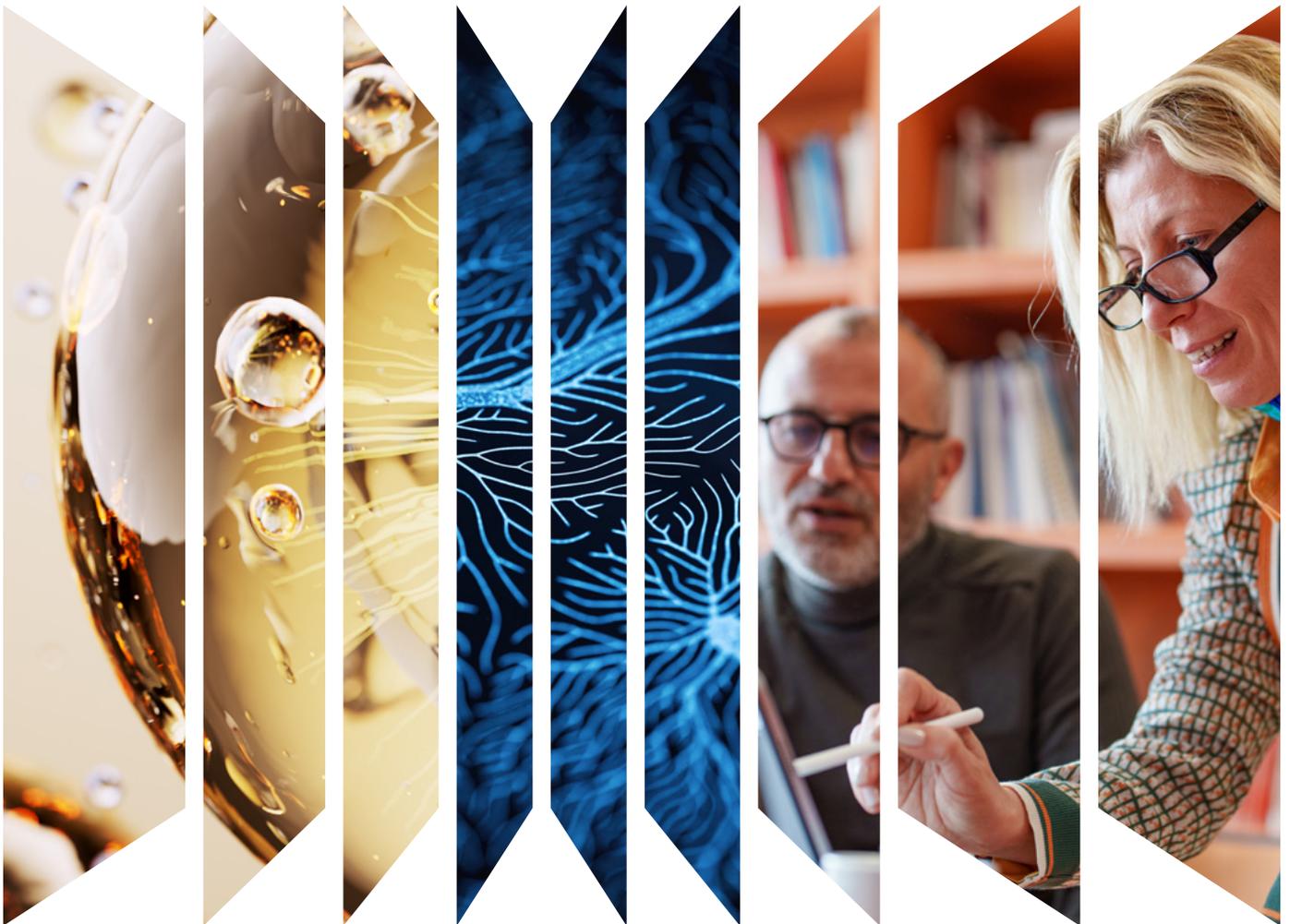


Why you need a Research Information Management System (RIMS)



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Introduction

The academic landscape is becoming increasingly complex, with globalized competition, increased strain on faculty and researchers, and rapid technological and regulatory change. To remain resilient, universities need a solution that offers coordinated and comprehensive insights into their research activities. Such a solution should help them understand and manage the diverse stakeholders, use cases and systems involved in research information management, enabling them to:

- Advance research performance
- Nurture global reputation
- Develop funding streams
- Expand local & international collaboration

This whitepaper discusses the role and features of Research Information Management Systems (RIMS) and explains how using one to centralize and standardize research data and systems can empower the whole workflow. Whether the challenge is funding, collaboration, showcasing real-world impact, or generating actionable insights for strategic decision making, a RIMS provides an invaluable foundation for sustained research success.

