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Introduction to the Software Sustainability Institute

13 August 2014, CCP-SAS webinar

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Supported by



*Project funding
from*



Jisc



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Von [redacted]
8 April '21

I just took a "release" of source code from one graduate student and passed it onto another graduate student to build. What could go wrong? (I feel Neil scowling at me across the Atlantic.)

Like · Comment · Share

[redacted] like this.



[redacted] you should know better!
9 April at 01:14 · Like



[redacted] Surely the Makefile will Hahahaha, sorry, I can't.
9 April at 01:25 · Like · ♡ 1



[redacted] let us know what happens!
9 April at 01:28 · Like · ♡ 1



[redacted] as it has been done since the start of the unix epoch!
9 April at 02:33 · Like



Neil Chue Hang I'm not scowling, that's my amused face.
9 April at 08:40 · Like · ♡ 1



[redacted] Error on line 536: code obviously written by student, apply software engineering and rebuild.
9 April at 13:56 · Like · ♡ 1



Don [redacted] Which brings up my idea for software sustainability --- offering ignoble prizes for bad code...
10 April at 03:09 · Like · ♡ 2



[redacted] Excellent idea Don --- provided you don't use me as an example --- or perhaps this is my next career as the sustainable software jester/court-fool.
10 April at 14:34 · Like

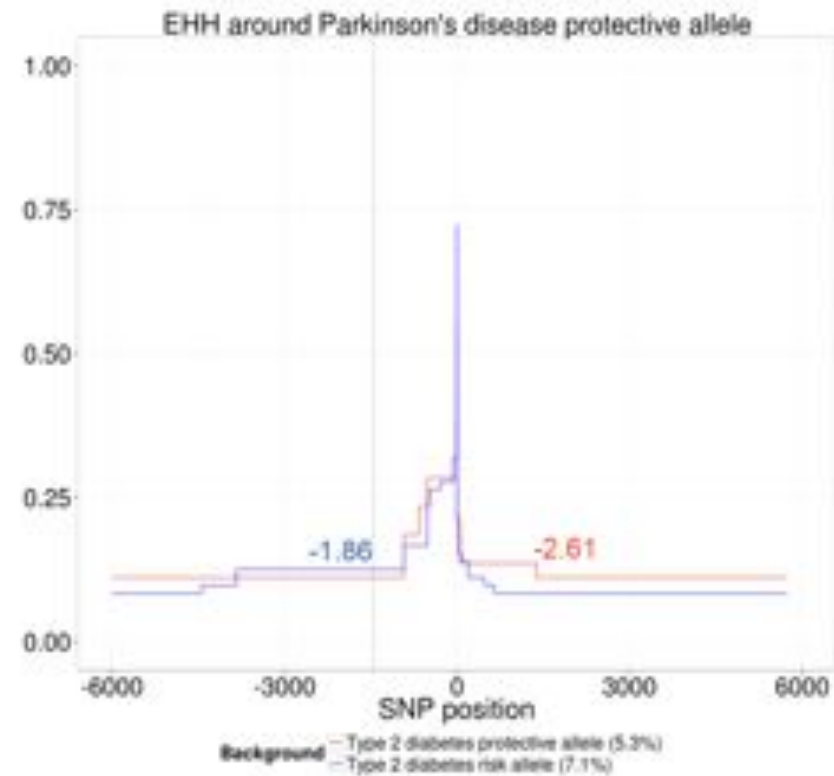
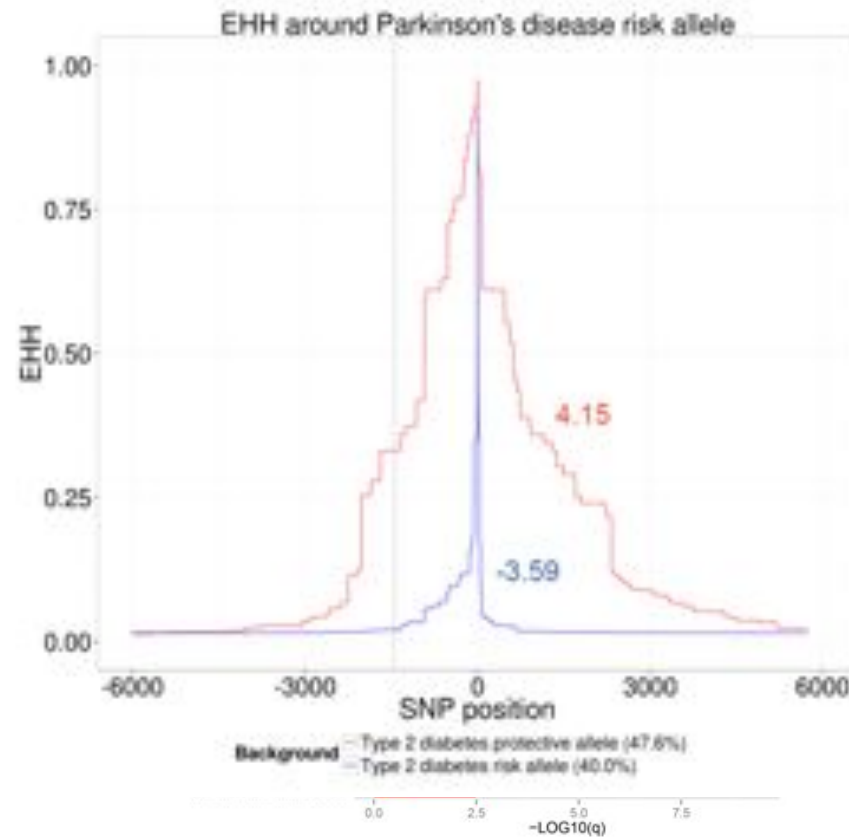
- Of course, we don't deliberately set out to create code that can't be used by others

Right?

Pleiotropic loci – diabetes and Parkinson's disease



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Behind every great piece of science...



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```
#go through each SNP of interest
for(my $x = 0; $x < scalar @pos; $x++)
{
    #and then each downstream SNP of interest
    for(my $y = $x+1; $y < scalar @pos; $y++)
    {
        #if SNPs within our chosen distance (500kb) and both present in the haplotypes file
        if((!($trait[$x] eq $trait[$y])) && (abs($pos[$x] - $pos[$y]) <= 500000) && (exists($legArrayPos{$pos[$x]})))
        {
            my $snp1ArrayPos = "";
            my $snp2ArrayPos = "";
            my $snp1All = "";
            my $snp2All = "";

            #create output file for this SNP pair
            my $filename = "ConditionedResults2/$chr[$x].$pos[$x]-$pos[$y].EHH.GBR.2.txt";
            print "$filename\n";
            unless (-e $filename) {
                open(OUT, ">$filename");

