

Facilitating Better-than-Random Researcher 'Speed Date' Interactions at a Global Cancer Conference

Jeff Horon – Science of Team Science Conference 2013



Research Networking Landscape

Strategies for 'Interventional' Networking

Case Study: Global Cancer Conference

Research Networking Landscape

Research networking tool adoption increasing

Effort is largely in passive research networking tools

Passive = Researcher must take an action, e.g. visit a website

Active = Imperative; Event-driven

Interventional = Automatic; Prescriptive

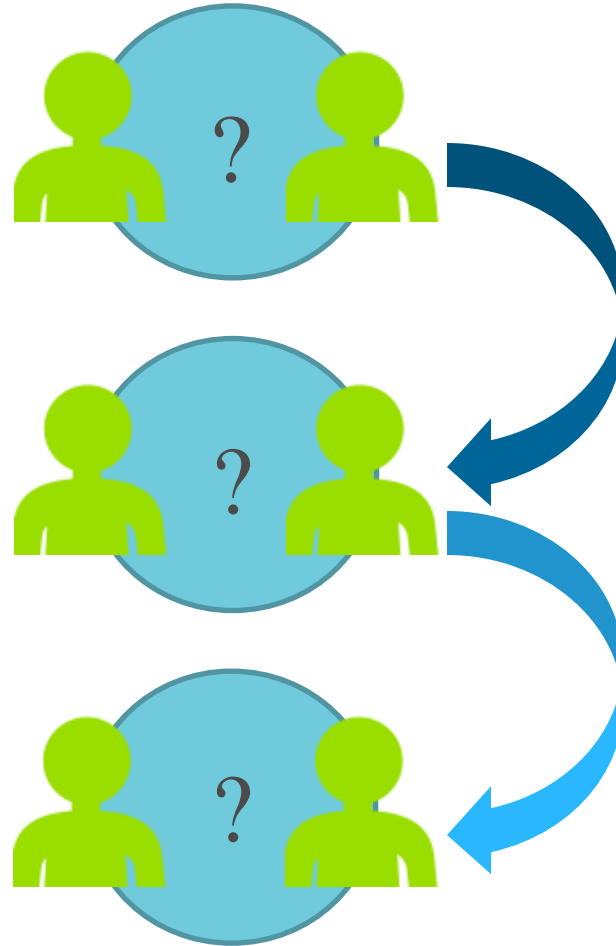
Strong interest in analytics and ROI among research administration

Researcher objections like “I already know everyone working in my field” are pervasive and undermine use of research networking tools

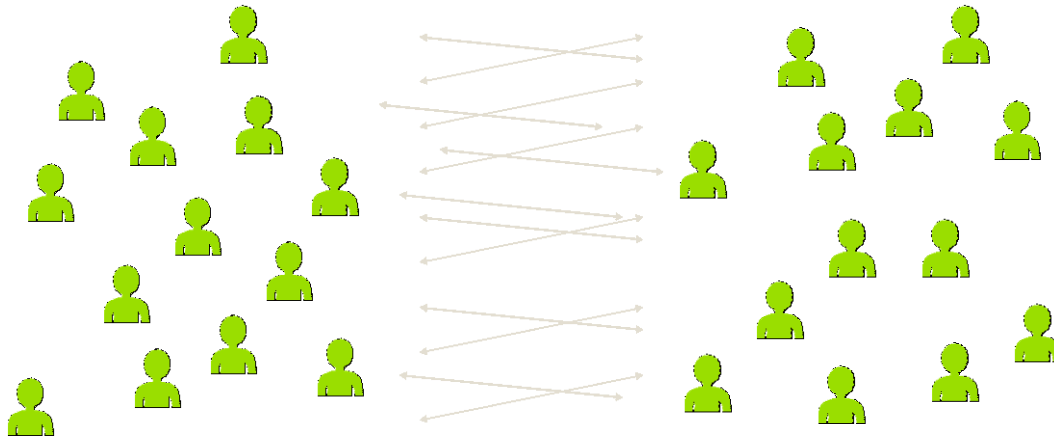
For more about how to escape defective networking strategies:

<http://jeffhoron.com/interventional-researcher-networking-vivo-conference-2011/>