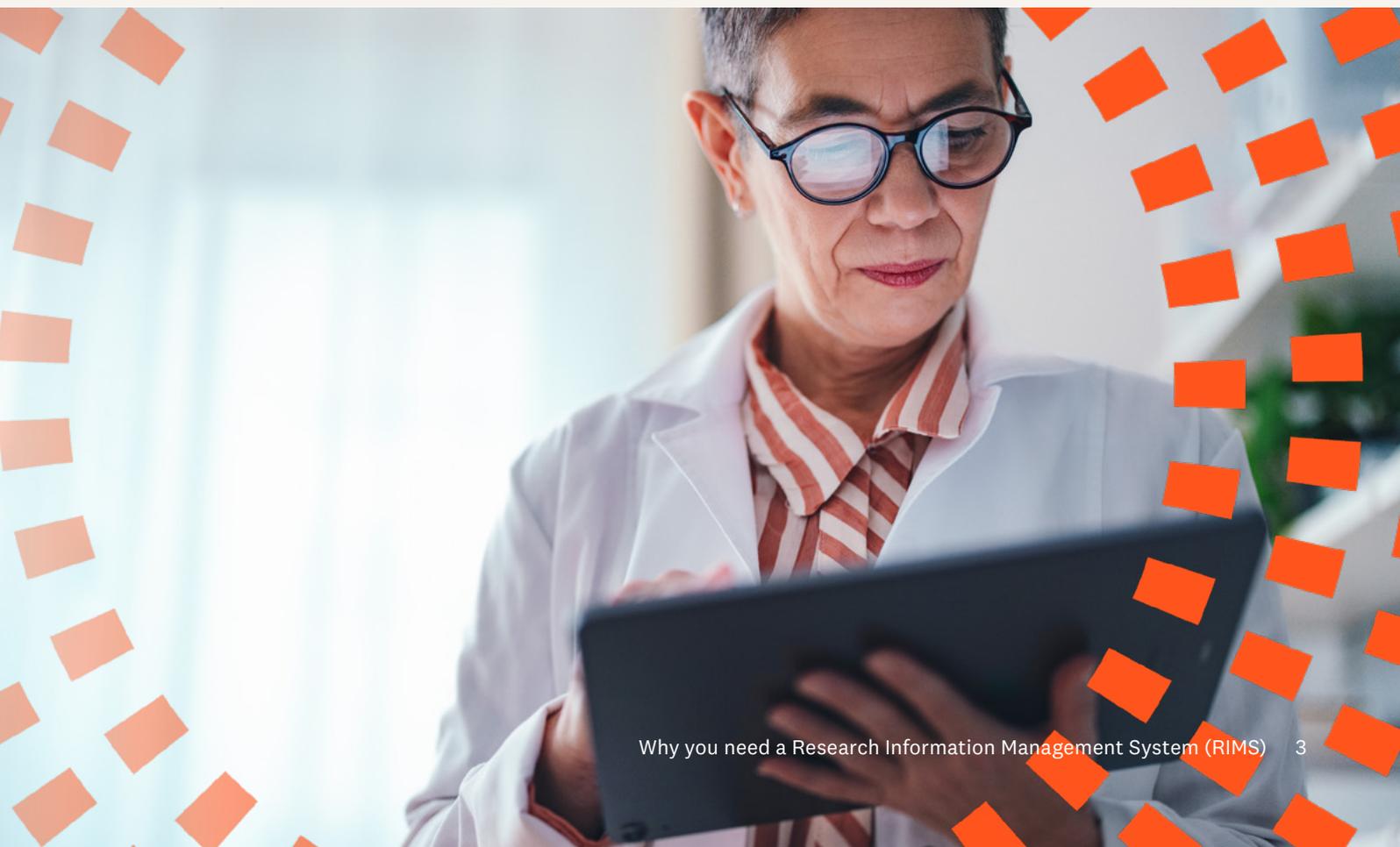
What is a research information management system (RIMS)?

