



# Joint Statement of Principle: ORCID - connecting researchers and research

*A proposal to adopt ORCID as a common researcher identifier across the Australian university research sector*

## Background

Unique identification of researchers is difficult for research institutions, publishers, funding bodies and researchers themselves, making it problematic to accurately link research publications, data and other research activities to the right researcher. A unique persistent identifier resolves problems of name ambiguity in search and discovery and can ensure that works are correctly and unambiguously attributed to their creator. Identifiers are a basis for digital data governance because they enable machine readability, disambiguate and enforce uniqueness and enable linking and data integration.

## Joint Statement of Principle

Use of ORCID has many tangible benefits, for our researchers, research institutions, funding agencies and the nation overall. It is proposed that Australia's research sector broadly embrace the use of ORCID as a common researcher identifier. A small working group from the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), the Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS), Universities Australia (UA) and the Australian National Data Service (ANDS) has drafted the following Joint Statement of Principle:

As a matter of principle we:

1. recognise the value of unique researcher identifiers in reducing red tape, increasing efficiency, improving data quality, integrating disparate data, promoting the reuse of data, and enhancing the online presence of Australian research to the global market; and
2. commit to support the use of ORCID as a common researcher identifier.

## Rationale

While there are a number of unique author identification systems<sup>1</sup> available, ORCID is an international, open, non-profit, community-driven effort, developed by and for the research community specifically.<sup>2</sup> As such, it is designed and optimised for researchers and acts as a hub that connects with other researcher identification systems, publishers, funders, professional

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<sup>1</sup> see for example: ISNI <http://www.isni.org/>, VIAF <http://viaf.org/>

<sup>2</sup> ORCID: <http://orcid.org/>



associations, repositories, and higher education bodies. The broad benefits of ORCID are many. These include:

- ability to disambiguate researchers through an online identifier that links to their works (publications, datasets etc.), links to other researcher identification systems, and is retained regardless of a researcher's institutional affiliation;
- enabling researchers to interact with multiple institutions, publishers and funders in Australia and around the world through use of a common identifier;
- simplification and automation of data entry processes, reducing the administrative burden on researchers, research institutions, and funding agencies;
- addressing duplication of effort and enabling the reuse of data for multiple purposes, both within an organisation and across organisations through automation of processes and data exchanges;
- improving data quality (accuracy, completeness, consistency, validity etc.)<sup>3</sup> through automated data extraction, harvesting and testing across systems and organisations;
- reduction of the workload for researchers, research institutions and funding agencies in the long term, improving the overall efficiency and productivity of the national research system as a whole;
- providing the necessary infrastructure to integrate data and facilitate timely and efficient data collection for the management of a research institution, and more broadly for monitoring the health and performance of the national research system; and
- enhancing the online presence and exposure of Australian researchers and their research activities to the global market, industry partners, international collaborators, and students aspiring to study in Australia.

These benefits have clear flow-on effects for researchers, research institutions and funding agencies, and for the nation as a whole.

## For the researcher

Establishing an ORCID:

- allows researchers to distinguish their research activities from others with similar names;
- enables researchers to easily and uniquely associate a researcher's identity to a wide range of research activities and objects such as publications, datasets, equipment, articles, media stories, citations, experiments, patents and notebooks;
- reduces manual data entry through automatic harvesting of associated activities and objects;

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<sup>3</sup> *Data Management Association Guide to Data Management Body of Knowledge* defines Data Quality to include 11 key metrics: Accuracy, Completeness, Consistency, Currency, Precision, Privacy, Reasonableness, Referential Integrity, Timeliness, Uniqueness and Validity.  
<http://www.dama.org/content/body-knowledge>



- makes the research process and collaboration across borders, institutions and disciplines easier because it removes the need to enter data over and over again - the data associated with a researcher can “move” with their identifier across organisations and national boundaries;
- facilitates researcher interaction with multiple organisations, publishers, funders through a common identifier; and
- provides an online profile, improving discoverability of researchers and their associated research activities and objects.

### **For the university/research institution/agency**

Using ORCID:

- improves data quality for the management of an organisation and tracking of research performance. As publishers increasingly adopt the use of ORCID, researchers at any stage of their career can link to as many publications and scholarly outputs as possible;
- enhances an institution’s research profile through improved visibility and discoverability of research outputs and their research impacts; and
- has a time and cost benefit as it reduces manual data entry, minimises double handling of data and makes it easier to maintain up-to-date records.

### **For the nation**

National adoption of ORCID would:

- reduce “red tape” and duplication of effort by capturing data once and enabling reuse and exchange of data across different institutions and systems throughout the entire life-cycle of a research project, e.g. for grant application and reporting, for manuscript submission to publishers, for the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC), for the Excellence Research for Australia (ERA) reporting etc.;
- improve data quality (accuracy, consistency etc.) for the sector as a whole;
- allow a more efficient national data collection and reporting (e.g. Research Block Grants, HERDC, ERA etc.) to monitor the health and performance of the national research system, leading to better understanding of the national system and more informed national policies;
- enhance the nation’s research profile through improved visibility and discoverability of research outputs and research impacts across diverse systems and sources (e.g. publishers’ websites, search engines, disciplinary repositories etc.), creating greater opportunities for international collaboration and access to Australian research by end-users or industries; and
- position Australian research institutions and Australian researchers as global leaders in research management practices, providing Australians with the opportunity to influence and shape the management and future direction of the global research and innovation system.