Traditional Researcher 'Speed Dating' Events



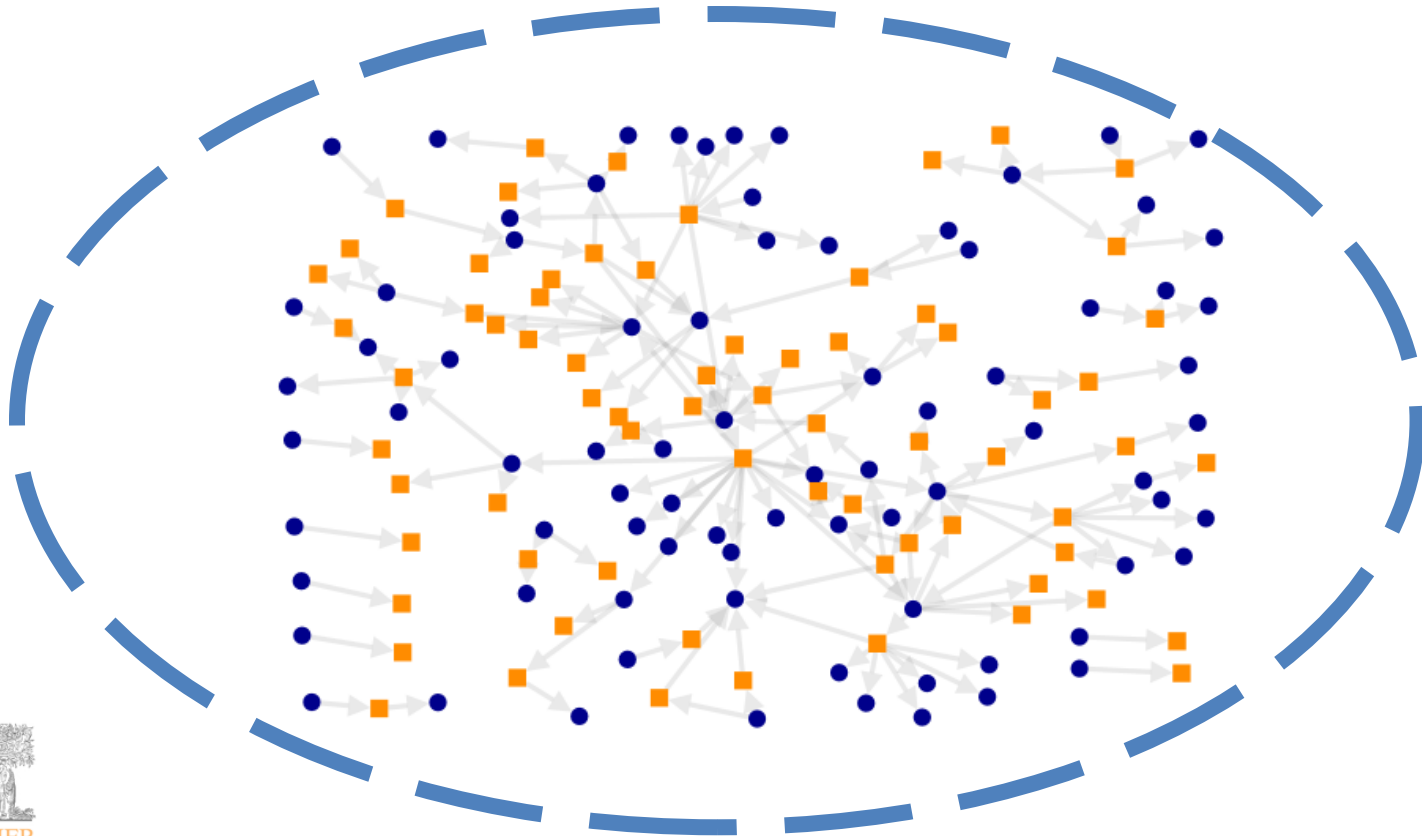
Interventional Networking



Who should meet who and why?

Objective detection

Try to capture all relevant researchers,
based upon sponsored project,
publication, or other data



Drive better-than-chance interactions

What will create better-than-chance interactions is situation specific, but reasonable expectations are that they will occur when researchers:

- don't know each other well
- have some common interest(s)
- stand to mutually benefit

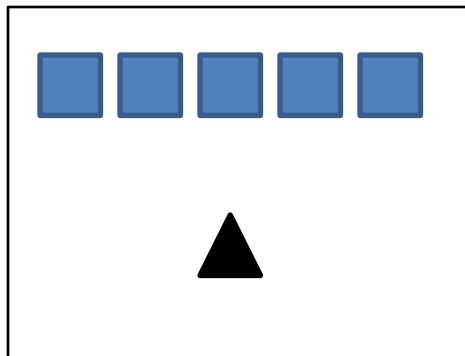
Supporting an Institute Launch Event

- Match** research interests, project needs, opinions
- Shuffle** existing working relationships, rank, etc.

