

Researchfish, funder platforms and interoperability with institutional systems

Pablo de Castro, euroCRIS and University of Strathclyde Glasgow, ORCID 0000-0001-6300-1033

Following the recent announcement made by Elsevier for the sunsetting of Researchfish in July 2027 [1], it's worth reflecting on the history of this platform for tracking the impact of funded research and projects awarded by research funders. Researchfish has repeatedly featured in contributions delivered to euroCRIS events in the past, both from a CRIS interoperability [2][3] and from a funder's perspective [4].

The system was originally called e-Val and was developed at the Medical Research Council (MRC) in the UK. In 2012 e-Val was spun out as Researchfish, which was the name of the system and the company that operated it [5]. This company was acquired by Interfolio in 2019 "to help track the impact of scholarship and research" [6]. Interfolio was in turn acquired by Elsevier in 2022.

At present, this platform to assess the impact of funded research is used by many funders, mostly in the UK – the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) featuring among the most prominent ones – but also in other European countries, especially in Northern Europe (Novo Nordisk and Nordforsk are examples of Researchfish customers in Denmark and the Nordic countries).

researchfish®

- Online system to collect information on outputs, outcomes (and impacts)

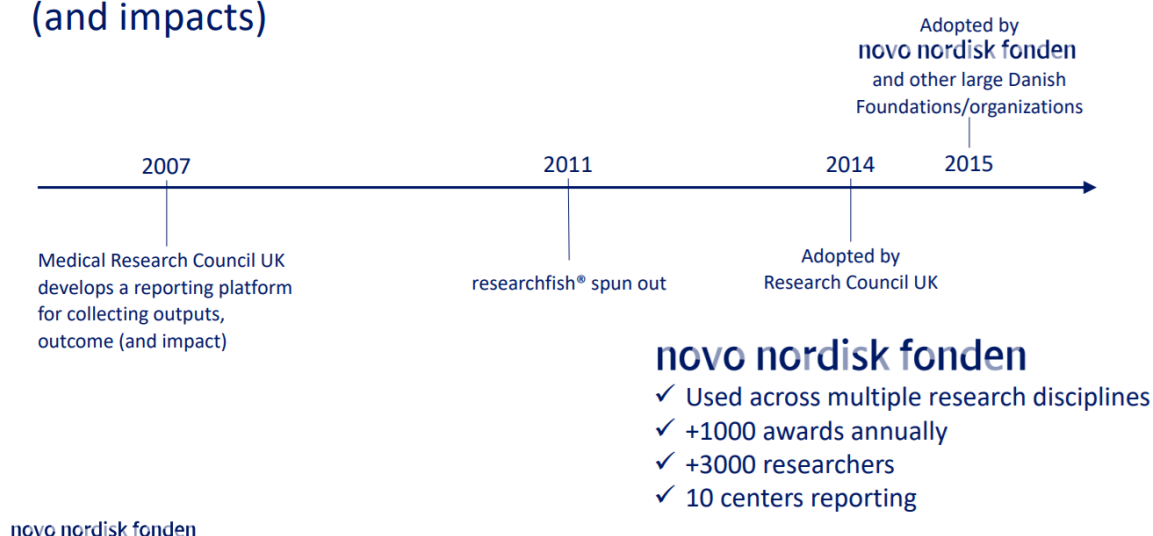


Fig 1. Overview of Research history from the Novo Nordisk presentation at the MM2019 Espoo [4]

From an institutional perspective the emphasis has traditionally been on system interoperability, with the main objective of realising the often-stated goal of research information management "one input, many outputs". Several of the presentations at euroCRIS events in the bibliography below focused on the interoperability between institutional systems (mostly CRIS but also repositories) and the funder system so that researchers involved in funded projects would only need to report to their institution, which would then go on to export the relevant references to the funder's system avoiding the need for multiple reporting. Institutional guides on Researchfish like the one provided by the University of Bath [7] provide a wealth of information on the system to researchers that need to use it.

Bearing in mind that “open infrastructures” is highlighted as a key theme of this CRIS2026 conference, this contribution will explore to what extent the history of Researchfish can be seen as a cautionary tale for a proprietary system passed on from company to company and eventually shut down. Some reflections on what the future may hold have been recently shared [8] highlighting the risk of fragmentation across funders – whereby each funder would develop their own impact assessment system – and the opportunities that AI might provide in managing funding-related data. The increasingly widespread availability of ever more sophisticated institutional CRIS could also offer interesting options for a larger reliance on system interoperability going forward.

The proposed format for this contribution is a presentation on the topic described above followed by a short discussion between the author and a senior representative of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT, co-organiser of the CRIS2026 conference). While the FCT are not Researchfish customers, their views on the evolution and the future of funder systems for research impact assessment will be very timely.

References

- [1] Chris Parr (2026). Elsevier to close controversial Researchfish platform. Research Professional News. <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-uk-research-councils-2026-1-elsevier-to-close-controversial-researchfish-platform/> (retrieved 14 Feb 2026)
- [2] Anna Clements et al (2016). Let's Talk : Interoperability between University CRIS/IR and Researchfish – a case study from the UK. Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Current Research Information Systems (2016). Procedia Computer Science 106: 220-231 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2017.03.019>
- [3] Gavin Reddick, Anna Clements, Ian McArdle (2018). Let's Talk Some More - Interoperability between University CRIS/IR and Researchfish – a follow up case study from the UK. CRIS2018: 14th International Conference on Current Research Information Systems (Umeå, June 13-16, 2018). <http://hdl.handle.net/11366/684>
- [4] Henrik Barslund Fosse (2019). The use of researchfish® by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. Spring 2019 euroCRIS Membership Meeting (CSC, Espoo-Helsinki, Finland, May 27-29, 2019). <http://hdl.handle.net/11366/999>
- [5] UKOLN iplus catalogue of repository services and systems. MRC e-Val. <https://iplus.ukoln.ac.uk/technology/mrc-e-val.html> (retrieved 14 Feb 2026)
- [6] Interfolio (2019). Interfolio acquires Research Fish to help track the impact of scholarship and research (press release). <https://librarytechnology.org/pr/24844/interfolio-acquires-research-fish-to-help-track-the-impact-of-scholarship-and-research> (retrieved 14 Feb 2026)
- [7] University of Bath Research and Impact Services (2026). Researchfish Guide. <https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/researchfish/> (retrieved 14 Feb 2026)
- [8] Rob Johnson (2026). So long, and thanks for all the Researchfish. LSE Impact Blog. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2026/02/02/so-long-and-thanks-for-all-the-researchfish/> (retrieved 14 Feb 2026)