Chelsea Gibson: So we have on the ORISE website, a whole host of successful stories about actual participants in some of our research programs or our science and technology related programs. And so they wanted to see those upfront really visible in the app because they wanted to know what was it like to be a participant with ORISE. So, that's one of the main features and then obviously I think when new users were testing it, they wanted to jump in and start searching for an opportunity right away. And they really found that very useful to be able to just jump right in and start finding something that fits their interests.

Speaker 2: This is the ORISE featurecast, a special edition of Further Together, the ORAU podcast. Join your host, Michael and Jenna for conversations with ORISE research program participants and their mentors, as they talk about their experiences and how they are helping shape the future of science. Welcome to the ORISE featurecast.

Michael Holtz: Well, good morning and welcome to a special episode of the ORISE featurecast. I'm your host Michael Holtz, with my cohost Jenna Harpenau. Jenna-

Jenna Harpenau: Hello.

Michael Holtz: How are you?

Jenna Harpenau: It's good. I miss your face.

Michael Holtz: I miss your face too. All of these virtual podcasts, it's awesome but we have the capability, but as we were just talking to Leslie and Chelsea sitting around the virtual coffee table, isn't quite the same.

Jenna Harpenau: No, it's not, it's not, but we're lucky we can continue this.

Speaker 2: We are lucky we can continue this and apologies to our audience for any sound quality issues. It's not the speakers, it's not the host, it's not even the producer behind the scenes. Sometimes it's just Zoom and that's what we're using. So, if you hear funky noises and sound drop offs, I apologize, but it's the perils of technology at the end.

Jenna Harpenau: I feel like everyone just had to learn how to go with the flow nowadays.

Michael Holtz: I think so too. I think so too, so it's just normal. It is what it is. But today we are talking about a brand new product. Can we call it a product? I think we can. The ORISE GO app. And to talk about ORISE GO. We have Leslie Fox and Chelsea Gibson from ORISE to tell us all about it. Good morning, ladies. How are you?

Jenna Harpenau: Welcome.

Chelsea Gibson: Good morning. Doing well. Thanks.

Leslie Fox: How are you guys doing?

Michael Holtz: We're good. We're good, we're having fun. The podcast is one of the, I think most fun things we get to do on a regular basis.

Jenna Harpenau: Yep, it is.

Michael Holtz: We get to learn stuff. You get to tell us stuff. It's all good. So-

Jenna Harpenau: We think we know everything there is to know about ORISE and then we learn something more every single time. Right?

Speaker 2: Right. Then we have a conversation with someone and we're like, "Oh, I didn't know that", that will probably happen today. So Leslie and Chelsea, and Leslie I'll start with you first. Tell us who you are, what you do at ORISE and how you came to the company.

Leslie Fox: Absolutely Michael, thank you. And any chance that I get to talk in general, of course is always a good thing. But particularly when I get to talk about something that we're as excited about as we are about this product, as you mentioned, it's been a long time coming, but is really going to, we think change a lot of the way we do things and we're super excited about it. So I've actually been with ORAU and ORISE for a little over 10 years now, my background is in customer service and marketing and communication. And most recently, before joining ORAU and ORISE, I worked at, with universities and to University of Tennessee Knoxville, working with students who are using the app today, finding out what they think about searching for opportunities and internships and fellowships, how we could do that better, then helping them through the university setting, but now a chance to help them through ORISE.

Michael Holtz: So you've been on both sides. I love that.

Leslie Fox: Absolutely. I always say, I feel like I've got one foot in both camp and it couldn't be a better place.

Michael Holtz: Sweet.

Jenna Harpenau: Well, that's good. You bring a lot to the table then, kind of already knowing what the students need, what they're looking for. So, that's great.

Michael Holtz: Chelsea, tell us about you.

Chelsea Gibson: I've definitely been here a little, a less experienced at ORISE but very excited to be here. I've been here for about a year and a half now. I'm a project manager so I manage one of our research participation program with ORISE. And my background is more on the participant side itself. So well not a participant in ORISE, I came from an academic research background, so I'm excited to help promote STEM research without actually being in a dark room with a microscope.

Jenna Harpenau: That's great. That's great. So how, why the app, why the app? What was the need for this app? What is this app solve for you guys?