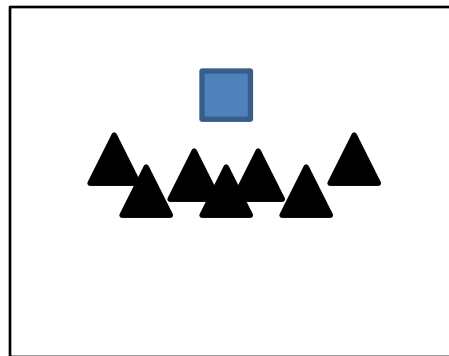
Social interaction models using a combination attendee survey data, SciVal Experts data, and project participation data

 Senior Faculty  Junior Faculty

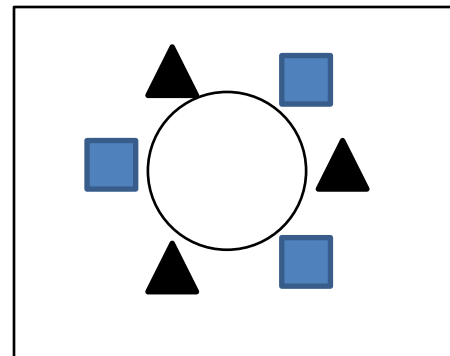
'Pitch'



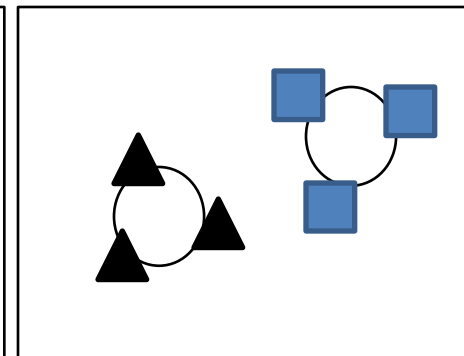
Group Mentoring



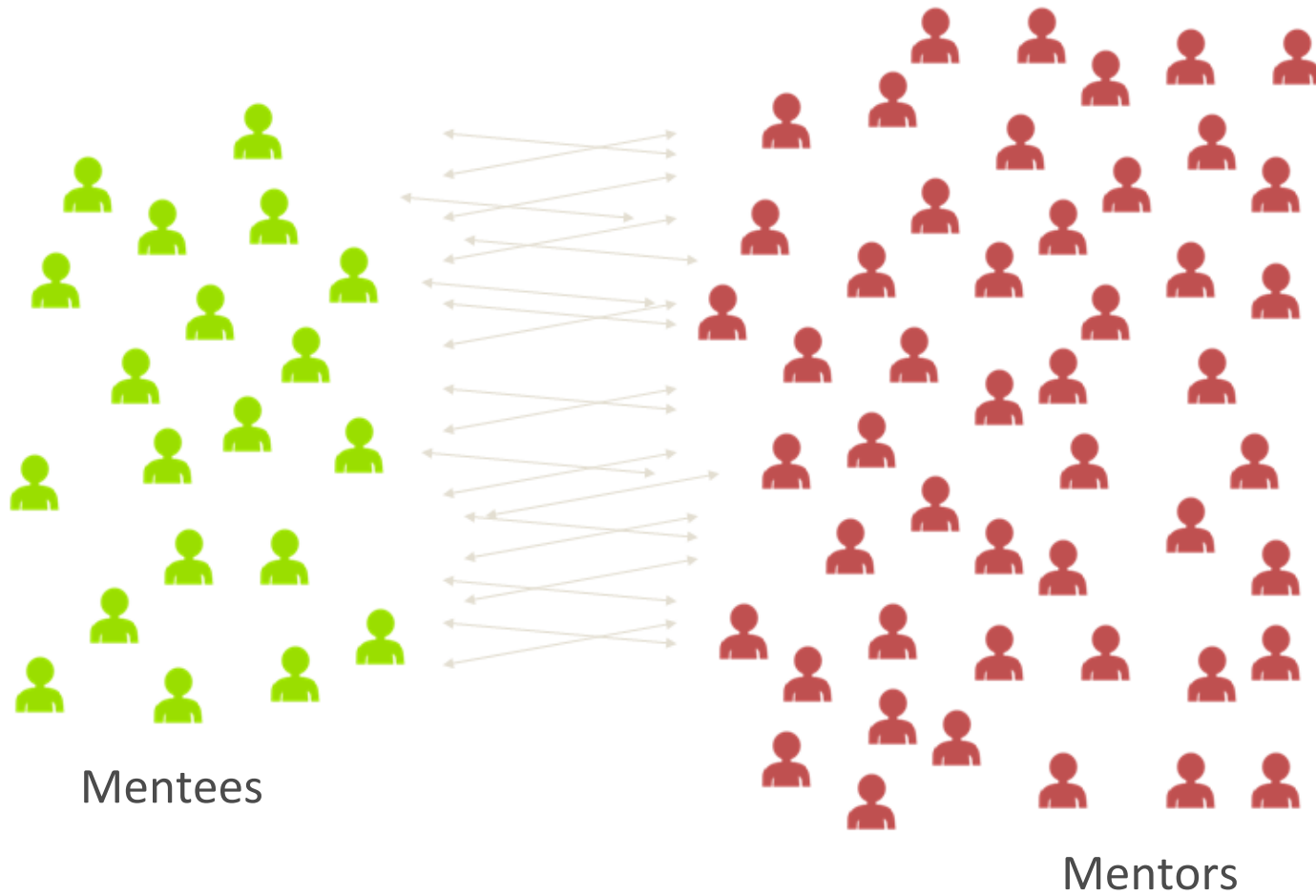
