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Modern science is increasingly collaborative, as signaled by rising numbers of coauthored papers, papers with international coauthors, and multi-investigator grants. Historically, scientific collaborations were carried out by scientists in the same physical location—the Manhattan Project of the 1940s, for example, involved thousands of scientists gathered on a remote plateau in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Today, information and communication technologies allow cooperation among scientists from far-flung institutions and different disciplines. Scientific Collaboration on the Internet provides both broad and in-depth views of how new technology is enabling novel kinds of science and engineering collaboration. The book offers commentary from notable experts in the field along with case studies of large-scale collaborative projects, past and ongoing.

The projects described range from the development of a national virtual observatory for astronomical research to a National Institutes of Health funding program for major multilaboratory medical research; from the deployment of a cyberinfrastructure to connect experts in earthquake engineering to partnerships between developed and developing countries in AIDS research. The chapter authors speak frankly about the problems these projects encountered as well as the successes they achieved. The book strikes a useful balance between presenting the real stories of collaborations and developing a scientific approach to conceiving, designing, implementing, and evaluating such projects. It points to a future of scientific collaborations that build successfully on aspects from multiple disciplines.

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