy schedule with keynote addresses coming up between October – December. Our department also did a press release on the keynote addresses I have given – over 170 to date and by end of this year will be over 180. Here are some press releases on the IEEE featured article, the recognition (one of 12 women in technology), a podcast on STEM that was published on September 4, 2020 and the article on keynote addresses.

Women in STEM with Dr. Bhavani Thuraisingham

IEEE Computer Society, September 2020

<https://www.computer.org/publications/tech-news/events/women-in-stem-bhavani-thuraisingham>

Women in STEM: Discussion with Dr. Bhavani Thuraisingham

Spotify/Apple Podcast on STEM Time (with Navya and Aishwarya) August 5, 2020; published on September 4, 2020

<https://anchor.fm/navya-ramakrishnan/episodes/Women-in-STEM--Discussion-with-Dr--Bhavani-Thuraisingham-ej40m3>

Also, on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xyJ7D17ILw>

Role and Impact of Women in Technology

<https://blog.wilsoncgrp.com/role-and-impact-of-women-in-technology/>

Thuraisingham gives six keynote addresses within six months while working from home during COVID-19

<https://cs.utdallas.edu/thuraisingham-gives-6-keynote-and-featured-addresses-within-6-months-while-working-from-home-during-covid-19/>

For more of my video talks, please view my YouTube channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdkdO2DUNqpgGLmeJjiXujA?>

I am doing better with working out and heating more healthy food. I am still not satisfied but better than the first six months staying home. I have also got into a regular study routine (like I did in May 2020) and on the whole quite pleased with the progress. My husband and I still drive on Saturday afternoons and take walks. Saturday afternoon is also my social media time – I use it around once a week. Also, we do at least twice a week facetime with our son and his family.

Hope that we are all safe and well and will post Dr. Bhavani's Diary Part 6 on November 29, 2020 and Part 7 on January 1, 2021. After that I will post every 3 months (instead of 6 weeks since we are going to be home much longer than I thought we would be back on March 13, 2020) and so the posts will be on April 1, July 1 and October 1 of 2021. Let's continue to hope we get some encouraging news about the pandemic/vaccines soon. Remember, we must never give up regardless of what happens in the future.