## ORCID international and local adoption

In addition to the large and growing number of individual institutions worldwide who have joined ORCID in order to integrate ORCID identifiers into their local systems, a number of countries have adopted a consortium approach to ORCID integration. Six out of Denmark's eight universities, all university colleges, and a consortium of research institutions signed a consortium agreement with ORCID in August 2014. Their motivation was to address '... a need to correctly identify researchers, across their careers, changes in affiliation, and changes or variations in names, and link all of these variants with a coherent publication record<sup>4</sup>'. In Spain, the Consortium of Andalusian University Libraries became a consortium member of ORCID in October 2014, aiming '...to provide facilities to register researchers at the nine participating universities and to integrate ORCID identifiers into institutional repositories and institutional and regional research information systems'<sup>5</sup>. In the United Kingdom, the Jisc-ARMA ORCID pilot project was undertaken from May 2014 to January 2015. It aims '...to streamline the ORCID implementation process at universities and to develop the best value approach for a potential UK-wide adoption of ORCID in higher education<sup>6</sup>'.

A number of Australian institutions have joined ORCID and others are considering integrating ORCID with their systems and workflows. Current ORCID members include: The Universities of Sydney, Melbourne, New South Wales, and Queensland, Macquarie University, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology, La Trobe University and Charles Darwin University<sup>7</sup>. The Australian National Data Service is also a member of ORCID. The high level of interest in ORCID in the Australian research sector was demonstrated at the ANDS-CAUL ORCID Roundtable held in Canberra on 29 July 2014<sup>8</sup>.

## Implementation Considerations

Whilst researchers can freely establish an ORCID identifier and institutional membership is available, national or consortial membership for the sector are, nevertheless, options worth considering.<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that the full benefits of ORCID are conditioned upon a broad adoption by the sector, the development of systems and business processes that can utilise ORCID. A fragmented and uncoordinated approach can diminish the dividend on investment. A

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<sup>4</sup> ORCID blog, Denmark Consortium: <https://orcid.org/blog/2014/09/03/denmark-adopts-orcid-consortium-approach-orcid-implementation>

<sup>5</sup> ORCID blog, Spanish Consortium: <https://orcid.org/blog/2014/10/01/orcid-andalucia-cbua-joins-orcid-consortium-member>

<sup>6</sup> Jisc-ARMA (Joint Information Systems Committee, Association of Research Managers and Administrators) ORCID Pilot Project: <http://orcidpilot.jiscinvolve.org/wp/>

<sup>7</sup> List provided by Laurel Haak, ORCID, 17 February 2015

<sup>8</sup> ANDS-CAUL ORCID Roundtable slides and notes: <http://www.ands.org.au/presentations/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> Further details regarding implementation options are available in the Institutional Implementation Options document: <http://ands.org.au/discovery/orcid-implementation-options20150414.pdf>



staged approach to implementation is recommended as it would give the sector and institutions more flexibility and time for planning. This should be considered once a critical mass of agencies and institutions have expressed their commitment.

A number of key issues would also need to be considered in the implementation.

- Privacy: institutional and sector wide implementation must be fully compliant with the Australian Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act.<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that acquiring an ORCID requires no more than the name of an individual and a functional email address. No personal information is collected during this process. Most of the data collected in relation to research activities is already in the public domain and part of their public persona as a researcher. Users retain control of their data. However, they can also authorise a third party (e.g. a journal publisher or an institution they are affiliated with) to edit the data on their behalf.
- Cost: the cost (both the initial upfront cost and the subsequent maintenance and support cost) associated with the implementation and the usage of ORCID may vary across institutions as different institutions would have different systems, capacities, budgetary constraints, and support structures in place. Implementation of a common researcher identifier is a long-term investment. As such proper costings (both cash and in-kind contribution) must be a priority.
- Communication: the use of a common researcher identifier has far reaching implications for many stakeholders (researchers, enterprise system owners, research institutions, funding agencies etc.). A communication plan must be in place to promulgate the rationale and full benefits of a common researcher identifier widely across all stakeholder groups. It is worth noting that the benefits of a common researcher identifier need not distribute evenly across the sector or disciplines. For instance, due to varying disciplinary coverage or community practice, collecting data for non-traditional research outputs (e.g. performances, exhibitions etc.) in the Creative Arts may require greater effort.

## Appendix

### ORCID

ORCID has been established as to create and maintain a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research activities and outputs to these identifiers. It aims to solve the problems of name ambiguity and researcher identification by giving individuals a unique numeric identifier that persists over time. Unlike other identifiers, ORCID is not limited by discipline or by geographic region.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-act/australian-privacy-principles>



ORCID acts as a hub: the ORCID identifier connects researchers with their works, organisations, and their other person identifiers; ORCID Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) enable data exchange between research information systems. The ORCID community includes individual researchers, universities, national laboratories, commercial research organisations, research funders, publishers, national science agencies, data repositories, and international professional societies, all of whom have been critically affected by the lack of a central registry for researchers. ORCID is governed by a Board of Directors with wide stakeholder representation.

One of the key enablers of the ORCID platform for researchers is the automated integrations with publishers (e.g. Thomson Reuters and Elsevier) and research data registries (e.g. ANDS, DataCite). These integrations enable researchers to link their scholarly works to their ORCID account with minimal effort.

There are over 140 ORCID members<sup>11</sup> from every section of the international research community and over one million ORCID identifiers have been issued since its launch in October 2012. Community uptake of ORCID has dramatically increased over the past year. Over 1,000 journals, including publications by Public Library of Science, Nature and Elsevier are using ORCID in manuscript submission systems. Funders such as the National Institutes of Health and the Wellcome Trust are integrating ORCID into their workflows, so that data can be 'pulled' and 'pushed' between systems to speed up submission processes. Other funding agencies across the world are following suit.

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<sup>11</sup> ORCID members: <http://orcid.org/about/community/members>