

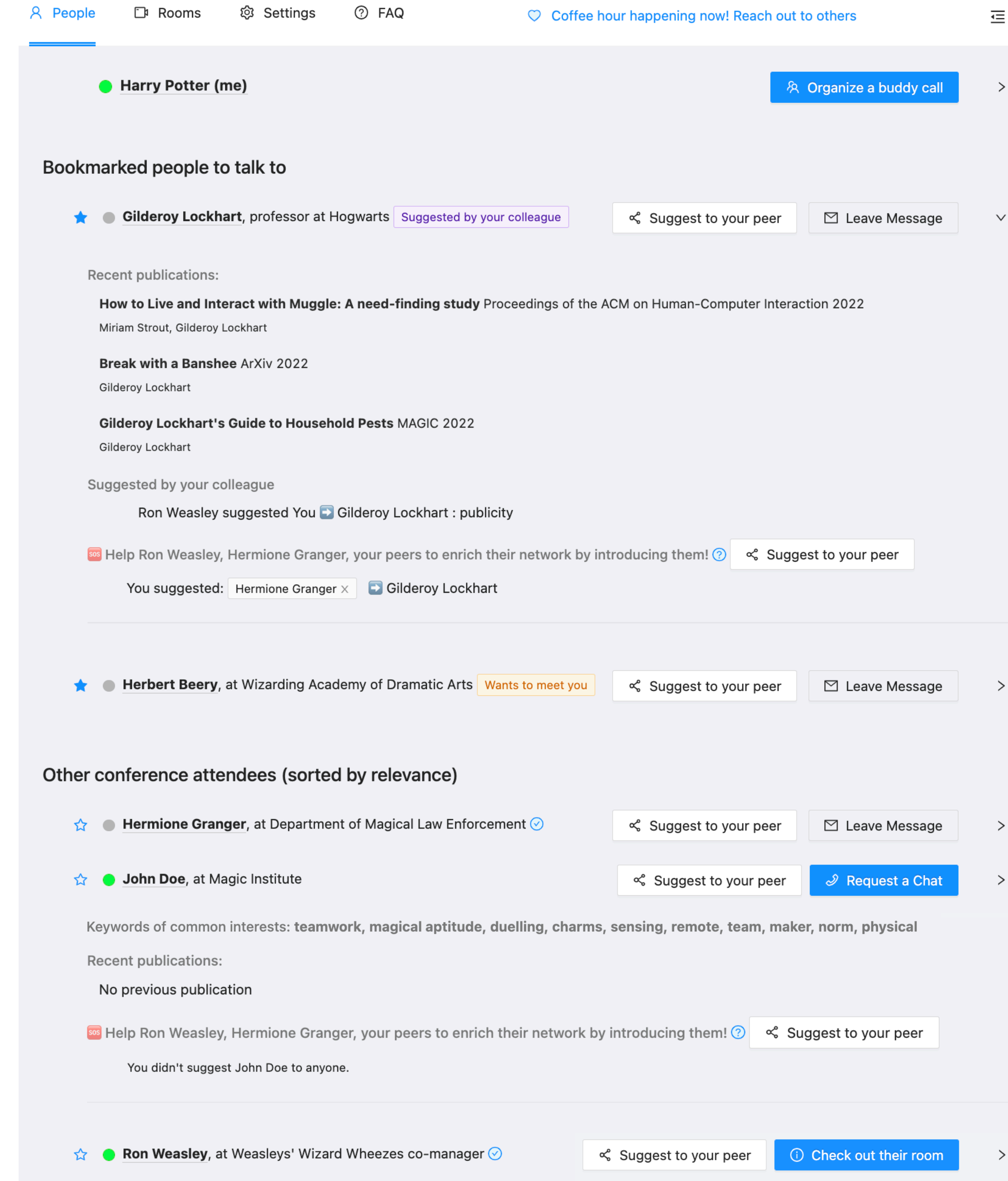
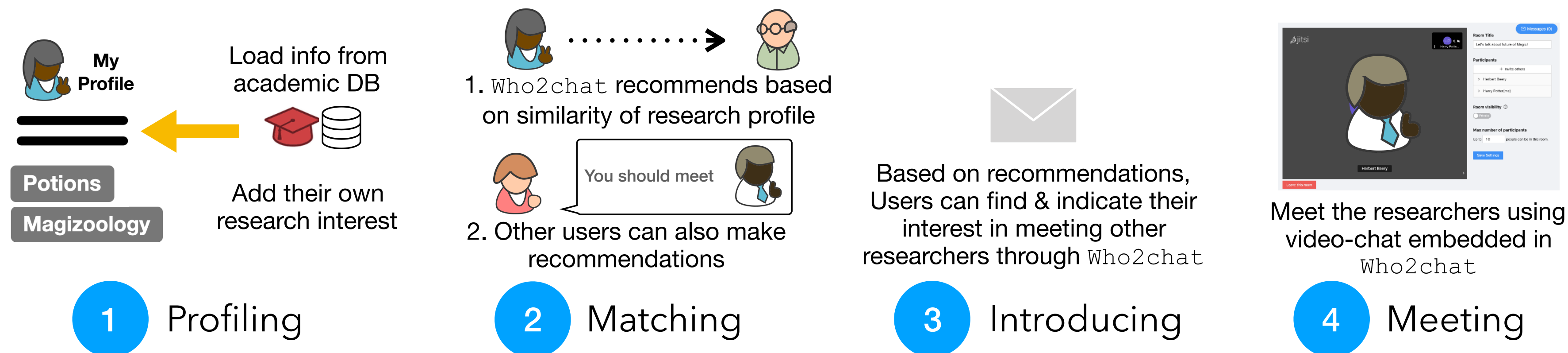
# Who2chat: A System for Academic Networking in Virtual Social Hours Enabling Coordinating, Sensemaking and Social Signaling

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Everyone knows networking is helpful for enriching their career, but not everyone knows how to actually do it. Especially for younger researchers, who can critically benefit from networking, it is exacerbated due to a lack of experience or knowledge of social norms. We sought to enlighten the community by gathering insights and experiences from the community.

We conducted a series of deployment studies to support researchers in making connections with other relevant researchers. Through our iterative design and deployment, we were able to capture researchers' strategies for navigating the social scene and employ that to improve Who2chat. Who2chat touched upon various stages in social matching for researchers; profiling and collecting useful information from researchers for matching, making recommendations, and connecting with relevant researchers. We further conducted a case study on two academic conferences. We found that with Who2chat, even shy users were able to meet new people otherwise they would have, found relevant researchers to meet. The needs and interface design discovered in our study will guide future researchers to organize networking sessions that are inclusive to junior researchers.



Users can buddy up with their colleagues to reach out to other researchers of interest

Suggested by your colleague  
Users can send and receive social recommendations

For each researcher, the interface lists their recent publications and social recommendations

Wants to meet you  
Users can indicate their interest in meeting each other by leaving messages

When online, users can initiate a video chat  
For researchers who do not have publications, the system generates a list of keywords representing their interests.

When in conversation, other users can request to join