Leslie Fox: Yeah, that's a great question, Jenna. And it really started several years ago when we had participants saying, "gosh, is there an applicant saying, is there a way to get this?" They'd pull out their phone at a career fair and say, "can I find you on the internet? Can I get you in the app store?" We unfortunately had to say no at that time, but Donna's thinking, how can we make this better? So with the app, we really started it a couple of years ago to kind of down the process. And through that we said, we want to do three things. We want to concentrate on ways to inform and communicate the whole search for the opportunities that we have out there. Right now, if you go through our app, there's over 700 open postings that applicants could be reaching out to right now, what better way to make sure we let them know? And of course this is our slow time.

So we really wanted to do a better job of putting that in their pocket, in their hand at all times to help them find these opportunities, namely wanting to continue that through engagement, engaging with them through notifications, to making it easy to reach out to us while they're an applicant. After they receive an offer and communicating with our ORISE staff and learning about the position that's, or the opportunity that's coming for them. And then continuing while they are a participant with us, letting them know about all the great opportunities that we've got to really grow through professional development and connect with our staff. So, that's really why we decided to start the app.

Michael Holtz: That's great. And I just want to say for students who are listening, who might be looking for STEM opportunities, you heard Leslie say that there are 700 open opportunities and this is our slow time. So-

Jenna Harpenau: So go.

Michael Holtz: Be applying for some opportunities. You said, Leslie, that it's, this has been a long time coming. And I have no doubt that, that's true because the whole world has basically moved into our pockets with our smartphones. How once, once I guess you got to work on it, how long did it take to develop the app as it exists now?

Chelsea Gibson: I'm happy to talk about that because it actually probably has taken about as long as I've been at ORISE, so about a year and a half when, after we got some funding, we're able to collaborate with some other groups at ORAU, in collaboration with ORISE to get this off the ground, probably one of the coolest parts in a development process or who we got to do some actual user testing throughout that. So, we got to actually get the preliminary product in front of some people who would actually be wanting to use an app like this to find a STEM internship. And so they got to give us feedback, so we got to then use to design the app further and really make it what they would want in that app.

Michael Holtz: That's awesome. So they got to test it, they got to use it. You're going in sort of like we'd be with both of them, both ORAU and ORISE websites is, we want to see how people use it. So, we know what we pack in there is useful for the people who use it, who we're targeting.

Chelsea Gibson: Exactly. And especially to know what they like that we were doing well. And then to know what some things we thought it would be really interesting up front. They're like, "eh, maybe not." You can hide that a little bit.

Michael Holtz: That's nice. But yeah, that happens.

Chelsea Gibson: Yes.

Jenna Harpenau: So what are some of the more specific features that you guys are excited about in this app and who do they target in particular?

Leslie Fox: So I can talk a little bit about the targeting Jenna, and really it's the full experience. That was really important to us when we thought about how we wanted to kind of develop this. So, it begins with that applicant that's just learning about ORISE, searching for the opportunities, but then it takes all the way through the experience as they're applying, as they've actually been accepted, continuing on, on their first day. I can imagine them pulling their phone out and looking at the app to try to remember where it said they were supposed to park or where, in what building they're supposed to go into for that orientation and onboarding session all the way through as it keeps them [inaudible 00:10:27] on some of our events. And really, even as an alumni, we plan to continue making this valuable and add to that experience. And I'm going to let Chelsea kind of kick it off and tell you a little bit about some of those features on the app.

Michael Holtz: Awesome.

Chelsea Gibson: Yeah. So as I mentioned, the user insight and the user experience and feedback that we got was really helpful, especially when we were designing a home screen and sort of the look of our app. And we wanted it to be pretty simple because that's what the users liked, they liked the simple, easy to follow layout. So we really were able to, I think meet their requests in that regard. And one of the most exciting parts that people really liked were success stories. So we have on the ORISE website, a whole host of successful stories about actual participants in some of our research programs or our science and technology related programs. And so, they wanted to see those up front really visible in the app because they wanted to know what was it like to be a participant with ORISE. So, that's one of the main features.

And then obviously I think when new users were testing it, they wanted to jump in and start searching for an opportunity right away. And they really found that very useful to be able to just jump right in and start finding something that fit their interests.

Michael Holtz: That's great. And there's, I mean, just looking at the list of features that, we have a list that we're staring at. I mean, there's a lot in here. I mean the function, the search and filter features, the calendar of events, Asking a Recruiter, success stories, how to find an internship and what to expect, information on postdoc experiences, ORISE learn, scholarships, I mean, holy cow it's all there.

