October 18, 2017

By Chelsea Walton

How to pick a research project?

This is <u>tough</u>, one of the hardest parts of research.

Obvious point

project should <u>not already</u> be done by others

WANT

Something that you can get obsessed over

* easiest to determine

* harder to navigate with multiple collaborators

Not-too-obvious point

has to build upon prior knowledge & skill set. There is a price in time & energy when learning new material

*

SHOULD

people will actually read / use / cite your results (even if not immediately)

* harder to determine, requires knowledge of literature;

talking to experts helps

CAN

you're able to get the project done in a finite amount of time;

e.g. by job deadlines for junior mathematicians

* hardest to determine

* easier to navigate with multiple collaborators

For Students —

Off the beaten path: No competition!