**Unique Author Identifiers**

Many authors have similar names. The Unique Author Identifier is a numeric/ alphanumeric string used to identify an author uniquely and grouping together all of the documents written by that author. This feature is especially useful for distinguishing between authors who share very common names like Smith, Wang, Lee etc. Additionally, author names are being formatted differently by different publishers. For example, the same author could appear in one document as Priya Ghosh; in another as Ghosh,P.; and in another as Priya G. The author identifier matches the documents of the same authors and groups the name variants together so that even if cited differently, are identified with their specific papers.

Thus the unique identifier helps to measure the impact of an author by making sure that he gets credit for all his research output. Publishing under variations of author name, having a common name, changing the name, changing institutions - all of these can lead to one author’s work being incorrectly associated with another author, or ending up with several author profiles.

The two most popular Unique Athor Identifier Systems used by the researchers all over the world are:

1. ResearcherID

2. Open Researcher and Contributor **ID (ORCID)**

**1. ResearcherID**

Web of Science also provides a unique author identifier called a [ResearcherID](http://wokinfo.com/researcherid/" \t "_blank) that allows you to link your research outputs as indexed in Thomson Reuters' databases. ResearcherID collects your various publications together, even if your name has been listed differently from item to item. **H**owever, the ResearcherID works primarily within the Thomson Reuters ecosystem.

**2. Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID)**

An Open Researcher and Contributor (ORCID) IDdentifier, or ORCID id, is a persistent, unique, 16 digit numeric identifier for individual researchers and contributors provided by ORCID Incorporation, a US-based non-profit organization. . It distinguishes you from other researchers with the same (or very similar) name and supports automated linkages between you and your research activities. Since many major publishers and other information producers are integrating ORCID identifiers into their products and tools, having an ORCID identifier may help simplify processes like journal article manuscript submission. Some granting agencies (e.g., NIH) are piloting the use of ORCID identifiers to manage granting information.

**How Do I Create an ORCID?**

It's easy to register for an ORCID and it is free.

1. First log onto to the website of ORCID at [http://orcid.org](http://orcid.org/).

2. There are three steps to creating an ORCID

3. Add your information. If you have previously created a ResearcherID in Web of Science or a Scopus ID, you will be able to link to those and import references for your publications.

4. You can also add a variety of professional information including current and previous institutional affiliations.

**How to Use an ORCID**

1. Use your ORCID when submitting grants, publications, datasets, and any other scholarly output. (Some publishers are already requiring ORCID iDs.)

2. Display your ORCID as an author ID on software, databases, websites, and social networks.

3. Add your ORCID to your email signature

**Characteristic features of ORCID**

1. ORCIDs protects your unique scholarly identity. There are approximately 200,000 people per unique surname only in China. That is true in many other countries. ORCID solves the author name problem by giving individuals a unique, 16-digit numeric identification number that lasts over time. The numbers are stored in a central registry, that ensures that people find the correct names and [get credit for all their publications](http://orcid.org/blog/2013/12/05/i-claimed-my-orcid-id-now-what).

2. Creating an ORCID identifier takes 30 seconds. Setting up an ORCID record is easier than setting up a Facebook account. Also, if you’ve published before, you likely already have a [ResearcherID](http://support.orcid.org/knowledgebase/articles/175738-transferring-information-between-your-researcherid) or [Scopus Author ID](http://trainingdesk.elsevier.com/how-to/how-do-i-create-an-orcid-record-by-using-my-scopus-author-id). You can easily import information from those systems into your ORCID record.

3. ORCID is getting big fast. The number of ORCID users grew ten-fold over 2013, and [continues to](https://orcid.org/statistics) [grow daily](http://www.orcidlive.org/). You’ll likely encounter ORCID identifers more and more often on journal websites and funding applications–a great reason to better understand ORCID’s purpose and uses.

4. ORCID lasts longer than your email address. Anyone who has ever moved institutions knows the pain of losing touch with colleagues once access to your old university email disappears. ORCID eases that pain by [storing your most recent email address](https://orcid.org/blog/2013/06/20/new-features). If you choose to share it, your email address can be shared across platforms–meaning you spend less time updating your many profiles.

5. ORCID supports 37 types of “works,” from articles to dance performances. It can handle any type of scholarly output you create such as book chapter, [data sets](https://orcid.org/blog/2013/06/17/connecting-research-datasets-and-researchers) and figures.

6. You control who views your ORCID information. When setting up your ORCID record, you can select the default privacy settings for all of your content–Open to everyone, Open to [trusted parties](http://support.orcid.org/knowledgebase/articles/131598) , or Open only to yourself. Once your profile is populated, you can set  custom privacy levels for each item.

7. ORCID is glue for all your research services. You can connect your ORCID account with websites including [Web of Science](http://wokinfo.com/researcherid/integration/), [Figshare](http://figshare.com/), and [Impactstory](http://impactstory.org/), among [many others](https://orcid.org/organizations/integrators/integration-chart). Once they’re connected, you can easily push information back and forth between services–meaning that a complete ORCID record will allow you to automatically import the same information to multiple places, rather than having to enter the same information over and over again on different websites.

8. Journals, funders & institutions are moving to ORCID. Some of the world’s largest publishers, funders, and institutions have adopted ORCID. Over 1000 journals, including publications by [PLOS](http://blogs.plos.org/plos/2013/09/stay-unique-plos-introduces-orcid-identifiers/), [Nature](http://www.nature.com/press_releases/orcid.html), and [Elsevier](http://www.elsevier.com/about/press-releases/science-and-technology/elsevier-joins-orcid-in-announcing-launch-of-orcid-registry), are using ORCID as a way to make it easier for authors to manage their information in manuscript submission systems. ORCID can also collect your publications from across these varied services, making it possible to aggregate author-level metrics. [Funding agencies are integrating their systems with ORCID](https://orcid.org/blog/2014/02/19/link-your-orcid-record-your-funding) for similar reasons. Many international research funding agencies have started requesting that grantees to use ORCIDs to manage information in their systems, and many other funding agencies across the world have decided to follow the suit.

9. When everyone has an ORCID identifier, scholarship gets better. For many publishers and funders, you can now simply supply your ORCID identifier, saving you precious time to do research. You need not waste your time by filling in your address, employment history, collaborator names and affiliations, etc when applying for grants or submitting manuscripts.

10. ORCID is open source, open data, and community-driven. ORCID Incorporation is a [community-driven organization](https://orcid.org/blog/2014/02/05/get-involved-orcid-community). You can help shape its development by [adding and voting for ideas on ORCID’s feedback forum](http://support.orcid.org/forums/175591-general).