                #####CHANGE THESE IF NOT FOCUSING ON SECOND SNP#####
                my $start = $pos[$y]-500000;
                if ($start < 1) {
                    $start = 1;
                }
                my $end = $pos[$y]+500000;
                if ($end > $chrLengths{$chr[$x]}) {
                    $end = $chrLengths{$chr[$x]};
                }
            }
        }
    }
}
```

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The modern researcher...



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**Where do they learn
how to do this?**

Picture of Otto Stern courtesy of
Emilio Segre Visual Archives

- ... worries about:
 - Data management and analysis
 - Reproducible research
 - Scalable simulations
 - Integration of models and workflows
 - Collaboration

repeat

same experiment
same lab

replicate

same experiment
different lab

test

same experiment
different set up

different
experiment
some of same

reproduce

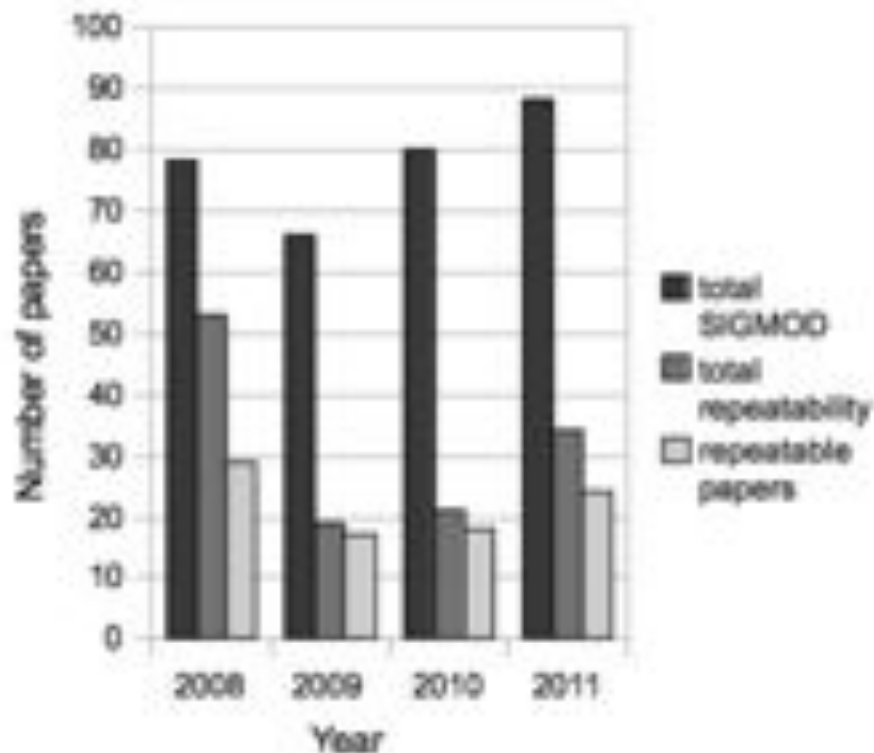
reuse

Figure by Carole Goble adapted from Drummond C, Replicability is not Reproducibility: Nor is it Good Science, online and Peng RD, Reproducible Research in Computational Science *Science* 2 Dec 2011: 1226-1227.

SIGMOD Reproducibility



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Bonnet et al, SIGMOD Record,
June 2011 (Vol. 40, No. 2)
doi: 10.1145/2034863.2034873

- SIGMOD conference offered to attempt to repeat/reproduce papers accepted at conference
 - 2008-2012
- “High burden on reviewers when setting up experiments”
 - Use of VMs advocated

SSI Drivers and Themes



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- Two key drivers which cause people to seek the SSI's advice:
 - They want to be more productive in their research
 - They don't want to be embarrassed by appearing worse than their peers
- Broadly, our work falls into a few key themes:
 - Developing the scientific computing / software development skill base
 - The role and reward of software in research
 - Recognition of software career paths
 - Re[peatable|producible|computable] research

The Software Sustainability Institute



www.software.ac.uk

A national facility for cultivating world-class research through software

- Better software enables better research
- Software reaches boundaries in its development cycle that prevent improvement, growth and adoption
- Providing the expertise and services needed to negotiate to the next stage
- Developing the policy and tools to support the community developing and using research software

EPSRC
Pioneering research
and skills



Software Sustainability Institute

Supported by EPSRC
Grant EP/H043160/1

UK Research Computing Ecosystem



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People

Computing



Software



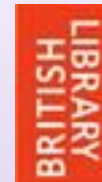
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Communities



...

Data



Network/Collaboration



Instruments

Software Sustainability Institute

SSI Objectives



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1. Getting software on the research agenda
 2. Supporting communities that want change
 3. Increasing skills
 4. Improving software
- Building a platform
 - Engaging the community
 - Being an authoritative voice

SSI Organisation



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- Community Engagement (Lead: Shoaib Sufi)
 - [Fellowship Programme](#)
 - Events and Roadshows
- Research Software (Lead: Steve Crouch)
 - [Open Call for Consultancy Projects](#) / Funded Collaborations
 - [Software Evaluation](#)
- Policy (Lead: Simon Hettrick)
 - [Guides and Case Studies](#)
 - Best Practice and Policy
- Training (Lead: Aleksandra Pawlik)
 - [Software Carpentry](#)
 - Software Surgeries
- Collaboration between universities of Edinburgh, Manchester, Oxford and Southampton.



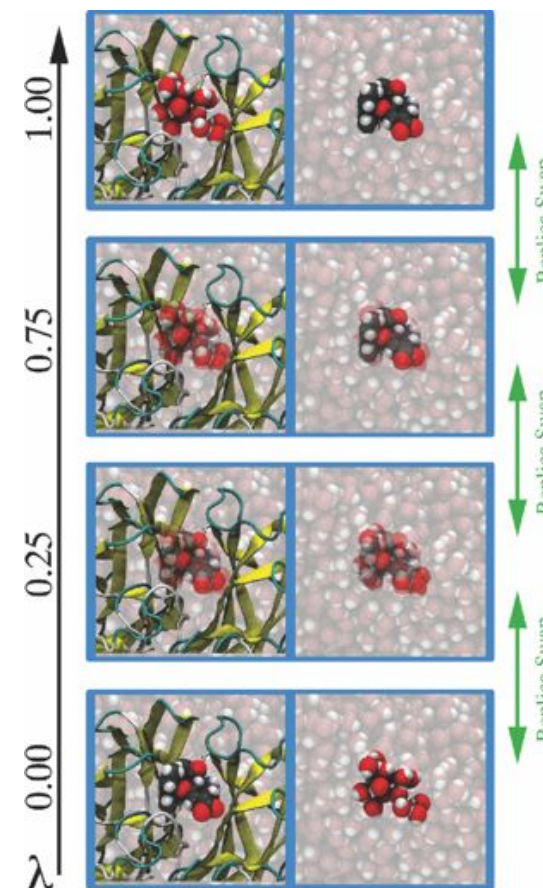
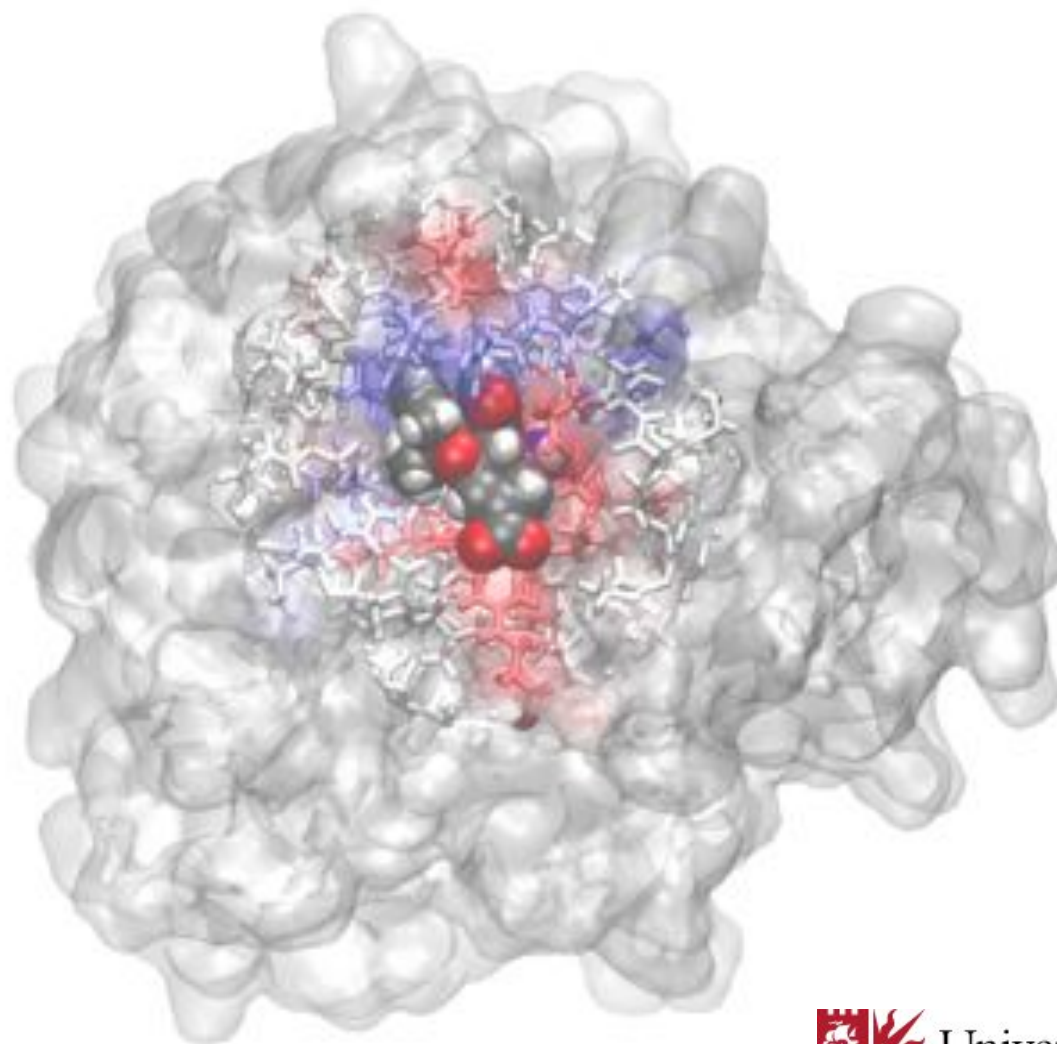
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Water Swap Reaction Coordinate



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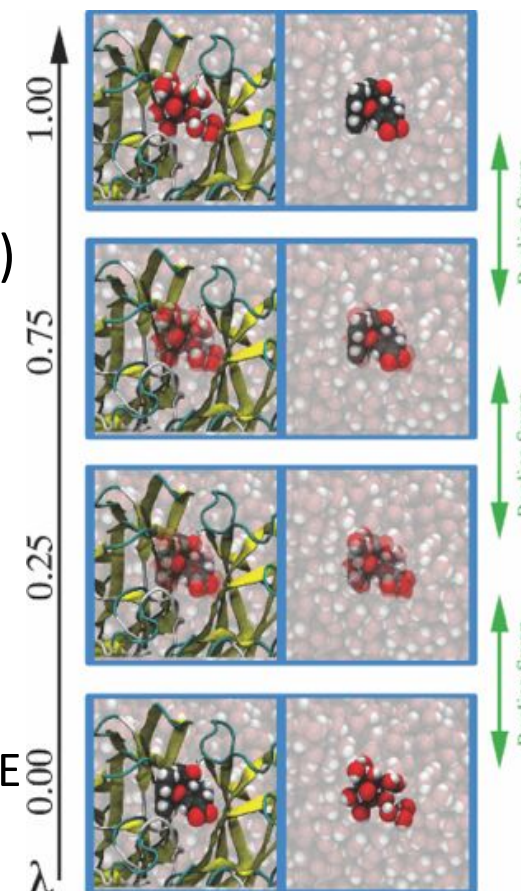


Case Study: Ligand Binding



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- Centre for Computational Chemistry, Bristol
 - New methods for rapid MC sampling of biomolecular systems modelled using QM/MM
 - Developed two codes ProtoMS (F77) + Sire (C++)
 - Water-Swap Reaction Coordinate method to calculate absolute protein-ligand binding free energies
- SSI's work is helping to scale development
 - ProtoMS and Sire both single developer codes
 - ASPIRE/ACQUIRE framework has multiple devs
 - Split architecture between ASPIRE (adaptive multiresolution hybrid MD simulation) and ACQUIRE (WorkPacket scheduling system with optimisation for time to result vs "green-ness")
