Why Penn State University Upgraded to the InfoReady Platinum Package

An InfoReady Case Study

infoReady

For more information, please contact
sales@inforeadycorp.com

InfoReady: The Case for Platinum – Why Penn State University Upgraded to the InfoReady Platinum Package

An InfoReady Case Study

As an early adopter of InfoReady, Penn State has been a champion for its use in automating formerly manual research office processes, such as Limited Submissions and internal funding competitions. As the number of InfoReady users grew across all of Penn State's 24 campuses, the demand for individual microsites increased as administrators realized the additional capabilities of the platform. Administrators began to utilize the flexibility of InfoReady for multiple processes beyond competitions. For Penn State, InfoReady's Platinum upgrade was the logical and cost-effective solution.

Significant Time Saving Advantages

One of InfoReady's many benefits compared to manual processes is its potential to save significant amounts of time and resources. The opportunity to extend these benefits throughout the institution result in a sizable increase in efficiency and output that cannot be understated and are measured in weeks saved, not just mere hours. According to Michelle Hutnik, ScD, Penn State's Director of Research Analytics and Communications, Office of the Senior Vice President of Research, "If you're to manage a faculty award program using shared folders and email, and you have five different categories (involving nominations and recommendation letters from deans) and five review panels with seven faculty each – as we do – it can take a month or more of administrative time for that program alone, even if that's the only thing you do. And with award programs of this nature, it goes without saying that mistakes simply cannot be made. Thanks to Platinum, we can quickly set up an automated template, which not only saves time but makes process continuity simple – and that's transformational."

Expanding the Participant Universe

Michelle also notes that "the Platinum upgrade opened competitions to a far greater number of applications, versus having to arbitrarily cap applications and consequently limit awards and grants. Plus, we didn't have to hire additional staff to administer the process. The bottom line is that participation went way up." The increase in the number of administrator seats allowed Penn State to invite more administrators to manage their processes in InfoReady.

From Unit Tool to Enterprise Solution

Chris Pfeiffer, Limited Submission Program Manager in the Office of the Senior Vice President of Research, was formerly IT Manager in Penn State's Institutes for Energy and Environment. In that role, Chris had hands-on experience with InfoReady and saw its broader potential as units began seeking greater autonomy in managing their own competitions. Penn State's seed grant programs are a case in point, where one-off competitions led to a choice between hiring additional administrators or opting for Platinum's enterprise solution offering more microsites. Chris notes another important reason for Platinum's adoption: "For both participants and administrators, it's a lot easier, more efficient and more accurate to work in InfoReady Platinum than a spreadsheet." The microsites function as centralized and branded landing pages for related units or processes, while allowing administrators the flexibility of managing their program as needed. All stakeholders and participants then have a common, shared experience with a standardized tool that is familiar to people across the institution.

Returning to Research

As restrictions began to ease after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the University to go remote, InfoReady's Platinum status helped facilitate some of the complex processes involved with restarting Penn State's Research Enterprise. For example, back to research approval paths include deans, department heads, and safety and compliance committees to review and approve plans for domestic travel and in-person human subjects. The flexibility of the InfoReady Platinum solution allowed administrators to establish these rolling review procedures in a matter of hours rather than days.

Why – and Where – the Platinum Enterprise Solution Makes Sense

"The administrative demands for people in leadership positions are growing," adds Michelle, "and the expanded use of InfoReady across domains has been tremendously impactful for them."

Michelle went on to say that "we've rolled out Platinum to other units and functions across Penn State. Currently, beyond Limited Submissions and seed grants, InfoReady is used in Undergraduate Research, the Graduate School, Global Programs, Foundation Relations, Corporate Engagement, in other colleges within Penn State, in a number of our institutes, and at our other campuses. What we're trying to do is encourage administrators that if they have a workflow that includes review steps, InfoReady Platinum is the tool we recommend."

The Bottom Line

Penn State's upgrade to InfoReady Platinum in 2020, and InfoReady's ongoing commitment to improving the InfoReady platform has increased the ways that Penn State has used it to include many more uses beyond competitions, uses they hadn't anticipated when the decision was made to upgrade.

"InfoReady Platinum has been a great way for us to go," says Michelle. "Our metrics are showing increased numbers of competitions, use cases, and participants. For many units, it has transformed how they do business. Once administrators, faculty, and students use InfoReady they immediately see the benefits."

For more information or to schedule a demo, please contact
sales@inforeadycorp.com