Swansea University Increase to funding and research profile with Idox's ResearchConnect

"**Swansea University has experienced a strong year of research income capture, much of which flows from high numbers of grant applications that ResearchConnect has helped us to identify.**"

Julie Wlliams
Associate Director, Department for Research, Engagement &
Innovation Services (REIS)
Swansea University

Background:
A growing, research-intensive university
Established in 1920, Swansea University is a research-led university with a long history of working with business and industry. The University's research changes lives, drives innovation and regional growth, and is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It positively impacts our culture and society, as well as health and well-being, the economy and the planet. Having celebrated its centenary in 2020, the University has achieved exceptional success in recent years with its research activity, exceeding that of many larger universities.

Challenges:
Capitalising on research funding opportunities across broad faculties
As a research-intensive university, Swansea University undertakes a broad portfolio of research projects across its three Faculties and their numerous areas of thematic research focus. Consequently, it's vital to match the researchers' interests and goals with relevant funding opportunities that give them the best chances of success, fit and quality to undertake the research they intend to do.

One of Swansea University's strategic goals is to continue to increase its research profile and funding capture across a range of providers. Fortunately, there are a good variety of funding sources covering a wide spectrum, from research councils and major charities to niche research schemes and small charities with specific focuses. But trying to keep up to date with the volume of updates regarding funders and schemes that come and go can be a daunting task. Additionally, the University has typically sourced many funds from Europe, but given the current economic and political challenges, there is uncertainty surrounding the future outlook of some funds. As such, the University is focused on diversifying its portfolio of funders to ensure that it is not over-reliant on any particular funding stream. But to do that, it requires access to accurate, high-quality, up-to-date sources of information about funders and their schemes.

Solution:
Streamlined access to accurate, reliable and up-to-date information on research funding

The University had a research funding database in place previously but during a time of particular financial stress across the entire higher education sector, it was seeking to maximise value for money while providing its research community with streamlined access to accurate, reliable and up-to-date information on funding opportunities.

Having researched funding database solutions in the market and comparing cost and functionality against the incumbent platform, the University decided to proceed with Idox's ResearchConnect. ResearchConnect is a specialist, up-to-date research funding database. Designed in collaboration with the international research community, it supports individuals and organisations to identify, share and benefit from the widest variety of funding sources to suit the broadest range of research disciplines.

One of the most important factors for Swansea University in identifying the right solution was the breadth and quality of information available from the service to ensure the University would not miss out on crucial funding opportunities, especially in niche areas. Dominic Parkes, Bid Writer and Editor, Department for Research, Engagement and Innovation Services (REIS), Swansea University comments, "It was vital for us to be able to rely on a service that presents relevant funding opportunities to suit a broad spectrum of research themes to ensure that we've explored all available options for research grants. But what sets ResearchConnect apart is the quality of information. Each opportunity is presented with a detailed summary of the fund on one page, which provides our academic colleagues with all the information they need quickly and easily."

Another quality that the University saw in ResearchConnect was its ease of use. Dominic explains, "We're effectively marketing ResearchConnect internally to our academic colleagues and encouraging them to self-serve, using it when they need to identify funding opportunities that meet their requirements. They are incredibly busy people, so the solution has to be intuitive and easy to use, which the Idox team has achieved. Particularly with the new interface, ResearchConnect requires little or no specific training so users can pick it up within minutes and achieve useful and valuable results." and send every single application and the supporting documents to the parish councils – saving us a significant amount of time and money," Mark highlights.

Outcome:
Increasing income capture and upscaling presence within the research landscape

Swansea University has seen strong usage of ResearchConnect across its user base, with an increase in funding views of 57% year on year. As a research-focused higher education institution whose strategic goal is to continue to increase the quality and reach of its research, it continues to see its user base expanding. According to Julie Williams, Associate Director of REIS, "Swansea University has experienced a strong year of research income capture, much of which flows from high numbers of grant applications that ResearchConnect has helped us to identify. As part of the overall strategic direction and drive to increase funding for the University, we're very happy with how we are upscaling our presence within the research landscape and ultimately achieving the impact that flows from transformative research."

Julie continues, "The research development team supports researchers to bid for and win funding and we constantly engage with funders and in horizon scanning to enable us to anticipate and respond to future opportunities that play to our demonstrable strengths. ResearchConnect ensures the service we provide is current and responsive".

Commenting on the overall experience of working with Idox, Dominic explains, "Whenever I've needed to escalate any issues that I can't resolve internally, the response I get is always prompt and helpful. And whenever there have been changes in the platform that might require new training or information, the support has been excellent. Idox has also helped us to run high-quality training events for university and academic staff that are always well attended.

"When it comes to selecting solutions that suit the higher education sector, I believe the fewer clicks and less time required from the user, the better. Using the platform myself, I know that it is quick and straightforward to get useful results, fast, and without requiring expert knowledge. Since we rolled out the solution, I've received lots of positive feedback about how useful the service will be to colleagues and how intuitive it is in presenting the most relevant opportunities via simple filters.

"With the latest update, it's become closer to the experience of Google, which is something we all know and understand – that's the benchmark for searching any online database and the new ResearchConnect interface has moved us closer to that."

Call us now on 0333 011 1200 or email marketing@idoxgroup.com to find out more about Idox's funding solutions.

idox