- http://www.siremol.org/adaptive_dynamics



Case Study: ICAT



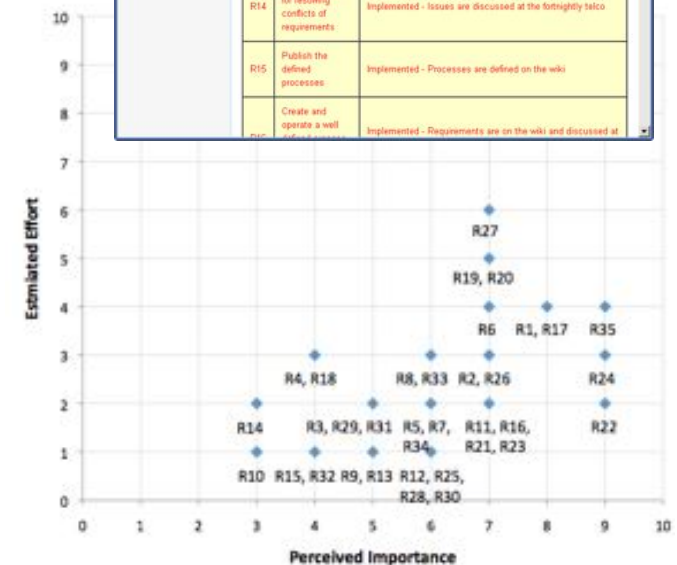
www.software.ac.uk

- ICAT metadata catalogue, STFC
 - Support experimental data linking at Large Facilities
 - RAL UK (ISIS, DIAMOND, CLF), SNS US, ELLETRA Italy
 - ICAT operationally critical at sites, other projects looking to use
 - Undertook interview-based organisational review
 - 92 observations, 32 recommendations
- SSI's work means the project has move forward
 - Taking forward: steering group, induction process, expanded roadmapping activity, technical workshops via Skype, involved with deployment
 - 1 year post-project
 - 25 (75%) recommendations implemented
 - Used by other major projects (PandataODI, CRISP)
- <http://www.software.ac.uk/blog/2012-02-17-evaluating-software-behind-some-worlds-large-experimental-facilities>
- <http://icatproject.org/>

ICAT-R-Process - ICAT Project

Home | Observations | Requirements Process | Planning Process | Test and Roll-out | Release | Recommendations

ID	Description	Status - 2013
R13	Define a collaborator induction process, including the allocation of a mentor	Implemented - https://code.google.com/p/icatproject/wiki/inductionProcess
R14	Define a process for resolving conflicts of requirements	Implemented - Issues are discussed at the fortnightly telco
R15	Publish the defined processes	Implemented - Processes are defined on the wiki
R16	Create and operate a well defined process	Implemented - Requirements are on the wiki and discussed at



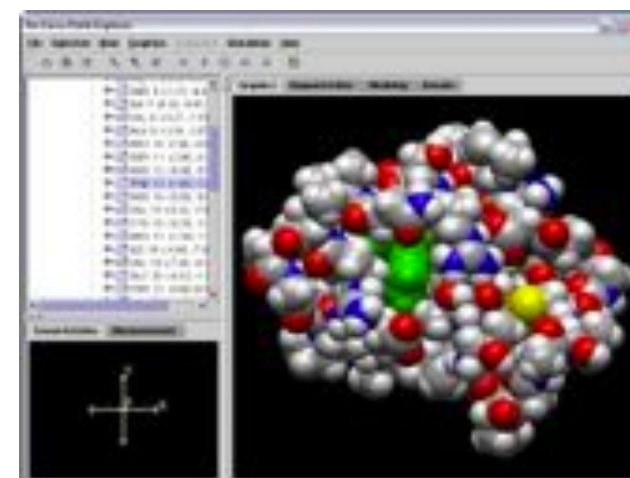
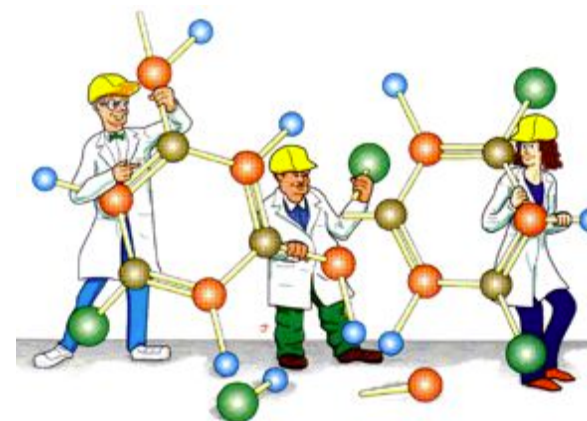
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Case Study: Tinkering with APES



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- NSF/EPSRC Funded
 - Polarisable empirical force fields (AMOEBA)
 - AMBER, Tinker, DL_POLY, ONETEP, Q-Chem
- SSI's work is helping to coordinate development across many packages and many people
 - Different languages, licenses, styles, teams
- <http://apes-soft.github.io/>



Current Consultancy (1)



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BoneJ



- *Trabecular geometry & whole bone shape analysis*
- Development review, community survey, CMS
- Assist future BBSRC BBR funding
 - 'SSI's involvement noted in a very positive light'

Lower Limb Model



- *Musculoskeletal model for lower limbs*
- Wellcome Trust, EPSRC funded
- Development review, moving to Assembla
 - 'Institute's team were invaluable'

ForestGrowth-SRC



- *Process-based tree growth model*
- NERC, Forestry Commission funded
- Run on IRIDIS cluster – take hours, not days
- Joint IfLS funding

Current Consultancy (2)



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LabBook



- *Fast, accurate, secure experiment recording/sharing*
- Wide domain potential
- Seeking funded development
- Infrastructure, outreach, roadmapping & feedback

DawnScience



- *Eclipse-based workbench for scientific data analysis*
- STFC funded
- Collaboration review, community marketing
 - Uptake key measure of project success

BASIL/FABBER



- *Analysis tool library for FMRI, MRI, DTI brain imaging*
- Industry / EPSRC funded
- Architectural review, apply to new problems
- 10 groups outside Oxford using it

Software Sustainability Institute



Farah Ahmed



Mark Basham



Jane Charlesworth



Tom Crick



Stuart Dunn



Stephen Eglen



Michael Fischer



Liberty Foreman



Philip Fowler



Laurent Gatto



Robyn Grant



Derek Groen



Alexander Kononov



Alexandra Simperler



Leanne Mary Wake



Yannick Wurm

- 2014: 16 fellows
- 2013: 15 fellows
- 2012: 10 fellows
- Range of subjects, career stages

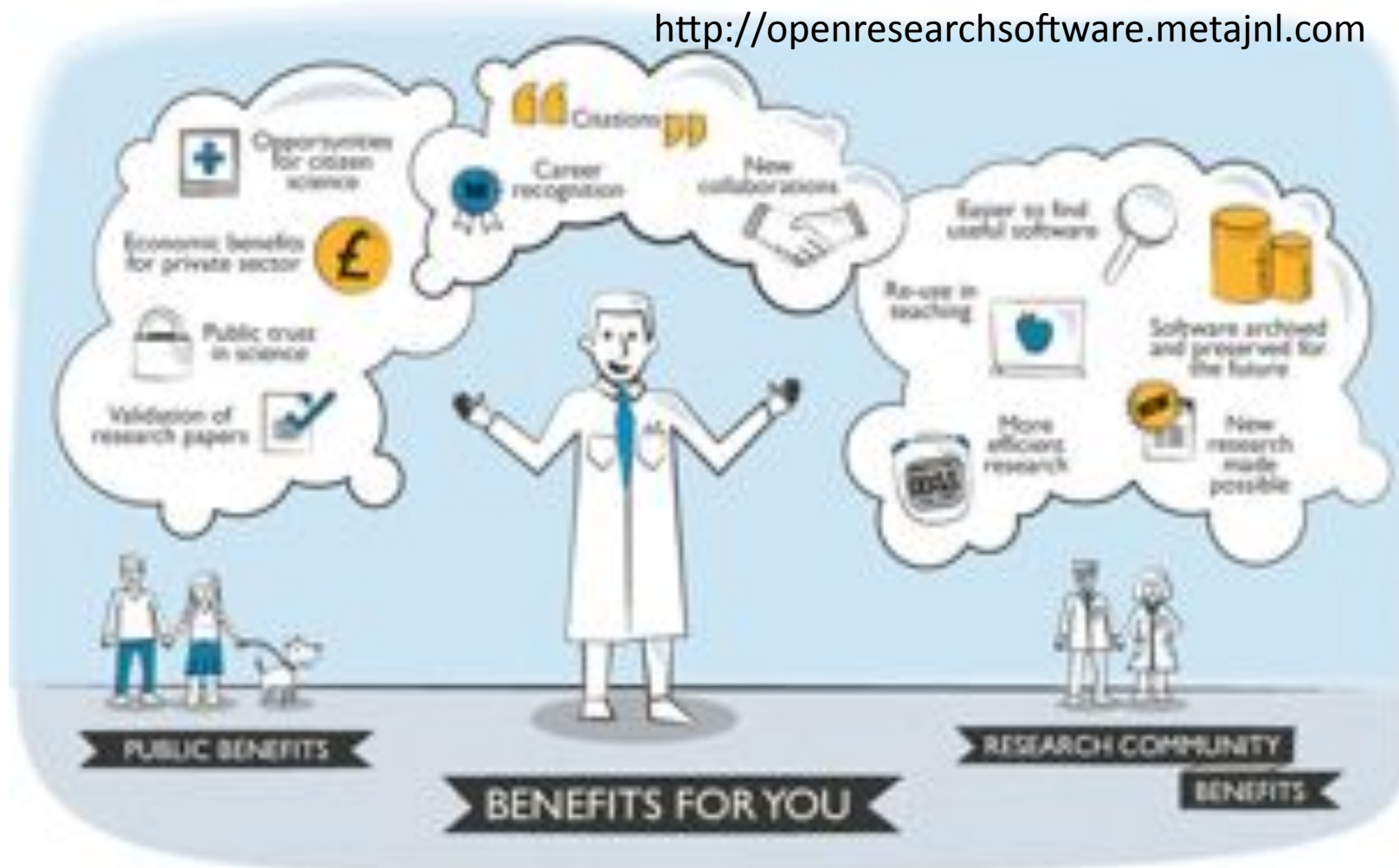
software.ac.uk/fellows

Journal of Open Research Software



www.software.ac.uk

<http://openresearchsoftware.metajnl.com>

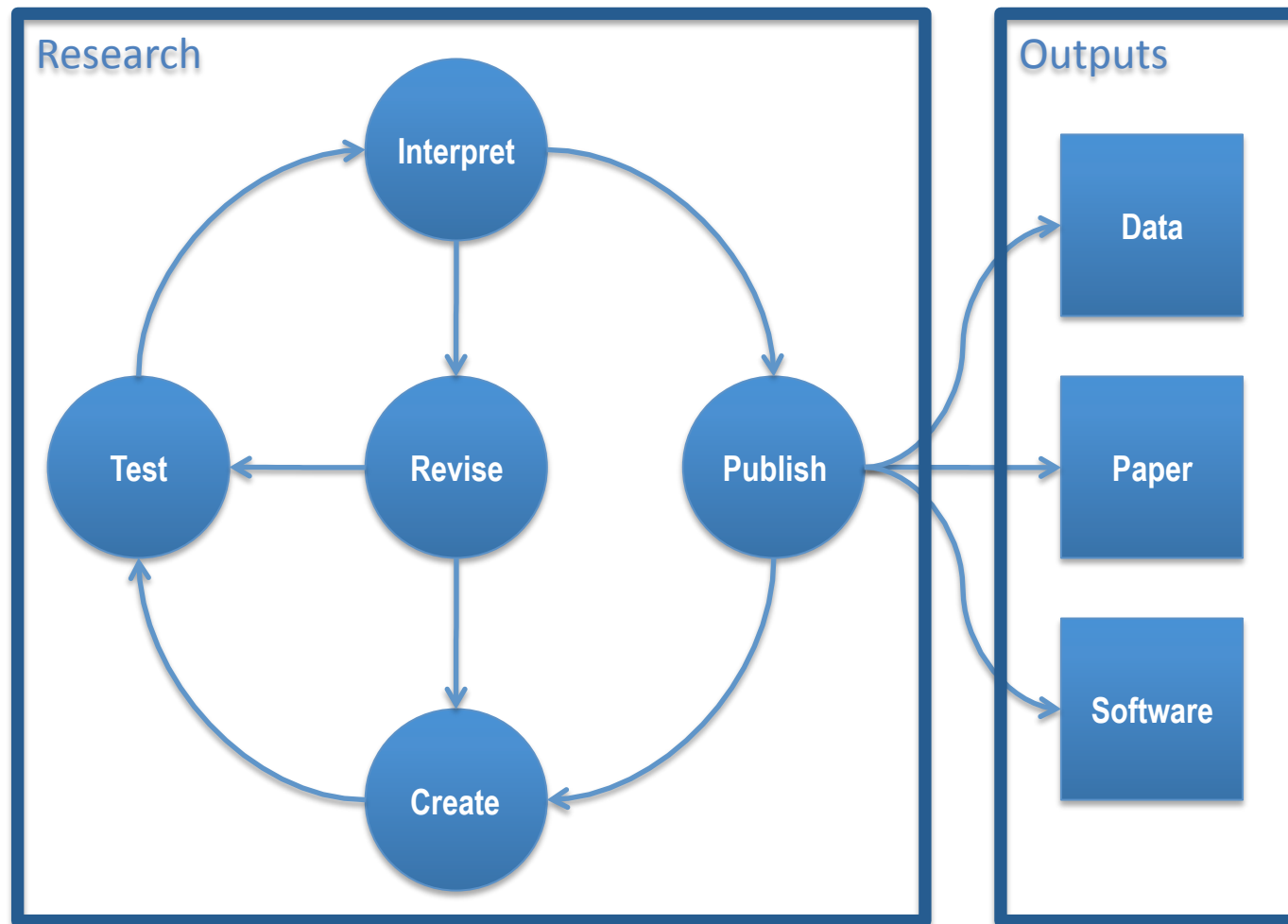


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The Research Cycle



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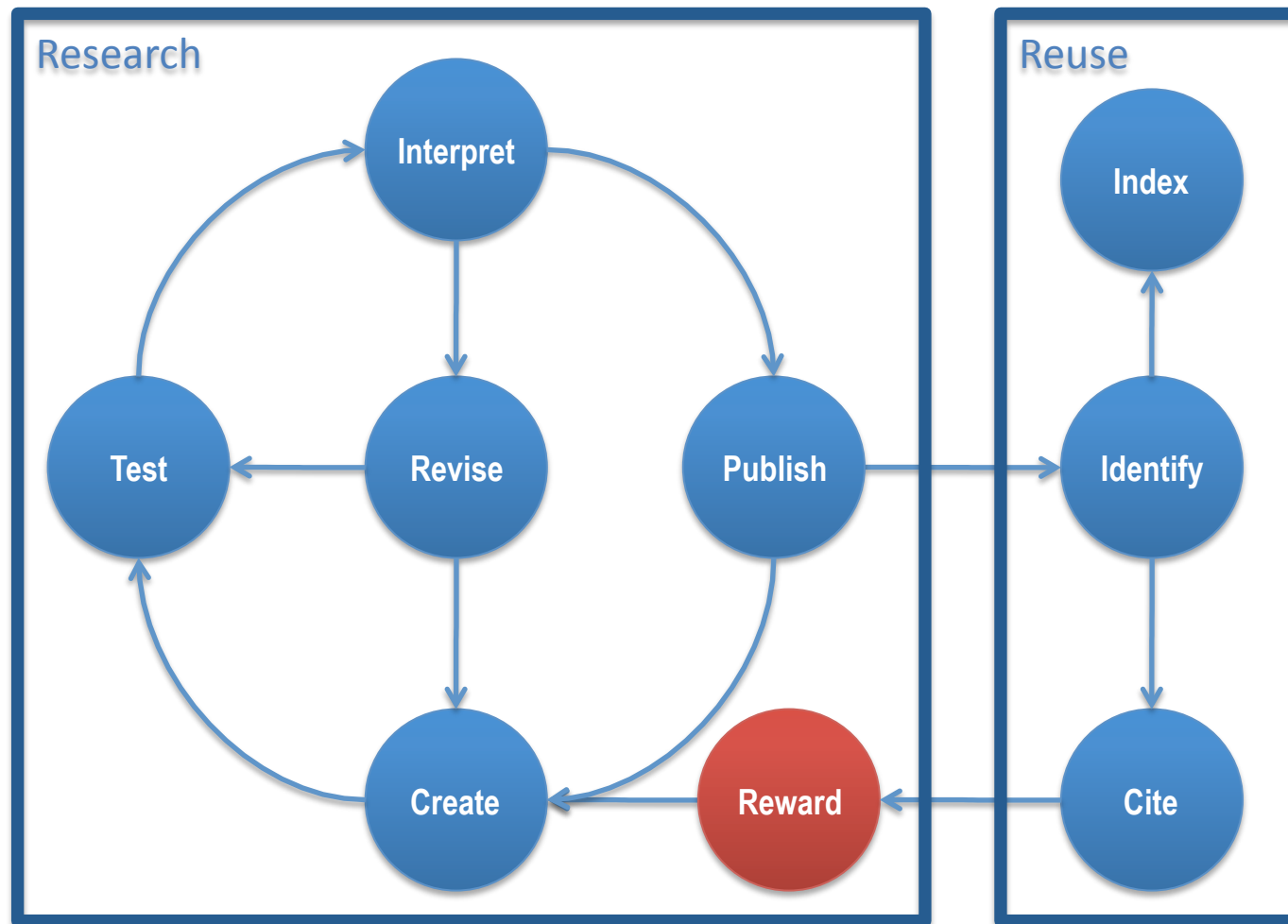
**Research is a
continuous
cycle.**

**When we
publish we
are
contributing
to the body of
knowledge.**

Research/Reuse/Reward Cycle



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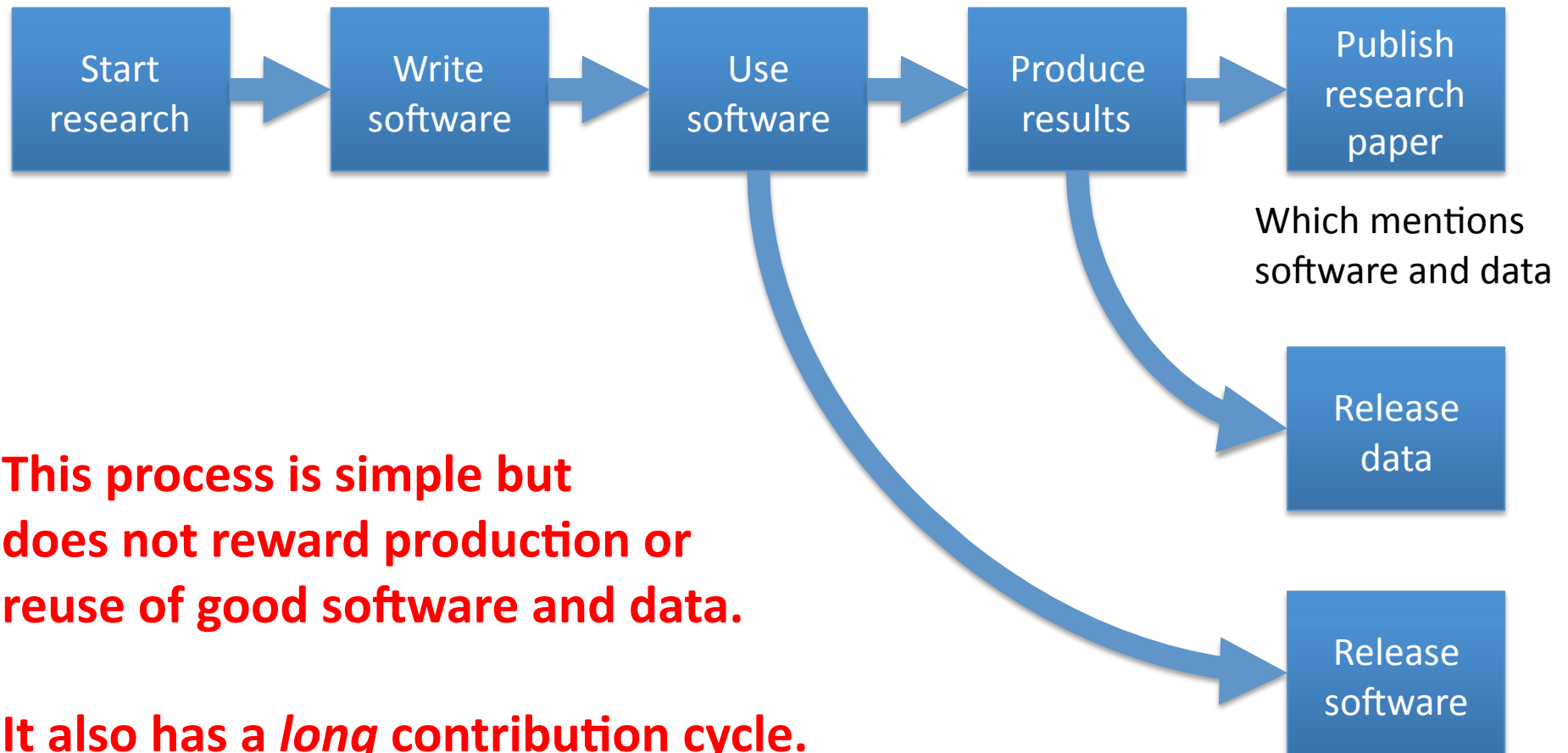
Reuse is also a cycle. We build our research on the work of others.

Reward mechanisms *should* encourage reuse.

The current process



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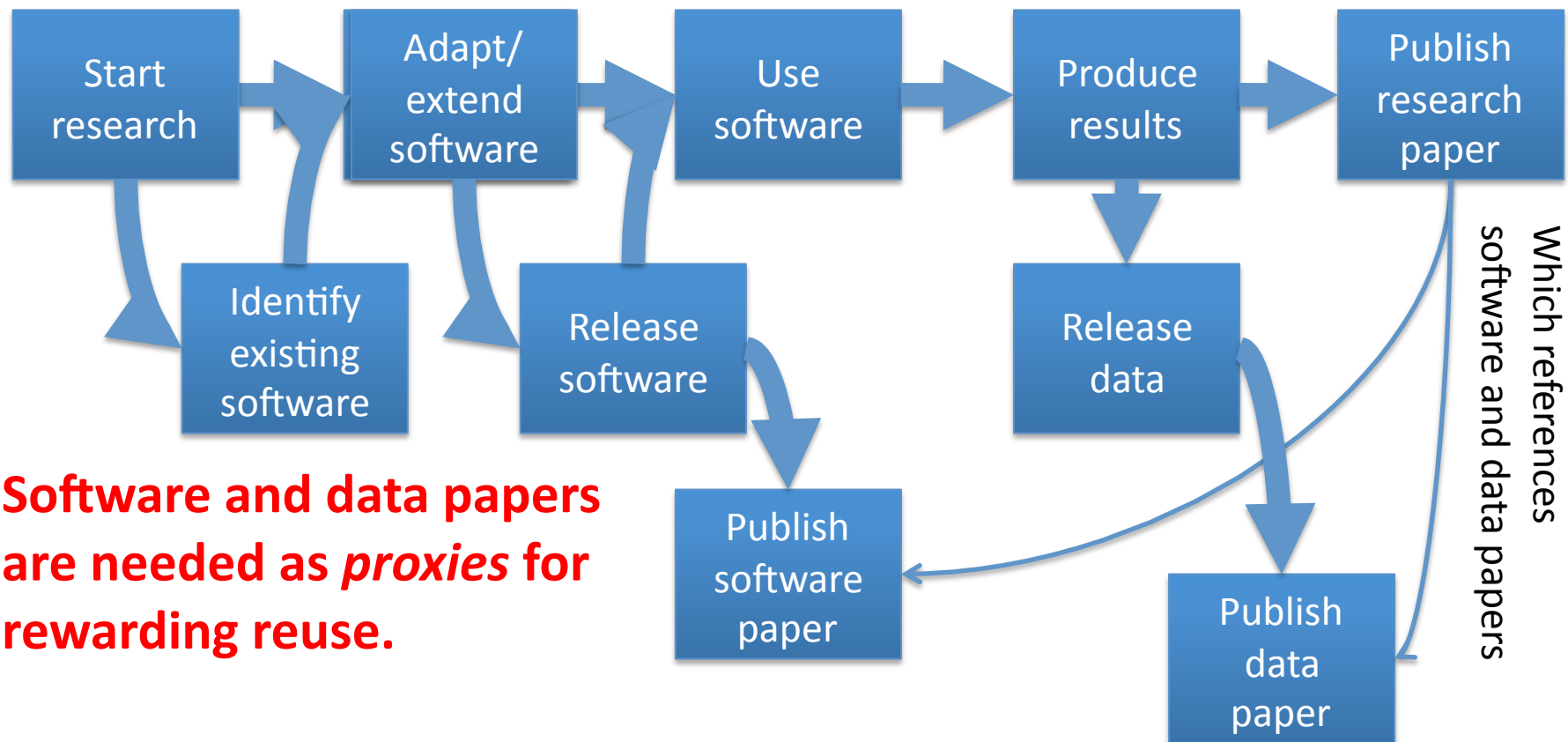
This process is simple but does not reward production or reuse of good software and data.

It also has a *long* contribution cycle.

