

naturejobs

**JOBS OF
THE WEEK**

It was only a matter of time before scientists began to use the new 'friend finding' websites such as Friendster and MySpace as a way to establish collaborations. Such networking tools have the potential to change the way science is done: rather than swapping photos and music tips, researchers can discuss protocols and exchange assays. But there is a potential pitfall: the avid networker could end up with too many connections. Fewer good connections may be preferable to many mediocre ones.

The much heralded age of Web 2.0, with its avatars, virtual worlds and 'second lives', has made connecting with others across the globe easier than ever before. A researcher's links among potential colleagues and collaborators can proliferate as much as he or she likes. But time is precious, and making sure those connections contribute to a productive lab or field project might become an issue. Every technology has a downside. Quality, especially in the world of collaborative science, must trump quantity.

But the benefits are clearly outstanding. This week's feature (see page 1024) explores some of the uses — forming online groups to reach across disciplines, connecting clinicians with basic researchers, or sharing workflows to undertake statistical analyses of large data sets. Researchers can boost productivity and technical acumen.

Recognizing the caveats, I am pleased to announce that *Naturejobs* is launching a forum on Nature Network (<http://network.nature.com/group/naturejobs>) to offer discussion and advice on a range of issues related to science careers. Moderated by former *Naturejobs* editor Paul Smaglik, and with contributions from specialists in science careers, we will hold discussions that will, for example, help scientists who want to switch to a nontraditional career, explore salary or benefits issues, respond to *Naturejobs* content or enquire about science opportunities in a particular region. This virtual meeting ground will offer sage advice and tips from experts and those undertaking career decisions alike. Please join us — no avatars required.

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