Mixed



Equals



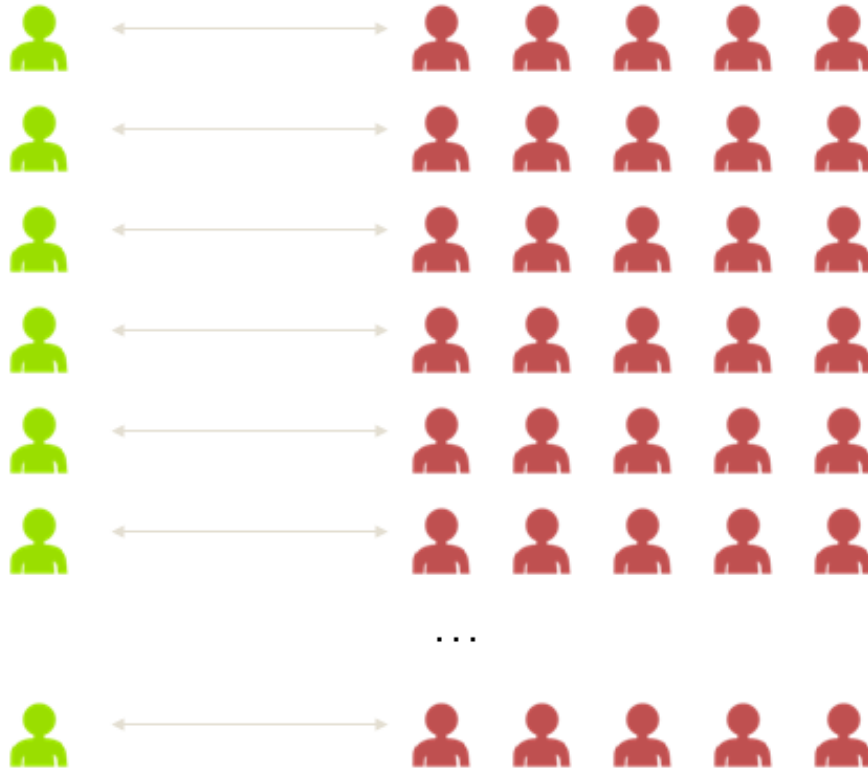
Mentor Matching



Mentor Matching

Mentees

Suggested Mentors



Researcher 'Speed Dating' – Data Collection

Indicate interests

- A
- B
- C

Indicate methodological expertise/needs

Method	Can Provide	Need	Not Interested
D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Example Match