A better process?



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Software and data papers are needed as *proxies* for rewarding reuse.

But it enables a *shorter* contribution cycle for data and software.

SSI Website



www.software.ac.uk

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Software Sustainability Institute. The header includes the SSI logo and navigation links: About, Blog, Community, Consultancy, Policy, Training, and Resources. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area features a large banner for 'Online evaluation' with a laptop image. Below this, the text 'The Software Sustainability Institute' is followed by two columns of text describing the institute's mission and services. A 'Most Popular' section lists five articles, including 'Migrating SourceForge Wordpress blog from "hosted app" walkthrough' and 'Bringing public data to life - competition to visualise UK publicly funded research'. A 'Latest News' section at the bottom mentions a 'Cambridge R Software Carpentry bootcamp success' and a 'PyData comes to Europe' event.

Online evaluation
Find out how to improve the sustainability of your software

The Software Sustainability Institute

Software is not static. New functionality is needed, hardware evolves, staff come and go and sources of funding change. To survive in this volatile environment, software developers must respond to changes and act to ensure that their users get the best from their software.

The Software Sustainability Institute works with researchers to identify and shape the software considered to be important to research. We provide a range of free and paid-for services which ensure that software is maintained, made available to a wider user base and its potential for sustainability is realised.

The Software Sustainability Institute can help ensure a future for your software. We will work with your project and use our expertise in software development, project management and community building to further your research.

If you would like to work with us, please contact info@software.ac.uk.

Most Popular

1. **Migrating SourceForge Wordpress blog from "hosted app" walkthrough** - By Mike Jackson. SourceForge announced yesterday...
2. **Bringing public data to life - competition to visualise UK publicly funded research** - Can you present complex data to tell a compelling story...
3. **The Craftsperson and the Scholar** - By James Hetherington, Research Software...
4. **Taking a Peek into eye disease** - By Andrew Bastawous, Research Fellow in International...
5. **Workshop for e-infrastructure trainers. Sold out! And more places added...** - By Simon Hettick. Our workshop for e-infrastructure...

How can we help?

The Software Sustainability Institute cultivates world-class research with software.

We help people build better software, and we work with researchers, developers, funders and infrastructure providers to identify key issues and best practice in scientific software.

[Click here for more.](#)

Latest News

15 January 2014 - **Cambridge R Software Carpentry bootcamp success** - Software Carpentry's first UK R bootcamp was a major...

14 January 2014 - **PyData comes to Europe** London 21-23 February 2014 - The first ever PyData event in Europe will take place in...

The screenshot shows a blog post titled 'Better software and better software management - even across a distributed team'. The header is the same as the homepage. The main content area features a large image of a network diagram. The text discusses the impact of collaboration and the problem of managing distributed teams. A quote from Chris Rogers, MCE Physics Software Manager, is included. The solution section mentions the use of MAUS (Meta-Analysis of User Stories) and its benefits. The post is dated 10 January 2014.

Better software and better software management - even across a distributed team

The impact

"The collaboration was a very useful experience... I would work with Software Sustainability Institute again and would recommend them to others."

- Chris Rogers, MCE Physics Software Manager, Accelerator Science and Technology Centre, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

We worked with MCE (the Muon Collider Cooling Experiment) to improve their software and the management of their software development. One of our developers was embedded in the MCE team and developed software that increased the speed of data processing, improved usability and made visualisation of the data possible. Following a review of development management, our improvements to the MCE project management are now being implemented.

The Problem