Leslie Fox: Absolutely Michael and I think that's really what we hope we would hear. And we did hear when testing, they were just amazed at the amount of information that's out there. And I think that's important when you think of the whole ORISE experience, because we are really that bridge, that gap to go along with their education, to help them plan and prepare for, and have success in their career path. So we wanted to make sure that it was a really easy way to access all the information in these professional development resources that's available on the ORISE website, but also be able to get to them and easily connect like the scholarship opportunities or to learn about the sponsors that we have. That's one of the features, for example, they can actually go out there and learn about our department of energy sponsors, or maybe they want to learn about FDA or even see your FBI. It's all there, it's in the app.

Michael Holtz: Right.

Jenna Harpenau: That's great.

Michael Holtz: So we've talked a lot about opportunities and those 700 that are out there waiting to be applied for. Chelsea talk about using Zintellect through the app to search for those opportunities. And what's Zintellect is, let's [crosstalk 00:14:01] start there. Let's start there, and then how you get there through the app.

Chelsea Gibson: For sure. So Zintellect is really our online resource or tool that participants, current participants and applicants can use, to manage their participant experience. So starting really as a application tracking system. So online on the web, it's a great interface for both ORISE staff and participants. We're both using Zintellect to recruit applicants for different opportunities. And then the staff can use it to then deliver important documents and really communicate with our participants through that website, as they move from an applicant stage to a participant or onboarding stage. And so, ORISE GO the mobile app is really powered by that great online tool. So it's kind of that, ORISE GO is almost mirroring Zintellect when it comes to finding opportunities, the same ones you can find in Zintellect, you just have the great convenience of it in your pocket, on your phone.

Michael Holtz: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Chelsea Gibson: So you can Google search or excuse me, instead of doing a search on Zintellect, you can just pull up your phone. You're waiting at the doctor's office, or you have 10 minutes before your ninth class, you could just pull up the app and look what new opportunities are added today. So from an applicant side, that's a great thing to do, but then we also wanted to take it beyond just the applicants who are trying to find the opportunity. We wanted to use ORISE GO the mobile app to also offer some of the features that participants might want to see. So, a whole dashboard in the app to let them track the applications that they've applied to and receive notifications about offers that have been made and some details about those offers. And even beyond that, as they navigate being an ORISE participant.

Jenna Harpenau: It's literally a one stop shop.

Michael Holtz: Literally.

Jenna Harpenau: Yeah. That'samazing.

Michael Holtz: It really is, before I came to ORAU, I'd never seen anything like it. It's just amazing how it's all there from beginning to end, from the participant applicant and participant experience, the mentor experience, and then the ORISE staff experience to be able to manage the whole process from end to end. It's incredible technology, you're very lucky to have that. Is there any... Oh, let me ask you, I was going to ask if there was anything else you want to say, but before I get there, Leslie people are using this thing, right? I mean, we didn't just create it and put it out there. I know you have great numbers on people are using this, applicants are using it.

Leslie Fox: Absolutely. And thank goodness, because [crosstalk 00:17:07] better when we've been doing all this work.

Michael Holtz: Right.

Leslie Fox: Is like, [inaudible 00:17:10] Thank goodness they do like it. And we are excited to say that we just launched it in June and we already have about 1500 downloads of the application.

Jenna Harpenau: That's great.

Michael Holtz: That's fantastic.

Leslie Fox: [crosstalk 00:17:29] celebrate and that's with about 75% conversion rate. And so I'm certainly not an app specialist when it comes to analytics, we did compare that to other education apps, which is kind of category we fall into. Generally, according to Apple, that's around 30%. So we feel like we've done pretty well. We're quite pleased.

Jenna Harpenau: Yeah.

Michael Holtz: Heck yeah. You've definitely created product that people find useful and that's exciting.

Leslie Fox: Yes, very much.

Michael Holtz: So on that notes, anything we haven't talked about and let's direct people where to find it of course, but anything you want to talk about before we wrap things up?

Chelsea Gibson: I would just add that we're hoping that this isn't a static app. We want to continue to make improvements and add content. And I guess we want that to be driven by the participants as well and their experience in the program. So, we're excited that this is doing so well so far, and we encourage feedback down the, along the line. And I'm thinking I'm really excited to see how we can continue to even build this out even more to offer even more engagement points for our participants and applicants.

Leslie Fox: I'll add to that. First of all, I want to say thank you to all those participants throughout the years and everyone that's helped us get where we are. We really built this based on what you told us you wanted to see. So please continue to give us that feedback. You can send any feedback of course to the Ask a Recruiter option, which will get to our team if you're using the app or you can directly send it to our email address at ORISE GO, O-R-I-S-E-G-O@O-R-A-U.org, O-R-G, so ORISEGO@orau.org. And to download the app, it is available under ORISE GO, O-R-I-S-E GO at the Apple and Google Play stores.

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