In science as in life, it is often useful to ask "what are the consequences of not proceeding". Systems Biology has a long history, going back sixty years to Norbert Wiener if not to earlier ideas on homeostasis, and so we might ask with the prophet 'is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new?' (Ecclesiastes, 1:10). Over fifty years ago, Randall (Proc. Royal Soc. (1951), 208, 1) was extolling the need for interdisciplinary working, to support "An Experiment in Biophysics", an exhortation with which we are all too familiar today. While we have tools to generate and occasionally integrate large data sets, the need for slow careful thought and biological validation risks becoming a second tier activity. Knowledge management is a key part of modern science, yet some of the largest databases are held and mined, not by scientists, but by financial and news organisations such as Bloomberg, Reuters and CNN. It was not a flippant comment when, in an unsigned article (Nature, (2000), 403, 345), it was asked "Can biological phenomena be understood by humans", and it should give us pause to reflect on whether Systems Biology is just another fashion, or will add new insight otherwise lost.