



Description

To do research you need money and irrespective of the amount needed or the subject area, funding opportunities must be considered. Finding the right research funding for your project is in itself a lot of work. Recently, Mendeley, the reference manager launched a new online tool, called Mendeley Funding. It aims to help researchers easily and quickly find the right funding opportunities for them in one place. The goal is to offer both an accurate research funding service in a one-of-kind catalog, with many benefits.

Nowadays, the pressure and competition to get research funding has never been greater and there is a lot to choose. Although more people are looking for money, there is no shortage of funds. Compared to 2015, there was a 3.4% increase in research funding spent in 2016 (1.9 trillion USD). Mendeley apparently understands this and by launching Mendeley Funding, it wants to help researchers launch their own projects.

Using Mendeley Funding

This tool is a type of aggregator. It searches and compiles information on funding opportunities. These typically are scientific grants to academic persons or groups. It also includes award-type funds to individuals, including PhD students and post-docs thus making it a funding catalog. The key is its global scope: Mendeley Funding takes information from more than 2000 prominent organizations on their call for proposals. These will not only include major government research funding agencies (think NIH in the USA, NSERC in Canada, European Union [EU], to name a few) but also non-government funders (think philanthropy foundations, societies, etc.).

To try it, you must access the tool [through the website](#). Here, you must first sign in. Once you have logged in, look in the toolbar for “Funding”. Click on it and this brings you into Mendeley Funding. To get started you can choose either the “Find opportunities” or the “Browse funders”. Through both, you can find the right match for your research project, with speed and ease. You can also view funding opportunities currently available by their type, or even see the funder’s history.

Benefits of Using Mendeley Funding

Even if you don’t like the Mendeley reference manager, Mendeley Funding is worth a look. This is

because of what it offers researchers. First, it is free to access and use. Just set up an account. For researchers in less wealthy countries, this is great.

Second, the tool has a timeliness factor, as the catalog is always updated in real time. Therefore, you won't miss the relevant funding opportunities. Third, you can easily save those funding opportunities that only interest you, all in one place. Fourth, you get to see detailed information about the potential funders. Mendeley Funding wisely lets each funder have its own page for easy viewing.

Potential Impact

Mendeley Funding is a promising tool that many researchers will surely find useful. By providing a funding repository, the scientific community can save much time and presumably do better science. This should have knock-on effects across universities and may improve or worsen the strain on peer-review. On one hand, by finding the right opportunity for research funding, a better match means fewer yet more targeted proposals. Conversely, some may use the tool to cast their net wider. If so, this could flood funders with more proposals to consider. Finding even more unbiased reviewers for these will be difficult.

The bigger business picture also cannot be ignored. Three "tech-savvy scholars" founded Mendeley as software start up almost 9 years ago. It received several awards and many scientists embraced it because it championed Open Access. The impact of its reference manager and file-sharing academic network was substantial, with millions of registered users. So much so, that in 2013 the scholarly publishing giant, Elsevier, acquired it. This was perhaps to protect copyrighted PDF publications in scientific journals.

Mendeley Funding is built on the Mendeley reference manager and its associated social network. Presumably, people who like Mendeley Funding are more likely to dabble and try the Mendeley reference software. More users and their searches—e.g., who's reading what—will generate valuable information for Elsevier to promote its publishing business model. Optimistically, more users will enable the scientific community to share and comment on each other's work and on research funding and to better collaborate. Will Mendeley Funding do something good and fantastic for science? It very well may. We will have to wait and see.

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Author

daveishan