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O brother, Where Art Thou (communicating)?

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George Clooney's character Everett in *O brother, Where Art Thou?* thinks that his 'capacity for abstract thoughts' makes him the natural leader of a group of three escaped convicts. As the film progresses, it becomes clear that Everett is as clueless as his companions. But in the end they combine their limited abilities; they succeed and even rocket to stardom!

As communicators let's combine knowledge. We are all challenged by an ever-expanding job description and are stumbling from one aspect into another. **Take, for example, parsing out relevant data.** A massive amount of data – Big Data – floods in and demands analysis. How are we doing as statisticians? Are we drowning in data or staying in control? Can we effectively use this data? **What about communications strategy?** Competition is high, secured funding was yesterday. Times are gone where an overseable to-do list could be played by ear. How many of us keep an updated communications strategy in their repertoire? Why or why not? **Then there is social media.** Do we make optimal use of the opportunities social media hold? Or do we misuse these channels to issue our very same press release? **Take collaboration.** Social networks are all about sharing in an unprecedented speed. Both aspects require top-down transfer of power and trust to interact timely which in turn means loss of power for some within the organisation. Does that still matter? **Lastly branding.** Does sharing weaken branding? Can we build solid social reputation for our brand, the new currency in the virtual world? And if so how?

EUROfusion's communications office works on the answers to these questions. Can we be successful in this? We are not sure. And the authors wonder: Brother, Where Art Thou?

So, the spirit of sharing guides this activity at PARI that starts with an introduction into the topics. Afterwards the authors invite the participants to discuss one topic of their choice described above. The authors don't possess the silver bullet but seek salvation from sharing and learning. Learn from us as we learn from you. Contact details are shared during the session and – depending on the resonance – collaboration afterwards is thinkable.

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