From the idea to the successful study: How do I build an experimental project?

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Sponsoring a Successful Project

by Juan Carlos Soto
Director, Advanced Development, SW-CTO,
(and former jxta.org community manager), Sun Microsystems.

A "successful" project in the world of java.net means a vibrant, active virtual meeting place where productive conversations and/or development efforts take place. In short, a successful project engages interested, active people committed to the project's goals and who continually find benefit from being a member. With the help of leads from other community projects, we have created the following "Hints" that outline some common variables seen in other successful efforts:

1. Be clear of the project's goals.

Put them prominently on the project's main page. This will help people understand if the project matches their interests, and can offset a duplicate project being created.

2. Don't be shy about asking for help

As the project lead, be specific about what you need from others, in the form of a "wish list", or as part of a weblog, or as a monthly mailing-list update and posting. Contributors may have limited time and benefit from knowing how to make quick, specific contributions.

3. Make it easy to navigate to the most important resources

This may sound obvious, but it is easy to overlook. Regularly ask yourself what would a new member need and how could they find it quickly.

4. Give credit where credit is due / share the load

Be quick to recognize important contributions by members. This serves to encourage others to participate and sometimes recognition is the main thing OS developers desire.

5. Encourage other members of the project to help run it. Delegate!

6. Respond to requests in a "timely" manner

Generally make sure requests get answered quickly. However, sometimes you may want to give other project members a chance to respond to inquiries. Sometimes the "24-hour" rule works well -- that is, if you are a project owner, wait 24 to 48 hours before responding to questions to encourage members to support each other.

7. Be open and transparent

Manage the project in public using the mailing lists. Avoid private mailing lists and back-channel discussions of topics that affect other members.

8. Have an inclusionary bias, but maintain standards

When in doubt, approve the new member, contribution, or sub project. However, it is OK to say, "thanks, but no thanks" when the contribution(s) are contrary to the project goals. Keep in mind that important project contributions often don't involve any code.

9. Do great things and spread the word

Open Source communities are a remarkable resource. They bring together bright minds that can do great things when organized toward a common vision. Readily publicize project accomplishments and victories to reinforce the momentum you're working so hard to establish.

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- Get lab data, evaluate data, draw conclusions
- Write your paper, publish your data

Define the aim(s) of your project

Define

7 Habits Of

Highly Unsuccessful Project Managers

1. Make Assumptions For Stakeholders
2. Don't Press For Buy In To A Statement Of Tangible Project Outcomes
3. Leave The Project Scope 'Flexible'.
4. Base The Project Plan On Activities.
5. Start w/o A Plan-based, Stakeholder-approved ROI Estimate
6. Monitor Reactively Or Periodically
7. End The Project With A Sigh Of Relief

roject

Define the aim(s) of your project

1. Is it new?
2. Is it important?
3. Are you the first?

Acquire background knowledge

- Make a PubMed search
- Ask your colleagues
- Ask the staff of your experimental surgery lab!

Seek collaborations!

- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Avoid the 'learning curve', get help where needed
- Profit from available lab experience and tests
- Talk with your statistician!

Ask for critical internal review

- Standard procedure in industry
- Don't be afraid to talk about projects!
- Modify your project if necessary
- Try to find synergies on a local level

Get the necessary permissions

and don't forget the 3R..

Build your team, divide tasks

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Make pilot experiments

- Try to prove the feasibility
- Produce preliminary data, you need them for funding agencies!

Get funding

- University, Hospital
- SNF, EU, NIH
- Heart-, lung-, kidney-, etc. foundations
- Private Foundations

Plan the 'real' experiments

- Time planning: OR availability, animals, machines
- Availability of staff, team members
- Retrieval of samples: blood, tissue, etc.
- Protocols and decision schemes

Do the experiments

Do the experiments

Do the experiments!

Get lab data, draw conclusions

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Get lab data, draw conclusions

Write your paper,
publish your data

Write your paper,
publish your data

...and pay for being allowed to read them.

Be honest!

Editorial

Stop misbehaving!

Scientists are usually thought to be beyond reproach, but with the recent spate of high-profile ethical transgressions by scientists, the public's trust in science and scientists is deteriorating. The numerous cases of scientific misconduct that have crossed my desk in the last year leave me disenchanted, disappointed, and disillusioned.