MCE has a large, distributed team of software developers of varying degrees of availability. These developers work on MAUS, which is software used to analyse data generated by MCE. Chris Turner (MCE's Offline Detector Software Coordinator) asked the Software Sustainability Institute for advice on how to manage development, and for assistance in completing urgent development tasks relating to experiment monitoring and analysis.

The Solution

"The project was highly productive"

- Chris Rogers

The Institute reviewed the collaborative tools used by MAUS to manage software development (a wiki and issue tracker), and proposed improvements that will allow the overall picture of development to be readily identified and tracked. To this end, the Institute recommended use of a Gantt chart to understand dependencies between tasks and the impact of any slippage; creating, maintaining and reviewing a risks and issues log; and sending highlight reports up the line to summarise progress, changes in risks and issues, and plans for the next period.

Our developers conducted an evaluation of MAUS and its online resources, both of which scored very highly for sustainability in terms of the software and its related resources. The evaluation highlighted issues, primarily with the structure of the wiki.

Most Popular

1. **Migrating SourceForge Wordpress blog from "hosted app" walkthrough** - By Mike Jackson. SourceForge announced yesterday...
2. **Bringing public data to life - competition to visualise UK publicly funded research** - Can you present complex data to tell a compelling story...
3. **The Craftsperson and the Scholar** - By James Hetherington, Research Software...
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[Click here for more.](#)

Software and research blog

10 January 2014 - **STEM - not just for the boys!** - By Devasena Inspektika, Software Consultant. How do we get...

7 January 2014 - **Open-source licenses for people in a hurry** - By Mike Jackson, Software Architect, the Software...



Software Sustainability Institute

SSI Guides and Top Tips



www.software.ac.uk

- Guides provide in depth information
 - Licences
 - Software development
 - Project management
 - Repositories and project infrastructure
 - Open source
 - Community building
 - Publicising software
 - Policy
- Top Tips provide quick overviews
 - Software development
 - Repositories and project infrastructure
 - Software carpentry
 - Citing software
 - Data handling
 - Promoting and communicating your project
 - Community building and project management

Software development: general best practice

By Mike Jackson.

How to approach a new software-development project, and what to keep in mind

You will find that development of new code and maintenance of existing code is easier if you adopt best practices that have evolved over many years. Exactly how these practices should be implemented will depend on the nature of your project. If you would like help with best practice, the Software Sustainability Institute can advise you on how to proceed.

In general, there are two guiding principles to keep in mind when approaching a new software development project:

- Be aware of your goal.
- Be prepared for change.

Defining your goal

First of all, establish your goals. Your goals will have a number of facets, such as functionality, timescale and cost. Through all further planning, keep these goals in mind because it is easy to lose sight of the original plan during a development project. It is fundamentally important that your goals meet the needs of your stakeholders (customers, users, etc.), and the best way of ensuring this is to include them in the goal planning.

Before committing to delivering any functionality, you must establish deadlines and available resources. Prepare an estimate of the work, and if it appears that your goals are too ambitious, you should re-negotiate. There is little point in agreeing to goals that you know will not be completed on time or in budget. Meet again with your stakeholders, prioritise the most important and achievable requirements and establish new goals. Other requirements that are outside of your plan should be made optional so that you can work on them if time or funds allow.

When preparing your goals, remember that some requirements will be harder to satisfy than others. When dealing with risky goals, it is a good idea to manage expectations. Tell your stakeholders which goals are risky: if you cannot achieve them, they will better understand, and if you can achieve them, you will gain extra kudos!

