Unique Author Identifiers: An Introduction

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1. Introduction:

In this information age, research is happening in each and every field of knowledge. As a result scientists, researchers and students are actively involved in producing information in the form of scholarly publications. It is said that research publications are getting doubled every two years. Internet, World Wide Web, electronic publishing and open source movement have added their share of complexity to the world of publishing. At this juncture it is the indexing and abstracting services which come to the help of information seekers. They enable individuals to search through different entries like author, title, keyword etc. Few examples A & I service could be 'Web of Science' from Thomson Reuters and 'Scopus' from Elsevier group.

However, when it comes to searching through author's name, generally one faces lot of problems. If authors do not stick to one particular way of representing their name, then their publications get scattered. In case of female authors and their name change due to marriage and divorce, results in name ambiguity. Also Indian names especially south Indian names create problem as they generally do not possess a sir name. There could be many people with the same name and same initial publishing paper in the same knowledge domain. This also leads to confusion. Therefore, in academic and scholarly publishing world

it is important to maintain a standard name format as the promotion and funding often depend on the author's scientific impact.

At this point of time it becomes essential to have a unique ID for each author. ResearcherID - a product of Thomson and Reuters and ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) look to be promising in providing a good solution to the author identification problem. This paper discusses the various aspects associated with these two Unique author Identifiers.

Figure 1 below pictorially represents ambiguity that could exist with authors name and their representation in scholarly publishing. It also indicates how this can be corrected using Unique author Identifiers
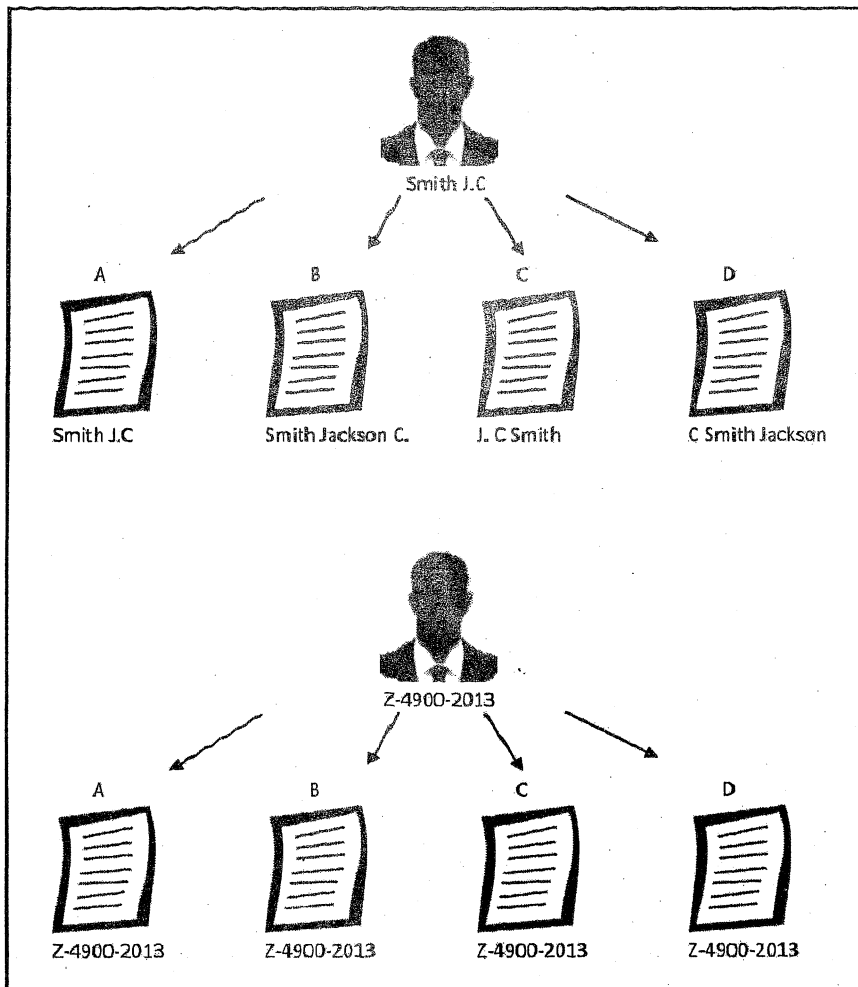

Figure 1 - Author name ambiguity and UAI's role

2. Why Unique Author Identifier?:

1. Author can use their identifier for manuscript submission, so that the new submission gets associated with their earlier publications.
2. Institutions/Organizations could use Identifiers to track the research outputs of their researchers'
3. Researcher can find a easy way to get credit for their scholarly activities
4. Identifiers helps publishers by simplifying the publishing workflow
5. Funding agencies could use identifiers to track publications of those who are seeking their support.

