OPINION

Genetics giant on the move

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Everyone in the scientific community is talking about **Francis Collins**? unexpected **decision to step down** on 1 August as director of the **US National Human Genome Research Institute**.

Collins is a giant among geneticists, and championed many pivotal projects including, most notably, the **Human Genome Project**. Among his newer ventures are the **Cancer Genome Atlas** and the signing into law of **GINA**, the genetic antidiscrimination bill that had circulated in Congress for more than a decade.

Here at the foundation, we have on occasion turned to his expertise to address the complex genetics of autism.

But at 58, Collins is far too young to retire, which is why, when I heard about this yesterday at the **World Science Festival**, there was instant speculation among attendees about his next move.

At a press conference yesterday (**listen**), Collins said he might consider taking over as head of the National Institutes of Health when the current director, **Elias Zerhouni**, steps down. He may also, apparently, be interested in serving as science advisor to the next President. That, as we all know, would be a welcome change from the current nonsense/nonscience-led administration.

But neither of those events is imminent, which leaves me still wondering: where is Collins headed?