

BIO5 Searchable Database Ignites Research Collaborations

the Office of the Chief Information Officer
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Published UA research is now more accessible for faculty, researchers and students thanks to a newly enhanced version of the searchable life sciences database **BioConnect** ^[1].

Introduced by the UA **BIO5 Institute** ^[2], BioConnect is a database focused on life sciences research and designed to help researchers collaborate. Currently, the searchable site holds information on 665 UA faculty members, 128 departments and 1,558 publications.

Lomax Boyd, manager of infrastructure services for the BIO5 Institute, spearheaded the effort to update BioConnect from its previous version to its new, user-friendly platform.

"BioConnect serves the University by being a search engine that allows researchers to find each other by subject matter," Boyd said. "Researchers external to the UA who are looking to move their lab here can search for 'cancer research on XYZ gene' and it will pull up any published paper or any faculty with similar work listed on their BioConnect profile."

Boyd worked closely with BIO5's in-house team of information technology professionals to develop a more streamlined database. He said the intent was to provide a user-friendly and comprehensive information hub that encourages collaboration among university life sciences researchers nationwide.

Before the most recent upgrade, the site had not been updated in two years. The previous version did not allow users to search by field, making it difficult to find specific contacts or publications.

With the updated system, users are able to search by specific publications, researchers or departments, using a new filter system. Researchers can now easily update and access their own published studies, as well as the work of their colleagues.

The database has automatic update features that keep the stored information current. It also is connected to Google so that anyone searching Google can get BioConnect links in their results. This is particularly beneficial to the UA since it could help attract prospective graduate and doctoral students by helping them find labs that correlate with their interests.

In addition to his work at BIO5, Boyd contributes to overall campus technology governance as a member of the **Administration Technology Advisory Council** ^[3], a University organization that works to promote a transparent and collaborative IT environment on campus.

Boyd also is on the steering committee for the upcoming **IT Summit** ^[4], happening Oct. 28. The summit is an annual UA conference for IT professionals to network with each other and discuss the latest projects and innovations.

He said the most interesting aspect of working on the BioConnect project was "the vastness of the research that's being done at the University."

"Working with BioConnect gave me the chance to read more published papers than I'd care to admit, but it was all very, very interesting subject matter," Boyd said.

Source URL: <https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/bio5-searchable-database-ignites-research-collaborations>

Links

[1] <http://bioconnect.bio5.org/> [2] <http://www.bio5.org/> [3] <http://cio.arizona.edu/resource/administration-technology-advisory-council> [4] <http://itsummit.arizona.edu/>