

# Collaboration Picnic: Developing and Maintaining a Growing Network of Research Partners Across the United States for Successful Research Production



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## Benefits of Collaboration

- If new to librarianship and publishing, great way to learn
- If a solo librarian or work with a small staff, opportunity to engage in larger projects
- If doing human subject research, working with other institutes gives a larger participant pool, better data, reduces risk of bias, and leads to better research
- Allows individuals to build a working network of peers that can be utilized beyond conducting research
- Helps you avoid getting scooped, as the more people working on your topic WITH you, the less people working on it WITHOUT you
- More collaborators lets you work faster and publish sooner
- The parts of research that you don't like might be someone else's favorite part
- Participation in a wider geographic range of events, such as regional association conferences

## Finding Collaborators

Finding the right collaborators can be difficult, particularly if you work solely. While exploring team dynamics is an essential part of a successful collaboration, sometimes just finding collaborators can be a challenge. Some tips for finding potential research partners include:

- Leverage the connections you have. Do you know anyone who knows people?
- Go to meetings on the regional, local, and national level.
- Have an idea about what you want to research and be open with the people you meet about your ambitions
- Be approachable and show your excitement about your idea and potentially working with someone

## Maintaining Connections

Once you've found one or more research partners, maintaining collaborative relationships across distances needs attention and work.

For a successful collaboration:

- Be generous with calendar invitations. Include future meetings as well as reminders of tasks, to keep the project on the group's radar
- Connect in real life at conferences and events whenever possible, and do something to encourage group identity. We like to put stickers on our name badges, but the sky is the limit.
- During your team meetings, devote at least 10 minutes in every meeting to get to know each other and reinforce personal bonds.

## Potential Outcomes

While there's undoubtedly a benefit in aiming to publish original research in a top-tier peer reviewed journal, the initial goal of your research partnership can be much more broad. Before committing to a large research project together, test out your team with a smaller venture and then evaluate your next steps.

Consider:

- Literature search or opinion article
- Poster session
- Lightning Talk
- Blog Post
- Panel Discussion
- Roundtable Moderation
- Volunteer on committees together
- Attend conference sessions as a group

## Challenges

With great opportunity for collaboration comes great challenges, particularly if your research partners span the country or world. Keep these tips in mind as you start a project, and prepare for the inevitable roadblocks as they come:

- Time zones can and will mess up meeting times
- As projects can take years, you can be locked in to working with someone who doesn't mesh with the group
- Clashing personalities and bad days will happen
- You may lose a team member mid-project, which can be good or bad
- Differing communication styles and technological proficiencies can cause tension
- Institutional resistance can make long distance collaboration difficult

## Contact Information

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