Why Pure has become the cornerstone of one young university's smart campus strategy

Research Intelligence

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Make confident program decisions, streamline funding analysis and forge new partnerships with complete, correct, current and connected information around research activities.

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Prof. David Gershoni
Vice Chancellor
GTIIT, China

> " Pure is a highly integrated and versatile system with the major modules, functionality and flexibility that institutions are seeking. "

With the help of Pure, China's GTIIT is building digital connections that are driving research capacity, supporting reporting and collaboration, and streamlining workflows

Since the official launch of Guangdong Technion-Israel Institute of Technology (GTIIT) in 2017, tracking and reporting on the university's research activities has been a manual task for Rita Zhou and her colleagues in the Research, Informatics and Graduate Studies Office. *In this case study, Rita and Michael Zhang, Director of the university's IT department, explain why the introduction of Pure in 2020 triggered an ongoing transformation in GTIIT's research culture.*

Background

As Senior Data & Analytics Manager at GTIIT, Rita's role has been a varied one since she joined the university in 2017. Alongside managing research information and developing and maintaining research data systems, she is responsible for the design, development and maintenance of the research office websites.

From the very beginning, with the ongoing sponsorship of ex-Vice Chancellor Prof. Eliezer Shalev, the university's goal was to introduce an integrated research information management system (RIMS) to support all the administrative work done by Rita and her colleagues.

So, in 2019, GTIIT set out to find a RIMS with a public-facing portal to help them address the various challenges they faced. For example, at that stage, Rita and the rest of the team were relying on Excel spreadsheets to manage research information, which were manually completed, validated and circulated. This not only absorbed a huge amount of their time, but also resulted in duplicate records, incorrectly entered data and a lack of engagement among some departments. Drawing out the relevant data for reporting was also proving a challenge.

After a comprehensive selection process, GTIIT opted for Pure and now subscribes to the Pure core module, along with the portal, award management, reporting and CV modules. Since the portal went live at the end of 2020, they've received more than 11,800 visits from over 130 countries and regions. To date, more than 5,890 publications have been imported.

How GTIIT is leveraging Pure to address research challenges

Challenge #1: Improve publication data quality
Prior to Pure

After joining the research office, Rita relied on alerts from external sources, such as Scopus and Web of Science, to track research outputs; however, she would often receive multiple alerts about the same publication from different sources, which increased the duplicate entries in their Excel files.

Since the introduction of Pure …

Now Pure automatically imports new publications from Scopus, saving the team time and improving data accuracy. In addition, they can draw in extra information about the publications from Scopus; for example, citation data, which is proving very helpful for reporting, according to Rita.

Rita and her team have also noticed an increase in researcher engagement. "They care a lot about whether new publications have been added to their profile, and, if there is a delay in a publication being added, they contact us to ask why. That's a very positive change, because previously it was really challenging to collect information from them."

Challenge #2: Eliminate manual workarounds
Prior to Pure

With so much research information managed manually, the

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research office was under constant pressure. Rita explains: "The work was very labor intensive. And because I am a very detail-oriented person, I would spend extra time trying to ensure everything was accurate. As a result, I had little time left over to focus on higher, management-level tasks."

Since the introduction of Pure…

Although GTIIT is still in the process of migrating data and validating it in Pure, it already perceives a great improvement. According to Rita: "Pure is now aggregating our research information, reducing the administration burden and providing insight into the research landscape. Once all the modules are complete, we'll set up dashboards, so that key stakeholders can easily track research progress, and we'll provide them with regular data reports and analytics."

Challenge #3: Comply with government reporting mandates

Prior to Pure

A major challenge the team faced was meeting the university's various reporting demands. They must supply specific data for government-mandated reports at national, provincial and municipal levels within very short timeframes. In addition, they need to comply with reporting requests from the university senior management. With the Excel spreadsheets, it wasn't easy to develop reporting templates as each new report required different fields and columns.

Since the introduction of Pure…

According to Rita, with Pure's reporting module, the team can work quickly and independently, and the customization of the data fields is proving "very flexible". She adds: "Although the new reporting module is still under development, it has shown its advantages. It has a very user-friendly, straightforward interface; all you need to do is search for and select relevant fields." For Rita, the variety of data that can be extracted, the ability to sort it, and the opportunities to select related information mean that you always "get the result you want". In addition, the customized keyword fields can be extracted, which helps Rita and her colleagues comply with government reporting mandates.

Rita Zhou
Senior Data & Analytics Manager, Research, Informatics and Graduate Studies Office, GTIIT, China

> " Pure is aggregating our research information, reducing the administration burden, providing insight into the research landscape, showcasing researchers' expertise, and helping us find potential collaborations internally and globally. "

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Michael Zhang
IT Director
GTIIT, China

" Pure's modules shed light on our top-notch research capabilities inherited from our home university, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, while its domestic-cloud-deployment practice ensures data security compliance with China's laws and regulations. Pure makes a remarkable contribution to our five-year smart campus strategy. "

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Challenge #4: Showcase researchers and their work

Prior to Pure

As a new university, increasing the visibility of researchers and their achievements is vital for GTIIT. Although Rita's team posted researcher profiles on the university's website, they weren't easy to find or search. In addition, they were limited with regards to the volume of information they could show.

The data collection process was also very labor-intensive for the team, as Rita explains: "We had to manually collect personnel information from our Human Resources department, and biographies, research interests, representative publications and photos from the researchers themselves. We spent a lot of time chasing and validating information. And each update had to be manually applied in multiple locations."

