Natalia Madjarevic

ORCID: a research support perspective

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ORCID: A Research Support Perspective

Natalia Madjarevic, Research Support Services Manager, LSE Library

Name authorities and research support

Name authority files have been used in libraries to enhance information retrieval for decades (see Younger, 1995) via library catalogues and, more recently, institutional repositories. Extending this expertise to support the uptake of name authority systems in the wider context of scholarly publications is an opportunity for academic libraries in enhancing support offered to researchers. Part of my role in research support at LSE Library is overseeing our repository services, including our institutional repository LSE Research Online, and bibliometrics initiatives. Both activities rely in varying degrees on effective name authorities and connecting researchers to their research activities and outputs.

Effective name authority identifiers ensure researchers – particularly those with popular names – are more likely to be cited accurately, attributed correctly in indexing databases and have the ability to pull this data together for analysis. This is vital if researchers and institutions are to be able to collect and analyse indicators of research impact in order to demonstrate research quality, impact on society or to develop performance indicators or collaborations with other institutions.

A registry of unique persistent identifiers for researchers

Officially launched in October 2012, ORCID (Open Researcher Contributor ID) is a community-driven registry of unique persistent identifiers for individual researchers that can be used across various scholarly publishing activities. An ORCID iD provides a unique ID for an individual in the same way a DOI provides a unique ID for a journal article. For example, a researcher registers for their ORCID iD which can then be used during grant applications, submissions to publishers and when depositing papers in a repository. This aims to bring an individual's research activities and outputs together under one identifier to be used throughout their research career. Publications are added to a researcher's ORCID record, either manually or via harvesting from databases such as CrossRef (see Mayer, 2012), listing outputs that can then be exported via an API or integrated with other services. ORCID also enables linking to other name authority IDs such as ResearcherID and Scopus Author Identifier.

ORCID statistics and membership model

At the time of the writing, ORCID has issued over 228,930 identifiers, recording 1,691,577 works, 974,627 of which have unique DOIs. ORCID also has 71 members including publishers (Nature, Springer, Wiley Blackwell), institutions (Glasgow University, Boston University, CERN, Harvard), funders (Wellcome Trust, NIH) and repository systems (CrossRef, AVEDAS, Altmetric, Symplectic). The scope of the ORCID membership demonstrates the potential uptake across the scholarly publishing process and the way ORCID iDs could be integrated and used by researchers from initial manuscript submission, with publishers and during dissemination via deposit in an institutional repository.

Integrating ORCID

I attended the ORCID Outreach Meeting at the University of Cambridge in May 2013, and the most useful part of the event was hearing how ORCID can be used in an institutional setting, for example by integrating with repositories or research information systems.

Potential ORCID integrations are:
- Link with institutional repositories
- Harvesting to university research information systems (CRIS)
- Manuscript submission
- Grant applications
- Link to other name identifiers (such as ISNIs)

This demonstrates how ORCID iDs could be used across the lifecycle of a research paper. If integrated, it is also important that publishers and institutional repositories display ORCID iDs in their metadata in a consistent way, as discussed by Haak in this post.

The Boston University presentation at the Outreach Meeting provided an insight into the work involved in integrating ORCID iDs at an institutional level. Boston explained that internal negotiations and discussions with legal teams, Deans, Council and relevant stakeholders took around six weeks - and were by far the most time-consuming part of the project. Boston decided on a process of opt-out ORCID iDs for faculty, to initially be included in university profiles, and an opt-in option for students and postdocs. Although ORCID is a self-claim system, member institutions are able to create ORCID iDs on behalf of current employees. If a researcher has already independently set up an ORCID iD, this can be merged with the record created by the institution. Boston were at a relatively early stage in the roll-out process but plan to use ORCID iDs in the HR system, institutional repository and during thesis submission.

I'm particularly interested in how the ORCID registry could be used in libraries to enhance institutional repositories and current research information systems. At LSE, we have a name authority file for all authors in our institutional repository and pay close attention via unique identifiers to ensure academics are described in a consistent and accurate way. International name authority registries, such as ORCID, could therefore enhance our current processes and enhance the metadata held in the repository. Name authority is so integral to ensuring academics get maximum credit for their work and libraries are central services well-placed to support developments in this area.

ORCID and altmetrics

ORCID iDs can also be used to access altmetrics services, which track reaction to research papers on social platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Mendeley, citeulike, Delicious and Figshare. Researchers can enter their ORCID iD into a tool such as Impact Story, which then displays social activity associated with their publications. This is a practical example of how ORCID iDs can be used to access tools which demonstrate research impact in a non-traditional way and, by authoritatively linking researchers to their publications, help expand the view of an individual's research activity.

Conclusion

The ORCID registry seeks to address the issue of author disambiguation by connecting researchers to their publications. There are clearly opportunities for libraries to support ORCID, either via membership and integration with current systems or by training researchers to claim their ORCID iD and to use it as much as possible throughout the publication process.

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