Researchers win the lottery

Well, not exactly, but now that we have your attention...

Join a research database that’s win-win, connecting you with collaborators worldwide and funding opportunities!

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS

Sadly, no University of Manitoba faculty members have bought a winning Lotto ticket and secured a life of luxury. But a growing number are joining an innovative online research database unique to the U of M that brings research funding dollars and collaborators their way.

“In some respects that’s like winning the lottery,” jokes Terry Hnatiuk, who helped found the web application My Research Tools (MRT). “One thing is similar at least: You can’t enjoy the benefits unless you at least take the step of buying a ticket.”

In the case of this online tool, “buying a ticket” means signing on to the free database and choosing keywords that describe your research and expertise, says Hnatiuk, research information systems manager in the Office of Research Services.

New Search Bar on Homepage

A “Research Experts” search bar has recently been added to the university’s homepage, allowing visitors to browse based on these keywords. “It is a tremendous tool,” says Hnatiuk. “Potential collaborators from all over the world can now find our specialized researchers almost instantly. It also helps bring graduate students to the university and connects researchers from different disciplines right here on campus.”

Researchers can choose to be accessible through a public or internal search—or both—and do their own searching for collaborators too, Hnatiuk notes. Not only will these keywords lead them to potential partnerships but also bring them funding. Researchers can sign up to receive e-mail alerts about upcoming funding opportunities in their discipline; the software uses the keywords to make the matches.

Makes it ‘Easier’

“Researchers are busy people and we’re trying to make it as easy as possible for them to pursue advancements in their field,” says Hnatiuk. MRT also gives researchers private online access to information about their research projects and accompanying financial information, making it easier to keep track of details and spending.

James Blatz, associate professor and associate dean (research and graduate programs) in the Faculty of Engineering, says the tool will prove helpful to researchers.

“This will aid in making the case for attracting additional funds and recognizing collaborative opportunities on the campus in areas that would not necessarily communicate otherwise,” he says.

MRT, which was launched last summer with help from the university’s IST Department, is catching on, Hnatiuk says. “In some respects that’s like winning the lottery,” jokes Terry Hnatiuk, who helped founded the web application My Research Tools (MRT). “One thing is similar at least: You can’t enjoy the benefits unless you at least take the step of buying a ticket.”

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