

RefShare : Use in Phytomedicine

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ABSTRACT

The Faculty Plan (2007-2011) of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria lists Phytomedicine and ethno-veterinary medicine as one of the six research focus themes that will contribute to the realisation of the Faculty's newly formulated vision statement relevant to its research program. Phytomedicine and ethno-veterinary medicine was also identified in 2006 as one of five "National Research Foundation Developed Research Niche Areas"

The Phytomedicine Programme focuses on the development of extracts from South African plants with antimicrobial or anti-parasitic activity for use in animal production. The multidisciplinary post graduate students come from diverse fields and most are situated off campus, often outside South Africa.

There was a need for a platform where postgraduate students could communicate, add references, share ideas, information and progress, to create a community of practice that would lead to collaboration and enhancing their research output.

After investigating several options, it was decided to use RefShare, a new feature of RefWorks. RefShare has the ability to support collaborative research in a new unique way, while maintaining privacy.

This paper will focus on the role of the information specialist in the development of a research platform on RefShare to promote and support research in the Phytomedicine discipline. It will illustrate the importance of collaboration between the information specialist, the department and the researchers in order to enhance education innovation and research excellence. The important role of the information specialist in applying new developments and tools for research in a new and dynamic subject field is highlighted.