Since the introduction of Pure…

The GTIIT Pure portal is now home to researcher profiles that are automatically updated with new publications. In addition, GTIIT can select the information it wants to appear. "It's really very easy," says Rita. "And researchers can log in and update their own profiles, which will ease the burden on us. Our next step is to set up logins for them and initiate training." Importantly, Rita has seen an increase in the volume of GTIIT researcher profiles appearing in the search results of major search engines, helping to showcase the university's research expertise globally.

GTIIT also subscribes to Pure's CV module, which enables researchers to create dynamic CVs with new content in multiple versions based on pre-defined formats. Rita says: "It will save researchers so much time. I think it's fantastic and I hope it continues to evolve with more flexibility to add filters to generate CVs with specific content. In the near future, we hope to use the CV module and the reporting functionality to support our management team strategically." Plans include using them to:

- Monitor research progress and guide strategic plans for future development
- Inform decisions on resource allocation
- Find strong / qualified candidates for major funding program applications
- Contribute to researchers' performance reviews

Challenge #5: Track and support funding awards

Prior to Pure

Managing research grants/projects was also an inefficient task for Rita and the team. Their workflow involves multiple departments, including the university's research and finance office. A co-edited Excel spreadsheet at SharePoint was used to track the grant information, but collaborating interdepartmentally on the same spreadsheet proved challenging, according to Rita: "It involved great efforts to track updates and remind people."

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GTIIT now has the **Pure awards management module** and has imported its grant information. Because the data is stored centrally, it's easy for members of the research and finance offices to access award information, while budget information can be recorded clearly under each grant with double validation by the finance office. In addition, grant information can be shared with others in minutes by filtering / exporting selected records.

Rita adds: "No more manual spreadsheets. With this consolidated data, we feel more confident about our data sources and our reporting."

Why Pure? GTIIT's journey to find a new RIMS

During the RIMS selection process, GTIIT compared the popular systems on the market, based on their ability to address the research challenges featured in this case study. In particular, it wanted a system that could combine research data drawn from multiple sources to create a single source of truth. Rita says: "We found that Pure was the only system that integrated all those features."

There were also a number of other factors that drew the GTIIT RIMS selection team to Pure.

- **Ease of use:** Rita says: "My first impression when I used the Pure demonstration system was that it is very user friendly and

"As a young university, we strive to build our research capabilities, which will give us a competitive advantage over other Sino-foreign cooperative universities and other Chinese universities. Pure helps us consolidate all our research outputs and build a portal to showcase our research strengths and capabilities as we expand."

– Michael Zhang

straightforward. With other systems, it's easy to forget where and how to access the content you want, and you have to refer to the manual."

- **Comprehensive features:** According to Rita, the more she learned about Pure, the more she discovered features that can help her and her team in their work. "For example, it's

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very easy to save filter options, which really helps us with our different reporting needs."

- **Multilingual interface:** As a Sino-foreign cooperative university, GTIIT works in at least two languages – Chinese and English – which are both catered for by Pure.

- **Expert support team and access to a user network:** Michael says: "Apart from the Pure system itself, the project team from Elsevier demonstrated their professionalism and international ethics during the system implementation stage. For example, they actively shared the practice of other international universities and properly tuned the implementation plan - this fueled the confidence of GTIIT's project team. Moreover, our involvement in the Hong Kong Pure user group and leadership of the China Pure user group has ushered in a new chapter of GTIIT's research services."

Rita adds: "I've learned a lot. For me, support during the implementation process was important. The recommended time schedules were very reasonable, and we just followed the advice of our implementation manager, which meant we didn't have to worry."

- **Free upgrades and secure cloud-based system in China:** Deploying the Elsevier Pure system in the AWS (China) platform mitigated legal compliance risks for GTIIT. In addition, the Elsevier support team takes care of data backups, system patches or security issues, which, according to Michael, means the addition to GTIIT's in-house IT team's workload has been almost zero.

Prof. Wayne D. Kaplan
Pro-Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs
GTIIT, China

"Prof. Wayne D. Kaplan, the university's Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, was very interested in Pure's CV module when I reported our plan to use it. He mentioned that he hadn't seen dynamic CVs integrated into a solution before. He believes it will change researchers' lives."

— Rita Zhou

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About Guangdong Technion-Israel Institute of Technology (GTIIT)

GTIIT is a Sino-foreign cooperative educational institution established by the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology (the Technion) and Shantou University (STU) in 2016. Located in the city of Shantou, Guangdong province, English is GTIIT's language of instruction.

GTIIT's vision is to become a leading research university, conducting cutting-edge research in the fields of science and technology. This research will boost entrepreneurship and technology transfer, and foster a high-tech industrial ecosystem in Shantou and Guangdong Province. The establishment of GTIIT is supported by the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Shantou Municipal Government, and the Li Ka Shing Foundation (LKSF).

GTIIT has been listed in the Guangdong High Level University Development Program. Four disciplines, including Materials Science and Engineering, Biotechnology and Food Engineering, Chemical Engineering, and Environmental Science and Engineering are listed as key disciplines. The institute will eventually grant Technion engineering degrees at all levels - Bachelor, Masters and PhD - and maintain the high academic standards of education, research and innovation for which the Technion's Haifa campus is world-renowned.

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Elsevier offices

ASIA AND AUSTRALIA
Tel: + 65 6349 0222

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Tel: + 81 3 5561 5034

KOREA AND TAIWAN
Tel: +82 2 6714 3000

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA
Tel: +31 20 485 3767

NORTH AMERICA, CENTRAL AMERICA AND CANADA
Tel: +1 888 615 4500

SOUTH AMERICA
Tel: +55 21 3970 9300

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