Indicate interests

[] A

[] B

[] C

Indicate methodological expertise/needs

Method	Can Provide	Need	Not Interested
D	[]	[]	[]
E	[]	[]	[]
F	[]	[]	[]

Example Match





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[ ] B

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Example Match





Indicate interests

[] A

[ ] **B** ←

[] C

Indicate methodological expertise/needs

Method	Can Provide	Need	Not Interested
D	[] →	[]	[]
E	[] ←	[]	[]
F	[]	[]	[]

Researcher 'Speed Dating' – Targeted Recommendations

Hello  _____,

... based upon survey responses, we would like to suggest that you meet:

Name:  _____

Institution: _____

Can provide expertise in: **E**

Seeks an expert in: **D**

Shares a common interest in: **B**

Researcher 'Speed Dating' – Targeted Recommendations

Hello  _____,

... based upon survey responses, we would like to suggest that you meet:

Name:  _____

Institution: _____

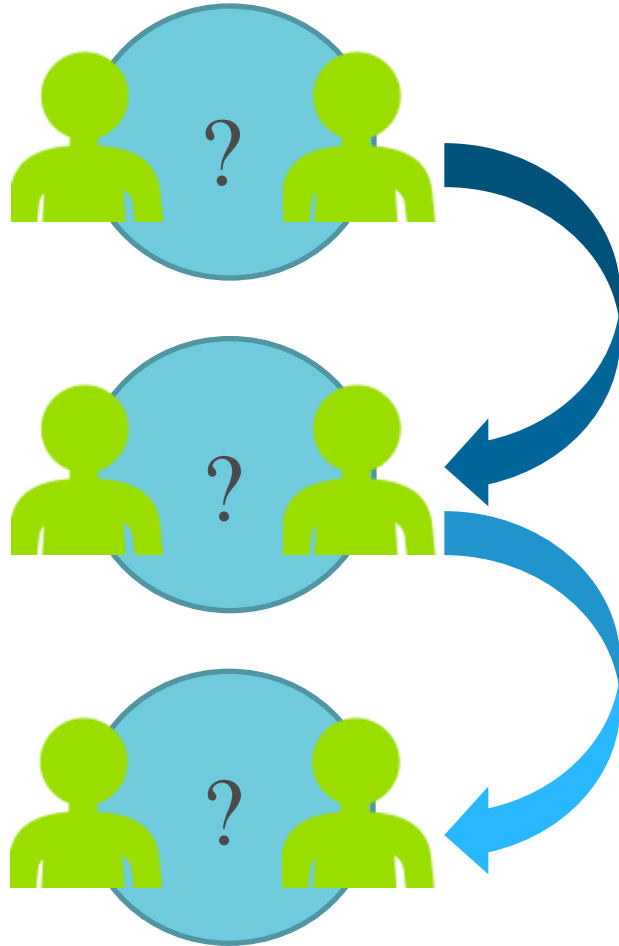
Can provide expertise in: **Cancer Survivorship**

Seeks an expert in: **Global Clinical Trials Research, Personalized Medicine**

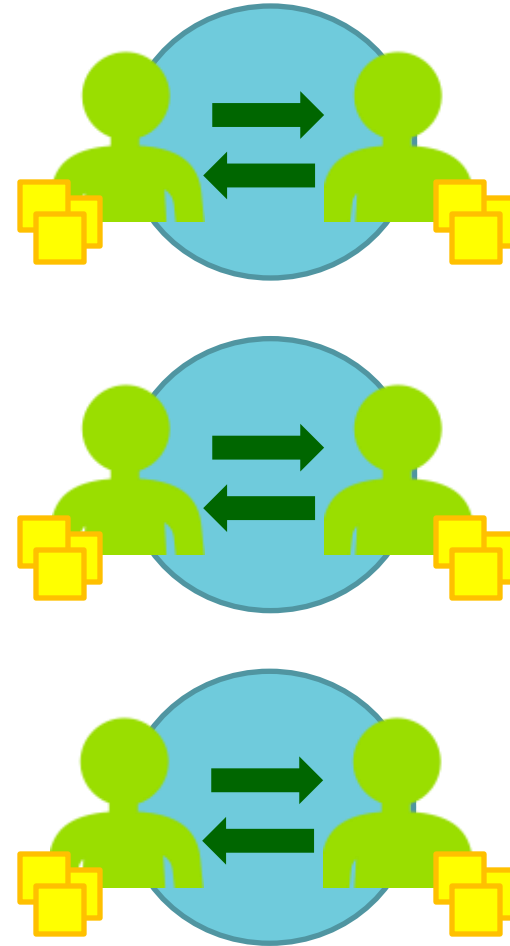
Shares a common interest in: **Lymphoma**