Very few projects - if any - get to completion without a change to the goals. Prepare to be flexible and, if possible, try and predict how to goals will change, and the ways in which these changes can be incorporated into your plan.

Getting to the goal

Do not start developing code without a plan. Find out what the stakeholders want and produce a plan that addresses:

- Design
- Implementation
- Testing
- Documentation

Approach your goals iteratively. If possible, deal with the highest priority and highest risk requirements first. Each iteration should be seen as a mini project, and should produce a testable product. Obtain feedback from the stakeholders on the product. Review the goal with your stakeholders, assess whether you have met the requirements and, if you have, start the next iteration.

Dealing with change

Change is inevitable. When leading a project, flexibility is key to success. There are many different changes that could occur during the lifetime of a project. The most typical are a change in goals due to a change in stakeholder requirements, a decision is made to refactor the code, or a change in resources such as a developer leaving the project. Software systems do not come into existence instantaneously, so expect the number and contents of files to change as your system is developed.

The best tip for successfully handling changes is to recognise and deal with them early. You are more likely to successfully handle changes if your development process is incremental, you test frequently, and you maintain good contact with your stakeholders.

And finally...

Do not forget to think about the end of the project. What will happen after you have met your goals? If you want to achieve sustainability, it is important that you make your software maintainable. For tips on maintainability, read our guide [How to develop maintainable software](#).

Other factors to keep in mind

Consider developing user stories to highlight requirements, and use cases to highlight design. When documenting the code do not forget that diagrams can be useful. UML is useful for describing object-orientated designs.

Exactly how you should implement this advice depends on the nature of your project. There are many different software development methods (a.k.a. methodologies) that give more specific advice that you may find useful.

Further Reading

User stories and use cases:

- User stories versus use cases

Unified Modeling Language (UML):

- An introduction to UML
- A UML tutorial

Software development methods:

- An introduction to software development methods
- A list of methodologies

Last updated: Wednesday 17 November 2016.

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SSI Blog



www.software.ac.uk

- Articles on research software and related issues
 - Ask the Institute
 - A Day in the Software Life
 - Heroes of Software Engineering
 - Top Tips
 - Women in Software
- 150+ posts written by external contributors
 - 6,000+ unique pageviews/month



About What do we do? Who do we work with? Resources Fellowship programme

The Craftsperson and the Scholar

By James Hetherington, Research Software Development Team Leader at University College London.

At Digital Research 2012, I presented a position paper with colleagues regarding the role of the Research Software Engineer. This paper followed on from a discussion I led at the Collaborations Workshop and some very interesting blog posts by Dirk Gorissen and Ilian Todorov. Rather than repeat these discussions, I've written this post for those who think the Research Software Engineer role could be for them.

A quick note about the Research Software Development Team at UCL

With the establishment of the Research Software Development Team at UCL, I hope we're on the way towards establishing a successful home for scientific programmers. If you love learning about cutting edge research, and enjoy crafting robust, readable and efficient code, then please apply to join the UCL team.

Bringing together the best of two archetypes

A good scientific coder combines two characters: the scholar and the craftsperson.



Software Sustain

SSI Training



www.software.ac.uk

- Software Carpentry
 - <http://software-carpentry.org>
 - International initiative to teach basics of software engineering to computational researchers
 - The “why” more than the “how”
 - Phenomenally successful – 2x oversubscription
 - Cheap to run but budget for 3x the coffee!
 - SSI are UK Coordinators for SWC
 - We ran 13 workshops in 2013 to 600+ learners
- Software Sustainability Surgeries
 - “Bring your own code”
 - “What makes Good Code good?”
 - Run at existing conferences, and for software funding programmes
 - Offering bespoke advice as well as training



Software Sustainability Institute

