**Project Title:** The natural history of social information gathering: Human and animal perspectives

**Key Words:** Cognition reputation evolution animal biology sociality

**Brief Description:**
Social cooperation is a crucial to the functioning of human societies. A longstanding mystery in the evolution of humankind is how we have evolved to be cooperative animals despite the inherently competitive nature of evolution. In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in solving this mystery. We know that human beings are cooperative owing to the phenomenon of “reputation” which I have defined as “knowledge of an individual’s typical behaviour based on a knowledge of that individual’s past behaviour” (Russell, 2007; Russell, Call, & Dunbar, 2008). Reputation regulates behaviour in at least two ways: (1) people manage their own reputations by acting in certain ways, and (2) people are generally more cooperative towards those they have seen being cooperative to others. Reputation has been studied extensively in various human disciplines (e.g. commerce, economics, psychology), but there has been little analysis of reputation as it occurs in the animal kingdom as a way of understanding how this propensity evolved in humans. Animals are highly observant of each other and can be said to have a kind of (non-linguistic) pre-human ability to keep track of reputation. I have been developing an empirical research program to investigate this area.

**Relevant Publications:**

**Further Details:**
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