

naturejobs

**THE CAREERS
MAGAZINE FOR
SCIENTISTS**

Music emanated from the aircraft carrier, as thousands waited in line, eager to get on deck. Already the party was in full swing. But this wasn't a political gathering or a military celebration. This was a gala for the Biotechnology Industry Organization, part of the group's annual international conference. Held in mid-June, the gathering took place on the *USS Midway*, a retired aircraft carrier that has been converted into a museum and is docked near downtown San Diego. After a day of sessions, thousands of people from biotech workers and venture capitalists to technology-transfer officers and journalists gathered on a warm, breezy California evening to indulge in free food, drink and entertainment.

Conferences serve many purposes — to vet ideas among peers, to seek new collaborators and employers, to learn and, yes, to socialize. Indeed, sometimes the networking and the socializing are quite intertwined. Attendees listened to the two live bands, ate Asian-inspired cuisine and took free rides on the flight simulators. Fireworks from across the marina lit up the night sky. I marvelled at the large Polynesian statues on deck, apparently hoisted up by cargo lift. Clearly the meeting was about displaying and attracting money and investment, not just discussing science.

Naturejobs has made its own slightly less lavish foray into the conference business. Last year we held our inaugural Source Event, a careers forum to advise young scientists on the paths to industry, academia and non-traditional careers. We are building on that success with a larger conference on 26 September in London. Already we have reached half our capacity, with more than 400 registrants. Anyone interested in joining us can get the benefit of some of our panelists' expertise online right now through our Source Event Nature Network group at <http://network.nature.com/group/thesourceevent>. Both online and in person, we can promise sage careers advice, from public- and private-sector researchers, that's tailored to your interests and curiosities. But we can't promise flight-simulator rides — at least not this year.

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