

Q&A Coffee Sessions

with EDGE super users

EDGE?



Super User!

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Name: Ronda Danchak

Organisation: Alberta Innovates, Canada

Job title: Business Partner

Email:

ronda.danchak@albertainnovates.ca

How and why did you move into clinical research?

I did not go to university thinking that clinical research was something that I would end up doing as a career. I did start out in a community health centre, where it was difficult to figure out how to do research. Then, I ended up in a rehabilitation hospital, where a doctor asked me if I could do an

ethics application. I took the protocol and ended up being able to translate the information easily. When you develop this skill, everyone wants to tap into it because, at the time, nobody liked to do these applications. When I ended up at the University of Alberta, I was asked if I wanted to move into clinical research as a coordinator. I was not totally sure that I had the skill set (I am not a nurse) but took on the challenge. As I was working in paediatrics, I loved working with the families again (back to my roots from the community), and found that, by providing additional opportunities, it gave them a sense of control in their child's health, and that they were doing everything possible to help their child overcome whatever disease/situation they were currently in. Now I am in research administration where I can help to potentially bring in more studies to Alberta to benefit more families, and also, to help streamline research processes to be able to remove barriers in the area of clinical health research in Alberta.

What does your role as Business Partner at Alberta Innovates, Canada, entail on a daily basis?

My job is to develop strategy and collaborate with our partner organizations in Alberta. This involves participating in many working and advisory groups. The ACRC acts as a facilitator and convener to bring together these organizations to develop strategies to overcome barriers and strengthen Alberta as a province to be a great place to do clinical health research. Currently, with COVID-19, our outlook has been accelerated on developing strategies to enhance digital health in the province.

What does the research portfolio look like in Alberta, Canada?

Each group in Alberta contributes to the overall portfolio of research. At Alberta, we have been able to leverage EDGE to expand the functionality to areas such as the Alberta SPOR Support Unit (AbSPORU), which have linkages to traditional research, but customizes the EDGE instance to enhance its use to include non-

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traditional research and support to areas that might not be linked in. We have created diversity within the Alberta portfolio with researchers and research administrators to create collaboration with groups that are not traditionally in a CRMS or facilitate the design of each instance to best represent their functions. So, we extend the use of EDGE in line with their business objectives. EDGE is not just a research tool, but much more. And we engage with stakeholders to look at how we can continue to extend the EDGE CRMS.

How do you utilise EDGE in your daily role?

EDGE has been the repository and helps us intake and manage requests from researchers to get help with their research projects from the AbSPORU. EDGE enables us to have a system which can host the files (application forms and any supporting documents) and provides easily adaptable attributes which generates metrics of efficiency and capacity. We can generate cycle times and volume to inform decision-making for AbSPORU. Also, the ease of reporting helps us to capture annual reporting requirements for necessary reporting to the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR).

You capture a variety of project request attributes from your users in EDGE. How did you develop these attributes, and what advice would you give to users planning to develop their own set of attributes for project requests?

The attributes were developed both for process and for reporting requirements. The advice I would give users is to map out the process and your touchpoints for each person using the system, allow input from everyone involved to address their needs, and have "buy-in" to using the system (we adopted this as a brand new system for our platform reviewers). Think early about what you would

like to report on and develop those reports early in the process. Doing all this will help avoid time-costing changes after the implementation phase.

What niggles/challenges did you encounter in creating and providing bespoke attributes for your projects?

Some of the challenges here are the difference in use of terms between UK and Canada. We tend to use only those necessary. We utilize the system at the site level typically. Only 3 bespoke attributes are used for AbSPORU.

During your talk at the EDGE Conference 2020, you touched upon your use of EDGE and Power BI to produce interactive study reports. How has using EDGE and PowerBI helped to shape and inform management decisions within your department?

Our team is very new to the functionality of Power BI. It will provide opportunities to combine disparate data from the various EDGE Alberta organizations and varying EDGE models, and the ability to transform that data to evaluate trends. We have not had the opportunity to utilize Power BI to provide a level of efficient data reporting and hope to leverage the work of groups such as 3CTN and others in this area. Our team complement is small, and our focus is to establish data connectivity between the different groups and their unique data as a first priority, and then to leverage the combined data by applying modeling and taxonomies for further analysis.

You have been using the system since 2015. Which personal skills do you feel has been enhanced by the deployment and familiarity of EDGE?

The personal skill of thinking through and developing a process from end to end. Looking at the entire picture and what the goals are of this process.

What are your plans for using and developing EDGE within your department for the next 12 months?

We are moving into Phase 2 of AbSPORU, so will be looking at whether needs remain the same, or new needs/requirements are necessary to build into the system. We will have some new staff and potentially new ways of looking at processing and capturing data.

What is your "bigger picture?" That is, what do you find most fulfilling about your job?

Making things easier for people. Avoiding the back and forth of email and reducing the potential of error. Being able to offer a solution that will meet needs and have buy-in from these users is rewarding. This makes everyone happy.

One great thing that you think clinical research has achieved, and why:

Advances and treatment for the people of Alberta. I am looking forward to the new digital clinical research realm and what the possibilities are for offering a more streamlined, efficient, cost effective health care system. Also, the possibilities of precision medicine for patients.

Describe one of the greatest achievements of your research team:

Creating access is a great thing for us. Building capacity in Alberta so that our diverse population can access helpful and sometimes necessary research opportunities.

Your favourite thing about living in Edmonton, Alberta, and why:

I love the people here. My family are here. I love that we have 4 definitive seasons. Edmonton is a great community for sports and arts, and has a wonderful cultural diversity. We also have a great volunteer spirit in Edmonton.

How does EDGE resemble your personality?

Helpful, efficient and knowledge providing.