

# **Lessons from medicine: Global Research Assessment using knowledge repositories**

Dr Beverley Sherbon  
Impact & Evaluation Adviser



# Aims

- History of Researchfish – where it came from and evolution over time
- Methodology and approach
- Insights on engagement – from producer to user?
- What worked and what didn't?



Future projections and next steps

# What is Researchfish?

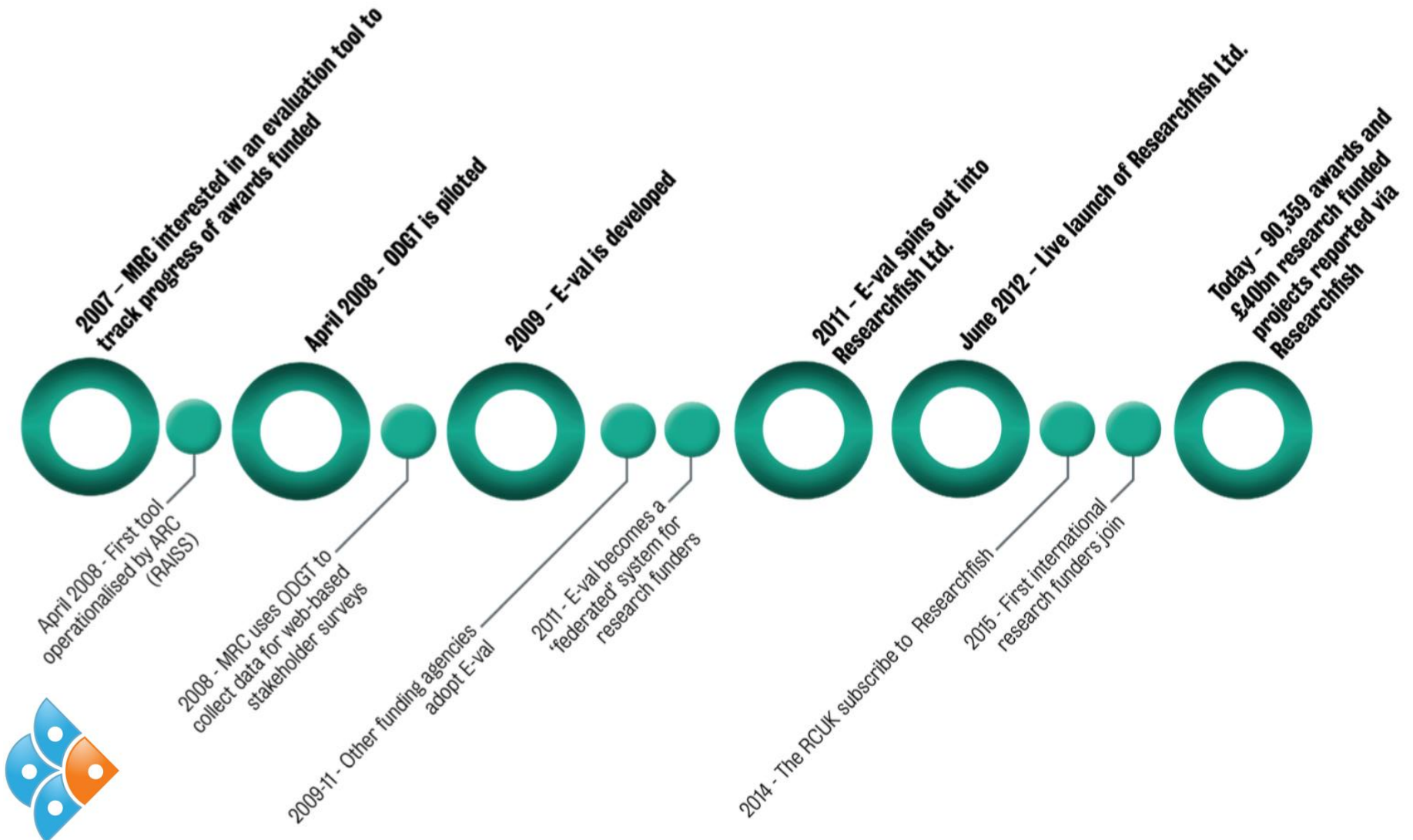
- online system to collect information on outputs, outcomes and impacts
- now used by over 100 funders and research institutes across the UK, North America and Europe
- over 63,000 researchers reporting into Researchfish across multiple research disciplines with over 90,000 awards, with 1.1 million outputs reported through the system (to date)
- around £40 billion of research funding being tracked



# History of Researchfish



**researchfish<sup>®</sup>**  
profoundly changing global  
research assessment



# Methodology and approach #1

- Aims to reduce burden on researchers
  - Only collect information with a defined business need
  - Report output once & associate to multiple funders
  - Dropdowns and checkboxes where possible, minimum narrative
  - Links to publication look ups
- Common outcomes (e.g. publications, collaboration, further funding, influence on policy, spin outs, engagement activities etc)
- Reporting suite in system for managing data collection, extracting data, and some standard analysis.
- API for data extraction (RCUK put all info on Gateway to Research)



# Methodology and approach #2

## 1. Evidence to communicate the benefits of funding

- Corporate & performance reporting

- Evidence for government reviews

- Stories/articles/blog posts for stakeholders

- Adhoc/short notice requests from government

## 2. Strategy/policy development

- Review of research areas

- Evaluation of funding mechanisms

- Supporting information for strategic discussions

## 3. Understand better how research leads to impact

- 'Science of Science Policy'

- e.g. timelags, scope & scale, leveraging studies...etc



# Insights on engagement

- Collaborative approach with funders, research organisations, researchers and information curators.
- User groups for governance of the system
  - main funders group (subgroups for policy, question set & reporting)
  - research organisation group
  - regular researcher group, plus extra focus groups this year
- Communication between producers and users is key
  - understanding of what information is used for & how
  - ensuring clarity in the questions & guidance used in the system



# What worked and what didn't?

- + Collaborative approach
  - + The more communications the better
  - + Structured information (enables analysis & case studies)
  - + Ongoing refinement of approach
  - + Common question set
  - + Direct links to publication sources (& ORCID)
- 
- Takes time for stakeholders/funders to learn to embed the use of the information (have to do own learning)
  - Need to train/help stakeholders with analysis and impact assessment





# Future projections and next steps



- Links with other information sources - patents, spin outs etc
- Interoperability with university systems – pilot
- Reporting & analysis capabilities/support
- Methodology for impact assessment



# What can COLUMBUS learn from these experiences?



- Communication/engagement with all stakeholders is vital.
- Agree types of outputs & ensure consistent information is collected for each (& enough to enable analysis & case studies)
- Consider policy implications early
- Retrospective vs ongoing data collection



Contact details:

[bev.sherbon@researchfish.com](mailto:bev.sherbon@researchfish.com)

+44 (0)7876 685030  
Skype – bevsherbon