Researcher 'Speed Dating' Events

Traditional



Interventional



Researcher 'Speed Dating' Event Participation

100% of conference attendees



~50% expressed willingness to participate



Each received 3 – 5 targeted recommendations



~33% of willing participants utilized opt-in 'speed date' booking system



Unknown number of participants arranged other meetings; observation suggests at least as many as booked via system

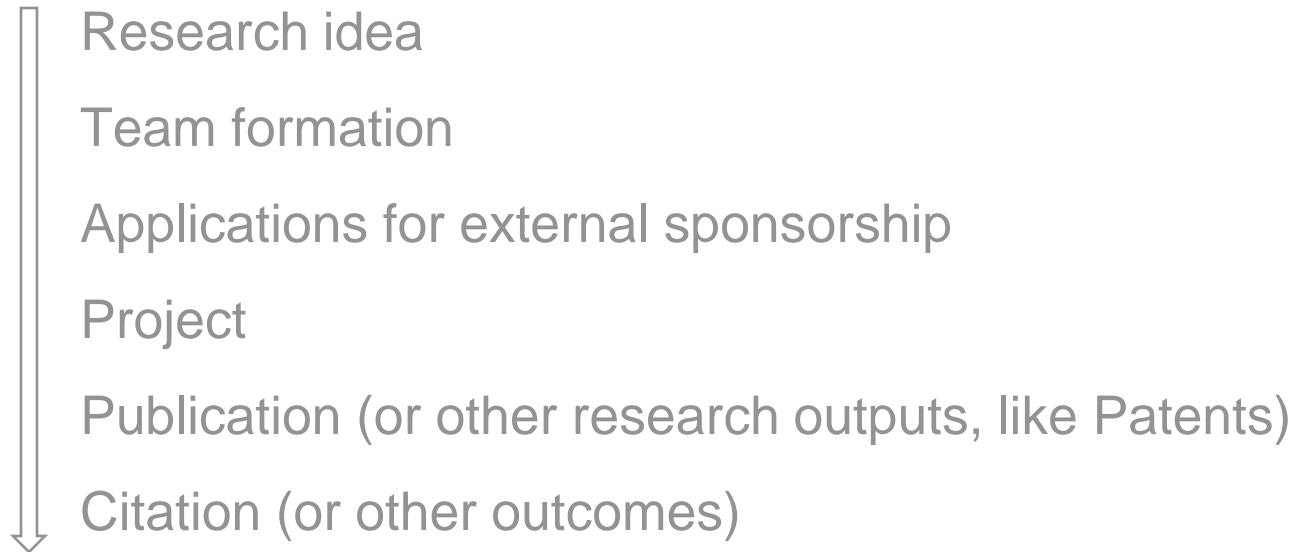
Challenges

Increased attention to Return on Investment (ROI), which in this context:

Is often misunderstood

Can be difficult to measure

Has a long time horizon



So, why engage in research networking?

Even though ROI is difficult to quantify, **we know that there are returns that accrue from collaborations:**

Researchers who are aware of each other might collaborate

Researchers who are not aware of each other will not collaborate

.... and the effects don't include just the participants in networking activities (network reach, brokers)

Secondarily, **peer institutions are engaged in research networking;** as a result they may be:

More interconnected

More readily able to demonstrate collaboration (e.g. in applications for external sponsorship)

Strategies for Research Networking

Above all, intervene

Take the initiative because researchers have objections (often false, but pervasive) and more interconnected networks are better for everyone

Research Development Professionals have more compatible goals (mandates to connect people / seek increased collaboration, keeping award dollars on campus, etc.)

Make it *look easy* (like added value not added work)

Focus on high-yield data collection, e.g. a few 'baked in' questions in an event registration form

Consider opt-in

Create data-driven, better-than-chance interactions

Strategies for Research Networking

Measure Outcomes

First impressions

Applications for seed funding / pilot projects

Applications for external sponsorship

Coauthorship and other research outputs

Influence (citations and other outcomes)

<http://jeffhoron.com>