Creating a training community



www.software.ac.uk

- Bringing together 39+ organisations with interest in e-Infrastructure training
- Raising issues and enablers with RCUK, BIS

software.ac.uk/policy



Software Sustainability Institute

Campaigning for careers



www.software.ac.uk

Is the work of scientific software engineers recognised in academia?

By Ian Tudor, Advanced Research Computing Group, STFC

This article represents my personal point of view. It is related to Gordon's blog post "The researcher programmer, a new species" and discussions from the "Scientific Software Development and Management" group page of LinkedIn, which started after the Sustainability Institute's [Collaborations Workshop 2012](#) (CW12) discussions pertain to why the software engineer in academia is not recognised.

Software has become a technique of choice for many scientists. It is considered to be low, but this often means "free to academia". Some down the line, someone has paid for it. Someone has invested their time in writing code instructions to implement a scientific methodology of a doctoral (PhD) researcher attempting to automate and simplify the way their research routines.

Times have changed enormously in the last 20 years. However, for a researcher in academia, one thing has remained constant: their career progression is based on their research performance, as measured by the impact of their research papers in peer-reviewed journals. More papers, high impact journals leads to more success and recognition, and better chances when applying for funding or academic jobs. In contrast, software development has diversified. It has become a well-defined profession in many sub-fields and computer languages. This is not surprising for an industry that governs our lives at home – PCs, games, smart devices, transactions, GPS, industry. It has also become a discipline in its own

The researcher programmer, a new species?

Update: There has been some good discussion on this post at the LinkedIn group on [Scientific Software Development and Management](#). See also the papers by [Morten Sævi](#) and the great complimentary article by [Ian Tudor](#).

Update 2: There is now a [Part 2](#) to this post: [The research software developer and the great complimentary article by Ian Tudor](#).

Last week I attended the [2012 Collaborations Workshop at Queen Oxford](#). Organized by the [Software Sustainability Institute](#) its goal is software developers and researchers and reflect upon how both of anything needs to be changed.

I only found out about the two day workshop and the existence of before but immediately signed up. It was the first time I attended a

The Architect and the Scholar

By Paul Madden, Solutions Architect, Professional Services, [SeaChange International](#).

Several weeks ago Simon Heinrich posted a reference on LinkedIn's Scientific Software Development and Management group to a blog post by James Heffernan entitled [The Craftsman and the Scholar](#). I responded to the post by pointing out the conventional wisdom that it's more expensive to play that additional cost for commercial software development, so Simon asked me if I'd write about my views on the economic viability of writing good code in academia.

I first thought I might not be qualified. I do have some background in scientific programming. Long ago I earned a PhD in experimental particle physics then worked as a staff computer scientist at [Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory](#). I then worked for a time at [Digital Equipment Corporation](#). Upon reflection though, I think the issues that commercial software engineering and research software development have in common outweigh those that are different and I have some things to say about these common issues.

There are three reasons why sustainable software typically costs more to create. First, sustainable software requires the production of good documentation, and third, more often must be expended in the creation of test harnesses that are efficient and robust.

So, at first blush, it would appear that the creation of sustainable software will add

The Craftsman and the Scholar

By James Heffernan, [Research Software Development Team Leader](#) at [University College London](#).

At [Digital Research 2012](#), I presented a [position paper](#) with colleagues regarding the role of the Research Software Engineer. This paper followed on from a discussion I led at the [Collaborations Workshop](#) and some very interesting blog posts by [Dink Gorkse](#) and [Ian Tudor](#). Rather than repeat these discussions, I've written this post for those who think the Research Software Engineer role could be for them.