Research Information Management Systems are commonly referred to by a few names and acronyms, including Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) or sometimes “profile system” or “networking tool.” These systems are designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of research information management activities by integrating and connecting the various elements and processes that comprise the research ecosystem. They also serve as a centralized data repository for analysis, reporting and research promotion activities.

What is research information management?

Research information management involves the collection, organization and effective use of data related to research activities. It enables tracking and reporting of research impact, showcasing of research outputs and scholarly profiles, compliance with legal and ethical standards like open access mandates, and ensures the long-term preservation of research and related data.

Given the growing complexity of the research ecosystem, managing data created during just one research project alone is challenging. Managing research data across your university without a solution is both impractical and infeasible.





How does a RIMS work?

Research Information Management Systems operate by integrating and connecting a wide array of data, systems and entities to create a unified view of an institution's research activities. They provide a set of features for managing these disparate elements, ensuring that all components work together efficiently. Data is processed to ensure accuracy and usability prior to storage and application.

A RIMS centrally stores related data for:

- Analysis
- Reporting
- Research showcasing and communication
- Managing information in one place through one interface

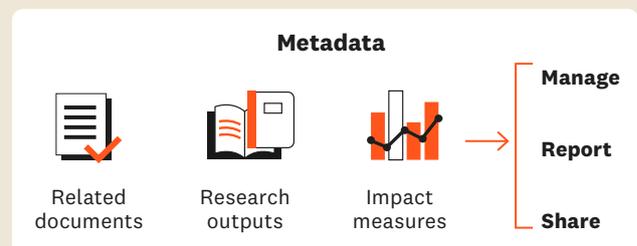
When analyzing and reporting, a RIMS help identify patterns in research data, supporting informed decision making.

In turn, having this centrally located data and interface helps drive:

- Research performance
- Global reputation
- International collaboration
- Funding

Research and metadata

Research-related entities fall into three broad categories – research outputs, impact measures and related documents. Linking these elements together in an interoperable system enables universities to break down data silos and transition from fragmented, manual record-keeping to a unified, automated and strategic overview of their research enterprise.



Who are the RIMS stakeholders?

Multiple stakeholders are involved in each element of the research ecosystem and subsequently face each research challenge. When access to good quality data and research management is available, stakeholders have the power to advance their contributions to their institution and beyond. Categories of stakeholders include:

Decision-makers

Includes institutional leaders that use research information data to make strategic decisions on internal funding allocations, staffing, facilities, equipment, public relations and internal policies that govern workflows related to research.

Enablers

Includes the libraries and research management offices that provide critical support for the management of research.

Supporters

Internal departments or teams that contribute to research information management, including:

- Information technology
- Finance
- Human resources
- Registrar
- Legal
- Risk management
- Ethics board
- Communications

Researchers

Includes individuals involved in research execution, publication and promotion:

- Faculty
- Staff
- Higher degree research students
- Research support staff

External stakeholders

Includes funding bodies, government or commercial partners who have an interest in the research. It also can consist of community members either being studied or impacted by the research and results.



Why should you use a RIMS?

What are the benefits?

Disconnected data sources with inconsistent identifiers can complicate research management, hinder timely decision making, and result in missed opportunities.

Connected and linked data with unique identifiers facilitates streamlined research management, simplified reporting processes and numerous additional benefits.

What is the value and benefit of accurate and timely information?

Transitioning from a landscape of disconnected systems and data to a connected, linked data environment within a unified system facilitates:

- Informed decision making
- Enhanced communication
- Improved research performance
- Increased collaboration
- Increased visibility and impact
- Improved compliance
- Reduced administrative burden

In a disconnected environment, gaining a clear understanding of what is happening is challenging. Universities often rely on accessing multiple systems and managing complex spreadsheets and documents, hoping to piece together entities and data to form a coherent picture.

In this new connected world, universities can leverage accurate and timely information to make better-informed decisions. Many RIMS customers have reported a range of benefits they experienced following system implementation.

The Top 10 benefits of a RIMS

1. Visibility

Enhance the global visibility of institutional research and researchers by showcasing dynamic researcher profiles on international platforms, highlighting their research output, expertise and impact.

2. Strategic decision making

Leverage comprehensive analytics to make informed strategic decisions regarding resource allocation and goal setting.

