



## Editorial: Role of Global Networking in Research Collaboration

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## Editorial: Role of Global Networking in Research Collaboration

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Globalization is the mantra of practically all aspects of the modern world. This is true of business, industry, and higher education, which are directly linked to science and technology. A quick scan through the authorship of articles we publish in this journal as well as other journals shows the extent of **international collaboration** empowered by the Internet. Networking with a researcher half way around the globe is no more difficult than collaborating with a colleague in an adjoining laboratory.

**Global-scale networking offers numerous advantages in R&D**, which did not exist just a couple of decades ago. It provides access to talent and financial resources, which may not be available locally to one or both parties. There is obvious synergy in working jointly with like-minded researchers. It is conducive to **innovation** as well, **since researchers in different cultures think differently and hence are likely to arrive at innovative ideas and solutions**. **Collaborating with researchers from other fields has also become more common**. Today it is not unusual to see collaborative works authored by mechanical engineers and medical doctors located in different parts of the world in the field of biomedical engineering research. **Collaboration between food engineers and molecular biologists on process-stimulated genes responsible for increased production of bioactive compounds in processing foods may also become routine in the near future**. **Multi- and interdisciplinary research is facilitated by networking**.

I have had the privilege of working with international partners in several countries, e.g., Japan, Finland, Hungary, Poland, China, Brazil, Germany, etc., even before the Internet era. This was accomplished by personal visits, meetings at IDS symposia, and the use of snail mail. Yet, as the parties involved were keen to proactively collaborate, we always arrived at our goals. In some cases, **this collaboration led to student exchanges**.

The process of collaboration intensified with the arrival of the Internet. I now have ongoing collaboration with half a dozen institutions in different parts of the world. It is now possible for me to mentor researchers and junior academics even when they are on a different continent. I am able to co-advise doctoral research students in different universities. **It is a great pleasure to be helpful and to be able to widely share my knowledge**. In a **knowledge-based economy**,

**sharing one's expertise and experience pro bono is a deeply satisfying experience to me**.

My research cooperation with several universities in China began in 1984 and continues unabated even today. A very large number of theses, publications, and even industry-relevant outcomes have resulted from this networking. Several companies in China and a major multinational company provided tangible support at Jiangnan University, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China. **This industry-academia interaction has indeed been a highlight of the collaboration**.

**The outcome of my long-term cooperation resulted in recognition** of the highest level in China. In addition to two highest level awards conferred by the Province of Jiangsu and the City of Tianjin, I had the district honor of being awarded the National Award for International Cooperation in Science and Technology in January 2014 and the esteemed Friendship Award in September 2014.

While my cooperative effort continued for over three decades, clearly there was no expectation of such a highest-level recognition. The effort would have continued regardless of such awards. On the other hand, perhaps, **such recognition can have a positive impact on encouraging such a joint effort**. The rapid development of science and technology has in significant measure been supported by international cooperation. The Government of China effectively recognizes the importance of the effort. Unfortunately, most other countries that can and do benefit from global networking do not have any formal way of recognizing the contributions made by nationals of other countries. Perhaps they should take a cue from China's longstanding initiative.

In view of the ease with which we can communicate regardless of our global position, I hope that the process of networking will accelerate in coming years. **Senior researchers will provide valuable mentorship and share their expertise as a professional service**. Although the impact of such effort is immeasurable, it is valuable and indeed priceless.

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