When I last commented on scientific naughtiness (1), I closed the editorial with a note that by and large, our authors are an honest bunch. While this is still true, a few rotten eggs are spoiling things for the rest of you. I am continually aghast at the

lished, but now rotated and/or cropped, images (Figure 1).

A recommendation: take high-resolution pictures from the start, label them clearly, and keep the files well organized. Several authors have claimed, when faced with an

recently had a reader contact us indicating that he was aware of a published author's undeclared (and substantial) conflict. We contacted the authors and issued a correction, but why wasn't the conflict declared initially? If you have an affiliation or agreement or deal, financial or otherwise, that could potentially be construed as a conflict, then declare it. Better to be transparent than to erode your colleagues' trust in your motivations.

I encourage you to openly discuss the

The Journal of Clinical Investigation http://www.jci.org Volume 116 Number 7 July 2006

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When I last commented on scientific naughtiness (1), I closed the editorial with a note that by and large, our authors are an honest bunch. While this is still true, a few rotten eggs are spoiling things for the rest of you. I am continually aghast at the amount of time I spend policing misconduct and at the different ways some authors have found to manipulate data, undermine colleagues, and push the limits of respectability. I'm writing this sequel to the earlier editorial to reinforce our rules and to underscore that we're still watching.

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- Usually professional OR-staff and setting
- Results easy to translate into clinics: bench-to-bedside

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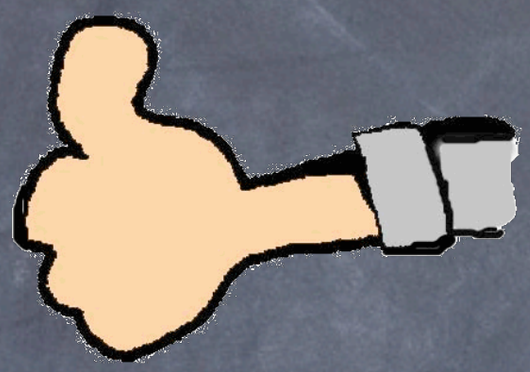

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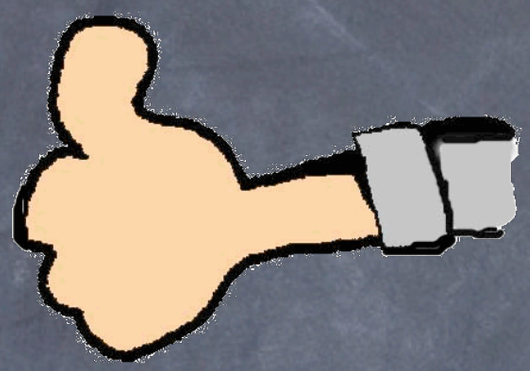

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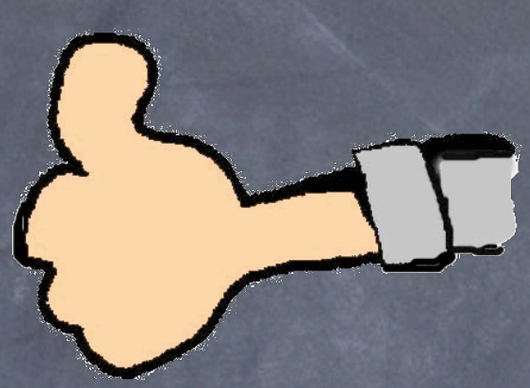

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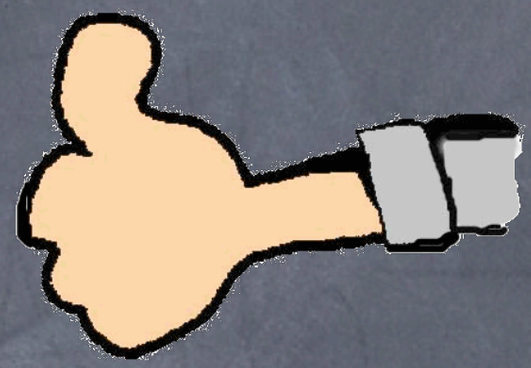

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