

# THE MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH SYSTEMS

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**Canadian Science Policy Conference / Conference sur les Politiques Scientifiques  
Canadiennes**

**28 – 30 Oct 2009**

**SFU**

**CPROST // SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
Centre for Policy Research on Science and Technology

# A Canadian Invention: Research Networks

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- **A few examples**
  - **Networks of Centres of Excellence (1989);**
  - **Major Collaborative Research Initiative (SSHRC 1993)**
  - **Team grants in CIHR**
  - **Genome Canada ...**
- **Experiments continue**
  - **Health of population networks in BC**
  - **FRSQ networks (Quebec)**

# OECD wide

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- **Australia -**
  - **Cooperative Research Centres; and**
  - **Research Networks**
- **UK**
- **Nordics**
- **EU Framework Programme networks**
- ***Surprisingly not the USA***

# But do they work?

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- **Australian science & innovation policy reviews**
- **(...2008)**
  - **Recommendations 7.4, 7.6 and 8.2 all address evaluation**
  - ***A common core of evaluation measures be adopted ... especially for programs involving collaborations ...***

# What to measure

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- **How do we evaluate networks against the core criteria that they network researchers with other stakeholders?**
  - Review of *Austrian* networks relied heavily on bibliometrics.
  - NCE evaluations in 2007 case studies and interviews
- **But does this allow us to distinguish between networks or any other funding model.**

# Time for a new innovation

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- Evaluation is often couched in terms of ‘returns on investment’, ‘pay back’ etc
- But with collaborative research the point is to create complexity and instability (bringing researchers, community and commerce together)
- There is clearly a need for evaluation frameworks for networks that go beyond bibliometrics, researcher collaborations and the structure of the networks.
- Evaluation frameworks need to address the initial starting conditions of networks and not preference those areas where collaboration pre-exists

# Conclusions

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- **This is a story of Canada initiating the best practices**
  - **In countries with large geographies and often nascent science fields networks make sense.**
- **But we should listen to the voices that we don't know yet know have the measures of success for collaboration.**
- **I would agree, but we do have some suggestions ....**
  - ***And that work is a joint effort of a team, including Adam Holbrook, Brian Lewis, Darryl Cressman and Sukhy Sidhu ... so far....***