CASE STUDY

RTI INTERNATIONAL, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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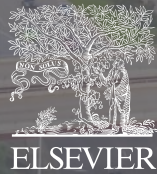
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RTI International's move from their DIY solution to *Pure* provided the right balance of a stable and reliable solution that also allowed customisation. Partnering a small and empowered internal team with a Pure project manager resulted in a smooth and rapid implementation.

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BACKGROUND

This case study is excerpted from the the 2020 whitepaper "Buy or build, an exploration of the total cost of ownership for a research information management system". Research institutions seeking to improve performance and accelerate growth are encouraged to read the whitepaper: **https://bit.ly/2M76AHi.**

RTI International is a US-headquartered research institute founded in 1958 as a collaboration between government, industry and three North Carolina Universities. Today RTI has more than 5,000 worldwide members of staff and produces over 1,000 journal articles annually.

To track its scientific stature, RTI used a home-grown system based on SharePoint and incorporating other databases, including an internal database of employee profiles. This system required extensive administrative resources to maintain and was not meeting the evolving needs at RTI to pro-actively manage their research information, especially regarding research outputs.

RTI had been investigating commercial RIMS solutions for some time by 2016, when they saw a presentation of *Pure*. They quickly concluded that the system was what RTI needed, and a management decision was taken soon after to procure *Pure*.

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IMPLEMENTATION & OPERATION

RTI initiated their implementation in June 2016 and went live about 4 months later, using *Pure's* Core Module for managing research outputs. They launched the *Pure* Portal internally and activated an additional feed from *Pure* to RTI's website to make desired information on researchers and their outputs available to the public.

Internally, RTI had a team of 3-4 FTE that worked closely with a project manager from Elsevier throughout the implementation. In addition to from setting up the *Pure* Portal, the implementation included migration of all existing publication data, mostly from the SharePoint system, and researcher profiles and activities from the employee database.

To automate the import of research outputs into *Pure*, RTI uses Web of Science and PubMed as sources. RTI has a long tradition of working with the Web of Science rather than Scopus and valued *Pure's* capabilities to be agnostic with regards to the online sources that are integrated.

For regular operations, RTI has committed 1 FTE for all data import and validation on behalf of the researchers and 0.8 FTE for the overall administration and coordination of the work related to *Pure*. In addition, some editors spend 1-2 days per month working in *Pure*, and another person is engaged from time to time to ensure information on external organisations is kept up to date.

There are about 2,000 active researcher accounts that use *Pure* to add conference contributions, activities, and other items not added by the central team. Research information directly input by researchers is validated by the central team. As *Pure* is used to support the annual awards process, the highest researcher activity in *Pure* is concentrated in December and January, but it averages out to 2-3 hours per researcher per month. This varies greatly depending on unique circumstances. For example, activity intensified when ORCID IDs were added and researchers were required to add or connect their ORCID accounts with their *Pure* account.

> "*Pure* is sort of the middle-line of having something that is very stable, well-constructed and works properly at the same time as it allows for a lot of customisation."
>
> Bonnie Nelson, Research Librarian

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RESULTS & LESSONS LEARNED

RTI has learned a number of lessons, especially regarding implementation:

- **Home-grown systems require significant resources that are difficult to scale up or expand.** RTI determined that their DIY solution was not viable as a long-term option. The home-grown system required extensive resources internally and couldn't meet the needs for reporting, automated content handling and visibility of researcher profiles.

- **A small, experienced and decisive internal implementation team is essential.** The implementation went very smoothly, and a key factor in that success was the preparation and organisation of the internal project team. Almost all decisions could be taken within the 4-person project team, which ensured a quick turnaround on any topic.

- **An Elsevier project manager helps with a smooth implementation.** RTI decided to engage an Elsevier project manager and felt that the guidance and support provided throughout the process helped leverage best practices and avoid pitfalls.

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For more detail about selecting and implementing RIMS, review the Elsevier/Knowledge E whitepaper "Buy or build, an exploration of the total cost of ownership for a research information management system": **https://bit.ly/2M76AHi**

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