

## About our ways of doing science

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Maybe you have also started noticing that our actual way of doing science sucks big time. I have talked about this with many people now, and I have to accept that I've got very surprised to read this:

### [Physicist Peter Higgs: No University Would Employ Me Today](#)

Posted by [Soulskill](#) on Saturday December 07, 2013 @11:33AM  
from the there's-always-money-in-the-banana-stand dept.

An anonymous reader writes "[Peter Higgs](#), the physicist who laid the groundwork for the discovery of the Higgs boson and winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics, says [he doubts any university would give him a job today](#). Higgs says universities wouldn't consider him productive enough — though the papers he published were important and of high quality, he didn't have the volume necessary for serious consideration in today's competitive employment environment. 'He doubts a similar breakthrough could be achieved in today's academic culture, because of the expectations on academics to collaborate and keep churning out papers. He said: "It's difficult to imagine how I would ever have enough peace and quiet in the present sort of climate to do what I did in 1964." Speaking to the Guardian en route to Stockholm to receive the 2013 Nobel prize for science, Higgs, 84, said he would almost certainly have been sacked had he not been nominated for the Nobel in 1980.' His comments highlight the absurdity of the current system for finding researchers in academia. How many researchers of Higgs' caliber have been turned down for similar reasons?"

Complete

story: <http://science.slashdot.org/story/13/12/07/1546212/physicist-peter-higgs-no-university-would-employ-me-today>

Now, we live in a world that is full of \*insane\* competition. As for being PhD students, we all are like islands just doing our work to get as many publications as possible in order to then have our

positions in the university or wherever we want. This was not the case, for example, in those gold years of the quantum mechanics. I really don't know where this will end up, but I hope that we, as the future, will try to change this fact. As for now, we cannot say we are not immerse in this situation (I'd not believe it). I think the scientific community needs to change this stupid competition and the idea of being "famous islands". In my humble opinion, the problem is a result of the system. Everything now is based on this capitalist idea like if science was an economic thing or a product. In some way, human beings like competition but let's try then to turn it into a sane thing.

It is not a secret that science is full of imagination, and creativity. These two ingredients are very affected by pressure, and stress (which is very normal when for example you are doing PhD). I suggest you to [check this video](#) to see what I mean. So, I'd not blame current professors for this but maybe the governments (?)... This is a very touchy subject in general, but I'd like to clarify that I don't imply we should get funding for an infinity period of time. Of course results are needed to justify funding, but in order to produce good ones, pressure and volume are two factors not very useful to accomplish this. I'm sure that only having the point of view as a PhD student is not enough to understand the complexity of this situation. Maybe I'm attributing the faulty to one part when actually there are more parts involved. However, I cannot stop feeling frustrated of not being able to share some part of my works with some colleagues because normally what I get is not what's expected. I have found so far few people whose definition of discussion is very near to this one:

Def. the action or process of talking about something, typically in order to reach a decision or to exchange ideas.

There are no words to express how sad I think it is the fact that it is not possible to have scientific discussions that fit into this definition. Normally what you get is a wild expression of wisdom, and superiority which is a consequence of this insane competition. I really don't see the point in such behavior, because it seems in some way childish. Knowledge is not something that should die with the person, but something to be spread and shared in good manners. Yes, times change but my question is: is this change good at all?. If somebody who was awarded with a nobel prize thought about our times like this, it means that he really believes that in these conditions he wouldn't have been capable of proposing his theory. This is not only alarming, but also sad for us!. Because it means our chances to do something relevant for the world are being reduced, and in one or another way it is knowledge and humanity itself who is being harmed.