3. Collaboration

Enhance your collaboration opportunities on an international scale by increasing visibility of your research, researchers, laboratories and equipment.

4. Societal impact

Demonstrate your societal impact and highlight your contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Research management

Expertly manage all facets of research administration using configurable communication and workflow tools.

6. Reporting

Improve the accuracy, rapidity and cost-effectiveness of reporting for individual and academic program evaluations, funding applications, national performance assessments and global rankings submissions.

7. Performance

Amplify researchers' efficiency and impact by providing access to top-tier resources along with advanced search and analytics tools.

8. Funding

Discover new funding sources and collaboration opportunities to advance your research initiatives.

9. Open Science

Foster open science practices and ensure compliance with relevant mandates and regulations.

10. Assessments

Streamline faculty and program assessments.

What is the difference between a RIMS and an Institutional Repository (IR)?

The Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) outlines how RIMS and institutional repositories (IR) differ.

Broad research activity vs. Research outputs

A RIMS focuses on all institutional activity around research. In comparison, an IR emphasizes research outputs.

Reporting vs. dissemination

Since a RIMS collects comprehensive information about research activities, it can be used to describe or report on research. By contrast, an IR – originally designed to support the open access movement – aims to provide access to research publications and other outputs.

Internally vs. externally-focused

Because these systems were developed with alternative goals, RIMS typically serve as internally-focused tools, while IRs are generally externally-oriented. However, as both product categories mature, this is beginning to shift. Many RIMS now feature an externally accessible component, such as a public portal showcasing research outputs. Similarly, IRs are evolving to provide internal reporting capabilities.

Should I buy or build my RIMS?

In the white paper “[Buy or build: An exploration of the total cost of ownership for a RIMS](#),” the research firm KnowledgeE looked at both one-time and ongoing costs. KnowledgeE defined these costs as:

One-time costs:

- Software licensing
- Implementation

Annual operational costs:

- Infrastructure
- Ongoing maintenance
- Operations staff

KnowledgeE found that the purchase of a commercial solution could provide a saving of more than 50%.

[RTI International](#) is an independent nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. It was founded in 1958 as a collaboration between government, industry and three North Carolina universities. This partnership necessitated multiple parties working in collaboration to achieve shared goals and make informed decisions.

RTI implemented Elsevier’s Pure, a RIMS, and found that transitioning from a DIY solution to Pure struck the ideal balance between system stability and customization.

Tips on a successful RIMS implementation

Whether you decide to buy or build, our long-standing proficiency with RIMS implementations enables us to provide the following insights and best practises for ensuring a successful deployment.

Identify key players

Identify the key individuals across the university essential for a successful RIMS implementation.

Choose the right technology

Ensure that whatever platform you choose meets your current and anticipated future needs.

Understand the benefits

Implementing a RIMS requires firm buy-in from stakeholders and key players. For success, it is essential that everyone understands the value of accurate and timely information and is committed to achieving this shared goal.

Rigorous project management

Effective project management is crucial when implementing a RIMS, with risk management being a primary reason. Project managers must identify potential risks, develop strategies to mitigate them, and establish contingency plans to address any issues should they arise.

Training

Changing established workflows and adopting a new system can be challenging, even when it simplifies employees' tasks. Effective and timely training is essential for overcoming this hurdle. Developing a comprehensive training plan, securing stakeholder buy-in, and executing it effectively are critical factors for the project's success.

Plan for feedback

Anticipating potential obstacles and maintaining open, transparent communication throughout the process will amplify the prospect of a successful deployment.

Ongoing support

While the bulk of your resources will be dedicated to implementing your RIMS, ongoing support remains vital. This support includes both technical and user-centric assistance. Utilizing a vendor's cloud solution can help reduce the technical support burden, while continuous vendor training, support websites, and FAQs also provide invaluable support.

Plan for growth

After completing the initial implementation, it's common for momentum to fade. There may be features that were not addressed initially or new functionalities released by the vendor, especially in commercial products. To ensure your RIMS remains effective and fully leveraged, plan for continuous improvement through ongoing projects that keep the system agile and current.

Plan for change

Stakeholders, university initiatives and reporting requirements are continually evolving. Since a RIMS serves as the foundation for many reporting and operational processes, these changes will demand a flexible and agile approach to addressing them.



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