



Parkinsons

Gaining a wider understanding of the impact of grants

This case study discusses how researchfish has provided Parkinson's UK with greater insight into the impact of their research and saved time digging through qualitative reports to find out specific pieces of information.

“ researchfish is particularly useful for getting information about the wider impact of our grants, beyond academic impact. Examples include engagement with the Parkinson's community and policy influences. These types of impact may not be captured in the annual or final reports as sometimes they happen long after the grant has ended. Because we track grant outputs 5 years after they finish on researchfish, we can understand the longer impact of our research. Without researchfish it would be more difficult to understand our research portfolio as a whole, produce statistics and answer queries. researchfish has provided us with greater insight into the impact of our research and saved time digging through qualitative reports to find out specific pieces of information. ”

Hanna Gillespie-Gallery
Grants and Evaluation Officer

Every hour, someone in the UK is told they have Parkinson's — a brain condition that turns lives upside down, leaving a future full of uncertainty.

[Parkinson's UK](#) is a charity to make sure people have whatever they need to take back control — from information to inspiration.

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“We want everyone to get the best health and social care. So we bring professionals together to drive improvements that enable people to live life to the full. Ultimately, we want to end Parkinson’s. That’s why we inspire and support the international research community to develop life-changing treatments, faster. And we won’t stop until we find a cure. Together we can bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson’s.”

researchfish spoke to Hanna Gillespie-Gallery, Parkinson’s UK Research Grants and Evaluation Officer, about her role that includes measuring the impact of the research they fund.

Parkinson’s UK had their first submission period in 2012 and have used researchfish annually ever since.

“We use researchfish to measure all the different kinds of impact our research has,” explained Hanna. “At a basic level, we can use researchfish data to track outputs of particular grants or grant schemes and assess the productivity of our grant programs such as by looking at publications produced over the years.”

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Another way Parkinson’s UK uses researchfish is to help them identify interesting research projects that they can explore more deeply with a case study. For example, they can look at the overall outputs of all research studies and can see that a particular study has produced many patents which they will then explore in more depth. For example, case studies are shared in Parkinson’s UK [Progress Magazine](#).

“We get queries from colleagues in fundraising who would like very specific information about the research, often as a result of a query from a specific trust that has funded that project. Having access to up-to-date information on the outputs of the project and being able to download a summary document often helps to answer these queries quickly.”

Finally, another way the researchfish data is useful to Parkinson’s UK is how it is a starting point to find out more information from other websites. For example, as the data feeds into EuropePMC, it’s great to link the papers reported in researchfish to citations of those papers.

Hanna explained why measuring impact is important. “Firstly to communicate with our supporters who work really hard to support research. They want to know how the research is working towards a cure for Parkinson’s or improving everyday life with the condition. Another reason is to ensure that the research we fund is impactful and productive which shows that our grant programs are effective.”

Measuring impact before researchfish

Before researchfish, Parkinson's UK collected information through annual and final reports only. "This was useful to provide an in-depth, qualitative overview of the progress of the project against its stated aims, but doesn't detail the outputs in a standardised way. It was difficult to bring all the outputs together and analyse them."

"It was difficult to get a quantitative overview of the outputs of our research and pick out projects that were strong in certain areas. The charity wasn't looking out for a solution but researchfish presented itself. This was helped by the [Association of Medical Research Charities \(AMRC\)](#) and the fact that other charities were interested in using it."

"researchfish makes it easier to answer specific queries from other staff in the organisation and provide specific examples quickly. We can look at the big picture of how our funded research is having impact as a whole (e.g. total number of papers) rather than just looking at individual projects."

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The next five years for research impact assessment

It looks like there will be a move towards data sharing with the AMRC member charities that would be really useful for benchmarking and collaborating on techniques and ideas for analysis. Now that we have research data from a couple of years we aim to have interesting statistics on the long-term impact of our research that would be valuable to share with our supporters.

If you don't use researchfish?

"Depending on your portfolio size, researchfish can really help to get an overview of the impact of the research you fund as a whole, save time in the long run when trying to answer queries and help communication with supporters," concluded Hanna.

About Interfolio

Conceived by academics for academics, Interfolio is an education technology company headquartered in Washington, DC, USA and in Cambridge, England, UK. Founded in 1999, Interfolio operates the acclaimed Faculty Information System, the Researchfish impact assessment platform, and the widely used Dossier service. Over 400 clients based in 15 countries choose Interfolio's technology for hiring and recruitment, academic appointments and timelines, activity data reporting, faculty reviews and promotions, and research impact analysis. For more information about Interfolio, please contact team@interfolio.com.