



**Freeing Research From Ukraine
Interview with Stephanie Dawson, CEO, ScienceOpen**

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KENNEALLY: The war in Ukraine grinds on one year after the Russian invasion. Along front lines in the east and south of the country, fierce fighting rages daily. In western Ukraine, a relatively safe region near the Polish border, students, professors, and researchers have managed to return to classes and labs at Ternopil National Medical University.

Welcome to CCC's podcast series. I'm Christopher Kenneally for Velocity of Content.

Ukrainians have so far deterred President Vladimir Putin's special operation with help from friends and allies around the world. At Ternopil National Medical University, researchers have found a global outlet for their ongoing work with ScienceOpen, a networking platform specializing in research, discovery, and impact.

ScienceOpen founder and CEO Stephanie Dawson says the collaboration makes available more than 11,000 scholarly articles and is a lifeline for Ukrainian researchers. Stephanie Dawson joins me from Berlin. Welcome to Velocity of Content.

DAWSON: Thanks very much for inviting me. It's exciting to talk to CCC today.

KENNEALLY: Stephanie Dawson, we're looking forward to talking with you. ScienceOpen began the Research from Ukraine collection as a showcase of Ukrainian research. Since the war began, it has given support and solidarity to many. What does it mean to Ukrainian researchers and students to have this open channel to the rest of the world?

DAWSON: Well, I think it's important for the entire global community to realize that research is still going on in Ukraine and also to highlight the fact that Ukraine is part of a global network, a global community of scientists and researchers, medical students, and not just victims of war. But they really are part of our, let's say, larger body of global research.

From that perspective, I was really happy to be able to just gather together the research that we could find that is created, written, researched by Ukrainians or on topics related. We started this collection last year in Berlin as there were floods of refugees coming into the city. We were ourselves – people on the ScienceOpen team were going to the train station, providing food and battery packs, old telephones. We had people living up and down in



our house. We were inviting people over for dinner. And we still have a lot of those contacts today, and we really were trying to think what can we do? We're so close to the border. What can we do to support Ukraine?

KENNEALLY: ScienceOpen recently spoke with Oksana Shevchuk, professor at Ternopil National Medical University, about the daily circumstances on campus. Stephanie Dawson, can you share with us about the way students and professors in Ukraine are managing to keep working in the middle of a war?

DAWSON: From Oksana's description, they started out really just going straight to online-only courses. We all had a lot of experience with that coming out of the pandemic, so there was already good infrastructure set up for just having online instruction. They then added in-person instruction for all of the Ukrainian students. And now, they have started bringing back some of the international students. So they're up to 300 international students who are now also doing in-person classes in Ternopil. It's in a relatively safe area of the country near the Polish border, but still I think it's quite challenging to study and do research under those circumstances.

KENNEALLY: I found it deeply moving, in fact, Stephanie, that Professor Shevchuk told you that the main challenge is to support the mental health of students and staff with psychological assistance. Is keeping a line open with the world for Ukrainian scholarly research about more than science for you?

DAWSON: Definitely. We were trying to think about anything that we could do to support the whole community in Ukraine. We are in our little niche of science publishing doing our part to open that up to the world and to support them to get more visibility, to create collaborations, to potentially get funding for some of their projects and work. But in part, we were just hoping to reach out to individual people and scientists to say, hey, we see you. We're thinking of you.

KENNEALLY: Funding for research all but vanished in Ukraine when the war began, for obvious reasons. What did Professor Shevchuk tell you about her efforts to find funding today?

DAWSON: They are absolutely looking for any collaboration, support from international groups and communities. They're asking for donations of any research materials that they can use. I think anybody who's interested in any of their research topics, they would greatly appreciate if someone would reach out and say, hey, could we start a collaboration? Hey, we've got funding. Would you like to join our coalition? Would you like to join our grant proposal? So I think they really are looking for outside funding, because at the moment, the university budgets are frozen. Most of that funding is spent on the war effort. So they



really can only spend money on salaries, nothing else. That is a pretty big challenge, then, for a research-intensive field like medicine.

KENNEALLY: Ternopil Medical is a leader in research on Lyme disease and other vector-borne diseases. Some of that work appears in the *International Journal of Medicine and Medical Research*, which is available on the ScienceOpen platform. What services does ScienceOpen provide to Ukrainian researchers?

DAWSON: We have been working with the journal for several years to basically promote that journal and their open access content within the entire ScienceOpen network. So we have 84 million article records in our discovery platform, and part of our services that we offer to the publishing community is to promote individual journals or collections of content, books, etc., embedded in that discovery environment. So we have been working for a while with the journal to increase the visibility of that open access content within the platform, get the authors and reviewers and students a little bit more visibility.

KENNEALLY: Well, Stephanie Dawson with ScienceOpen, thank you for joining me on Velocity of Content.

DAWSON: Thank you very much for the invitation.

KENNEALLY: That's all for now. Our producer is Jeremy Brieske of Burst Marketing. You can subscribe to the program wherever you go for podcasts, and please do follow us on Twitter and on Facebook. You can also find Velocity of Content on YouTube as part of the CCC channel. I'm Christopher Kenneally. Goodbye.

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