

Collaboration and Dissemination— The Cornerstones of Advancement

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As quoted by Sir Isaac Newton in a letter to Robert Hooke, “If I have seen further than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” This has been claimed to be either a reference to the many scientists whose work Newton built upon or a sarcastic poke at Hooke’s shorter stature. I hope it was the former. To advance research at the pace needed by society and our more immediate communities, we need to work together. Collaboration is the cornerstone of scientific advancement. This is both in the need to bring different disciplines, technologies and solutions to a problem but also to hear the most diverse voices pose their challenging questions for research. At Nottingham Trent University UK, like our international partner universities, we are anchored in our communities and region and pride ourselves on the inclusive engagement with diverse voices of our community to ask the research questions which are important and will make an impact on those seeking the answers. This approach to “hyper-local” research is exemplified by our PhD programme [Co\(I\)laboratory](https://ufncollaboratory.ac.uk/) (https://ufncollaboratory.ac.uk/). Now in its second cohort, Co(I)laboratory is bringing together university researchers with community organisations and citizens of our region to deliver insight and change. This eight-year project is funded by the Research England

Development (RED) Fund and will train 50 PhD students and many citizen scientists through paid internships including local government staff, community leaders and health and medical practitioners.

Whilst asking the right questions is important, dissemination of the findings is essential for the reproducibility and integrity of research. Research observations—whether the scale of the study is big or small, or the findings support or challenge current dogma—need to be published and found by others. In my discipline of computational biology, data is only considered of true value when it is “FAIR” data. That is when it is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. This mantra is equally relevant in all research areas and all of our practices.

As the first quote notes, collaborators standing on the shoulders of your observations and data is what moves a research discipline forward. Research articles like those published here may be the first point in that movement to change our collective understanding, and they are essential to be read and shared.

Author Note

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