



About

• **Floris van der Leest**, is Manager, Research Information Systems at Victoria University, Australia. The University hosts five research institutes and six research centers in seven Colleges. Research focus areas are built around three themes: Sports, Health and Active Living; Education and Lifelong Learning, and Sustainable Industries and Livable Cities.

Goals

• To provide a simple means of harvesting and managing publications for faculty members and affiliated researchers

Approach

- Implement Symplectic Elements to replace the manual publication registration process
- Use Symplectic Elements as a data harvester within the context of the institution's established research information system architecture



Floris van der Leest

A pathway to more efficient publication management and more

Floris van der Leest's role in the Office for Research at Victoria University is to manage the systems and processes that support the institution's external and internal research reporting requirements.

In a previous role at James Cook University, Floris developed a research profile system - <https://research.jcu.edu.au/portfolio/> - which is considered "best of breed" within Australia.

When Floris moved to Victoria University 18 months ago to take on the role of Manager, Research Information Systems he started to work with Symplectic Elements. "I was there at the starting point when Elements was implemented in the institution," he says. "I fed it with data out of the ePrints institutional repository for publications and the legacy research information management system."

Currently, Elements is used as a data harvester at Victoria University. Floris summarizes its strength: "Elements makes it easy for researchers or their representatives to claim or collect appropriate publication bibliographical data where required."

Replacing a very manual process

Before Elements was implemented, this process for publications management was completely manual. "A faculty member would be required to submit their manuscript for a journal article in person to the research office with a cover sheet, and an assistant would enter it into the legacy system," says Floris. "If they were timely, the manuscript would also be entered into the institutional repository." This was a very labour-intensive process, requiring the manuscript to be printed out and a cover sheet with metadata added. Temporary workers were needed to put the information into the system.

Key strength of Elements

Symplectic Elements does an excellent job of de-duplication of publications and provides Floris and his team with high quality metadata covering the outputs of their scholars.

Reporting requirements

Symplectic Elements is also used to gather data for internal institutional reporting exercises. The Office for Research now uses Symplectic Elements to prepare the returns for the annual publication collection and for the ERA (Excellence in Research Australia) Exercise. "The University measures the individual research activity of academic staff. This Measure of Research

cont.

Results

- Manual intervention by researchers is minimized when registering publications
- Clean data can easily be produced for assessment exercises such as ERA, HERDC and internal institutional measures
- Data can be re-used by administrators to represent and visualize accurately the University's academic and industrial collaborations. This is especially important with the change in focus towards encouraging industrial collaboration in the Australian research landscape
- Since implementation 18 months ago, 433 of the current 577 (75%) academic staff with a research or teaching & research function at Victoria University have logged in at least once into Elements
- Over the last year (March 2015 - March 2016), 69% of the academic staff have logged in to Elements at least once
- Of those who logged in to Elements over the last year, 72% logged in 1-5 times, 13% 6-10 times, and 5% logged in more than 20 times
- Of the 3,803 outputs claimed in Elements since its inception, 1,045 outputs (27%) have been deposited in the Victorian University Research Repository, of which 87% have a publicly accessible URL such as <http://vuir.vu.edu.au/28918/>

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Activity (MoRA) uses established and verifiable research metrics and incorporates weightings designed to strongly drive research quality and collaboration. MoRA requires the collection of publication data from faculty. Symplectic Elements supports this beautifully,” says Floris.

A very supportive and engaged team

The research information services team at Victoria University, comprising staff from both the Office for Research and the Library, estimates that it has engaged about 60 faculty members with Elements information sessions and has each time around 20 faculty members attend specific “drop-in” sessions to help users obtain the maximum benefit from the service. Other tasks for which the team provides support to faculty members include: helping to claim publications; adding publications that are not harvested by Elements; tweaking search settings in Elements for variations of author names and affiliations; submitting full-text versions of publications to the institutional repository VURR; and reporting functionality.

Impressive breadth of coverage

Floris is very impressed with the breadth of sources harvested by Elements. “We encourage researchers to put their best search terms in Elements, to find the publications from all available sources,” he says. “With the combination of data sources from PubMed, DPLP, Repec, Scopus, Web of Science, SSRN and arXiv, the spread of coverage is wide enough to serve our needs. Also the coverage from Google Books for books and book chapters will allow for the collection of better metadata than we have ever had before.” Having Altmetric as a source is also very useful for researchers who want to see if their publications are being picked up and to measure how effective are the promotion methods they use in helping them reach their target audiences.

Future directions

For Floris, the next step is to put research grants and contract data from the institution into Elements to make more transparent what the research information system of the university stores in that regard. He also wants to use the harvester to create an open research profile system.

RDM on the horizon

Floris says that there is currently in Australia a huge emphasis on research data collection and storage but he believes that many institutions are behind schedule on properly managing the full lifecycle of the research data their faculty generates. “When data management plans are produced, they require all information systems to come together,” he says. “The research data files should link to the grants that made collection possible, and to the relevant ethics approval that authorized the collection and to the resulting publications. figshare is a nice entry point, and a low threshold for the researcher to submit data. You don't have to force extensive metadata fields on submission, but one should allow the submitter to add a range of metadata to describe the collection as this will make the data more discoverable at a much later point in time.”