A quick note about the Research Software Development Team at UCL.

With the establishment of the Research Software Development Team at UCL, I hope we're on the way towards establishing a successful home for scientific programmers. If you love learning about cutting edge research, and enjoy creating robust, readable and efficient code, then please apply to [join the UCL team](#).

Bringing together the best of two archetypes

A good scientific code combines two characters: the scholar and the craftsman. The first of these, the scholar, is the archetypal researcher who is driven by intellectually demanding problems that attract, rather than deter, scholars. Their preparation for work. The scholar's curiosity is insatiable, and they prefer not to enjoy coding though they enjoy playing on that understanding through teaching

The Research Software Engineer

Rob Bester, Neil Chue Hong, Dink Gorkse, James Heffernan, Ian Tudor
[Software Sustainability Institute & University of Edinburgh](#), [University of Southampton](#), [UCL](#), [STFC Research Software Development Team](#)

Background

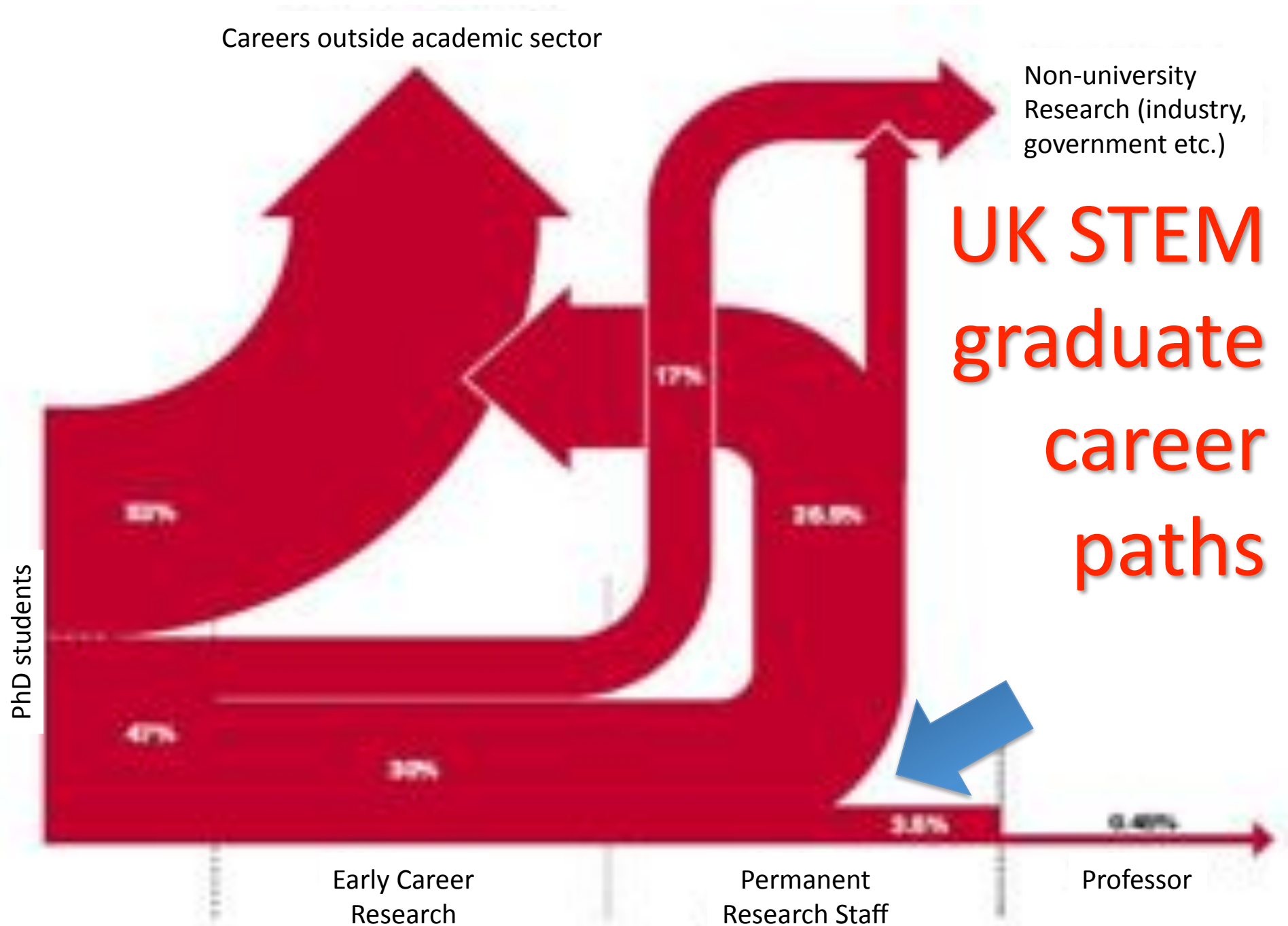
Research is increasingly digital. Twenty-first century research has been characterised by the rise of digital methods, the third and fourth paradigms of science – computational simulation and data-intensive research. In their turn, these new approaches are both built on a common foundation – computer software. Not despite this increasing reliance on software in research, professional practices for developing research software in academia lag far behind those in the commercial sector. Computational research tools are often fragile, generally not sustainable or usable beyond the lifetime of a given project, and frequently unsuitable for scrutiny. Those trained solely within academia often employ ad-hoc or casual development techniques. Institutions miss out on opportunities to increase the impact of their research by producing robust software deliverables that could be used and cited by their peers.

Computational work must reflect the committed attitude of experimentalists towards caring about precise, professional, repeatable, meticulous work – no-one with the same casual attitude to experimental instrumentation as many researchers have to code would be allowed anywhere near a lab. This is striking considering how often research results now depend on software.

Software engineering professionals are trained in best practices, and in the best commercial institutions follow a disciplined approach to the design, construction, testing and maintenance of software systems. Through leveraging these skills within academia by employing contract programmers typically fail, due to otherwise talented programmers lacking sufficient research experience and a necessary appreciation of the significant cultural differences between business and academia. Software engineers that do have research experience and

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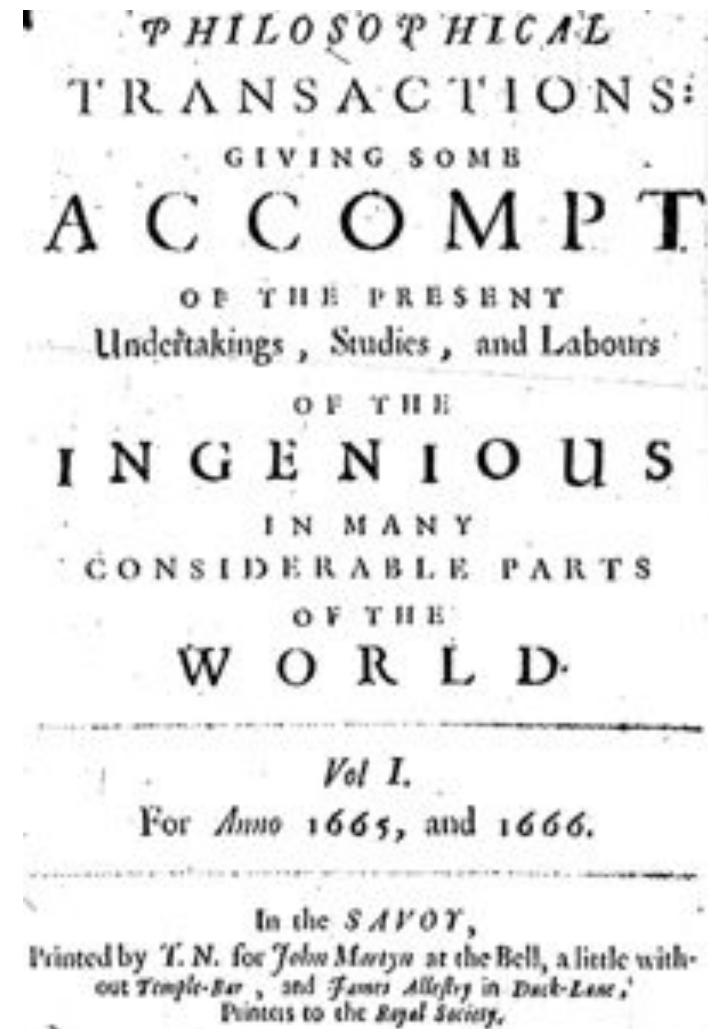
Source: *The Scientific Century*, Royal Society, 2010 (revised to reflect first stage clarification from "What Do PhD's Do?" study)

Shake up the system



www.software.ac.uk

- “*Swim or drown*” is not an efficient learning method
- “*Publish or perish*” is not an effective reward mechanism
- “*Becoming a Professor*” is not a scalable career path
- “*I’ll just have to do it myself*” is not a modern way of doing science



The people behind research software

The people behind research software - Research Software Engineers (RSEs) - lack recognition and reward for the incredible contribution they make to research. The RSE Community have come together to raise awareness of this issue, to campaign for change, and to share knowledge and collaborate to improve research software.

Are you a Research Software Engineer?

People who combine expertise with software and an intricate understanding of research...

Join us!

What can I do to help?

You can help by joining us, by raising awareness of research software engineering...

Our Objectives

We will create a community for the UK's Research Software Engineers...

Why does it matter?

If the UK is to continue to be a major research leader, effort and resources must be invested...

Supporters

Who's helping the community...

Join the RSE community at <http://www.rse.ac.uk/>

A national facility for cultivating world-class research through software



www.software.ac.uk

Some of our collaborations



Become our next collaborators!

Website: www.software.ac.uk
Email: info@software.ac.uk
Twitter: twitter.com/SoftwareSaved

