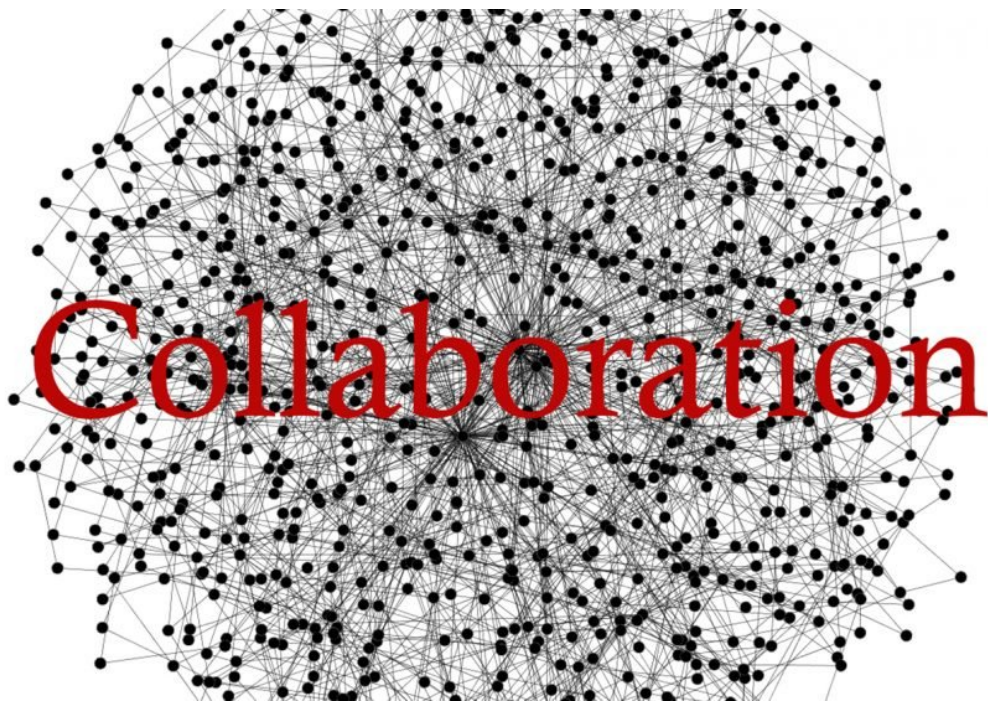


Intelligence study IDs key factors for government, academia, industry collaboration

November 9 2017, by Matt Shipman



Credit: North Carolina State University

A study of government and industry teamwork at a National Security Agency-funded research center found that an established suite of factors are key to fostering effective collaboration in a novel partnership to conduct research for the intelligence community. The work highlights

the importance of organizational innovation and adaptation in light of the challenges that emerge in interinstitutional and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The study revolves around the Laboratory for Analytic Sciences (LAS), a partnership between the NSA and North Carolina State University. LAS brings together government and industry stakeholders with researchers from a wide variety of disciplines - from computer science to political science - to address challenges related to big data, both in terms of how to use [big data](#) effectively and how people interact with relevant technologies.

"The fact that LAS pulls together such diverse teams of stakeholders poses certain challenges in regard to communication and team dynamics," says Beverly Tyler, a professor of management, innovation and entrepreneurship at NC State who co-authored a paper on the work.

"LAS is a unique model for bringing industry, government and academics together to address problems that none of them can solve on their own," says Tyler, whose research focuses on organizational and relationship management. "And whenever a new model is implemented, there are growing pains. We wanted to know what it takes to make this model successful, which would be useful both for LAS and for any future collaborative efforts."

Shortly after LAS was launched, it established a "[collaboration](#) group" assigned to work with various LAS-funded research teams to facilitate productive teamwork. The group also studied the LAS and the research teams it funds each year to determine which factors facilitated collaboration and which served as obstacles.

After several years of observation, surveys and interviews, the collaboration group found rich support for the six "imperatives"

identified by R. H. Pherson and J. McIntyre (Pherson, 2009; Pherson & McIntyre, 2009) - threshold elements necessary for collaboration:

- Mutual benefit: Team members needed to feel that their work benefited from being part of the team.
- Mutual trust: Trust allows team members to open up with teammates. For example, team members need to be willing to admit what they don't know, which is essential for avoiding miscommunication.
- Common understanding: Team members must have a common lexicon and agreed-upon rules of engagement that allow them to communicate clearly, despite the fact that they come from varied backgrounds.
- Access and agility: Team members need to be able to connect and communicate with each other quickly and easily.
- Incentives: The team must save [team members](#) time, increase their impact and enhance their careers.
- Mission criticality: Team members need to feel that the team is an important part of their accomplishing their professional goals - and that their involvement is important to the team.

"What we found highlights the need for all members of interinstitutional, interdisciplinary teams created to advance innovation - like those at LAS - to be adaptive and flexible and willing to step outside of their traditional routines," Tyler says. "Government, business and academics all have different ways of doing things, and building a long-term, research-driven relationship requires effort by all parties to accommodate each other.

"Team members who aren't able or willing to step outside their normal routines can hinder the progress of the entire team.

"While these findings were developed based on studying collaborative

efforts related to the [intelligence community](#), they should be applicable to other [collaborative efforts](#) aimed at pulling together such diverse groups of stakeholders," Tyler says.

The paper, "The Importance of Organizational Innovation and Adaptation in Building Academic-Industry-Intelligence Collaboration: Observations from the Laboratory for Analytic Sciences," is published in the *International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs*.

More information: "The Importance of Organizational Innovation and Adaptation in Building Academic-Industry-Intelligence Collaboration: Observations from the Laboratory for Analytic Sciences" [DOI: 10.1080/23800992.2017.1384676](#)

Provided by North Carolina State University

Citation: Intelligence study IDs key factors for government, academia, industry collaboration (2017, November 9) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-11-intelligence-ids-key-factors-academia.html>

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