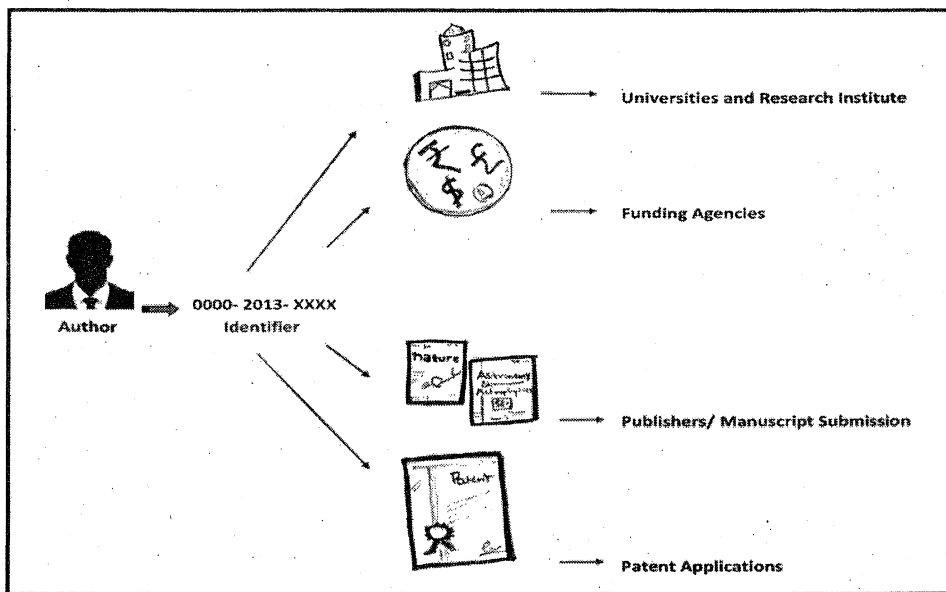Usefulness of Unique author Identifiers is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Uses of Unique Author Identifier

3. ResearcherID?:

To begin with ResearcherID, a unique author identifier system developed by Thomson Reuters is discussed. ResearcherID provides a solution to the author ambiguity problem within the scholarly research community. The system will allow a single identity to be identified using a unique number. This unique number in Web environment enables researchers to create personal identifiers to present their works and manage public presentation of their personal metrics.Participant member is assigned a unique identifier to enable manage their publication list and track their citation metrics.

3.1 Usefulness of ResearcherID:

ResearcherID is an efficient tool that allows researchers

1. To have a unique ID number that expressly associates them with their published works,
2. Update his/her profile information.
3. Can build their publication list using Web of Knowledge.
4. Generate citation metrics, such as the h- index or times cited etc.

3.2 ResearcherID Registration?:

ResearcherID registration is available to all ISI Web of Knowledge users. One can also register at ResearcherID home page (www.researcherid.com). By clicking on "New to ResearcherID? Join Now it's free" button at the very left of the screen, you will be given a simple form. Once the form is filled click on submit so that you will receive an invitation. Fill the registration and create ResearcherID profile. After your Profile has been created you can change/ modify your profile information by using **Manage Profile** link so that your profile can be viewed by other researchers. You can build your complete publications list by uploading your publications using **"Add"** option. Currently there are three ways to upload publications to ResearcherID profile. They are as under

1. **Web of Science** - to use this service to upload publications one has to be a subscriber of Web of Knowledge Database. To search publication, go through the search field and select the publications that he/she has authored and add them to ResearcherID profile by clicking "Add Selection to : My Profile" option.

2. **Endnote web-** Endnote Web is an online search and reference manager tool that allows researcher to search bibliographic resources and retrieve references directly in to his/her Endnote library.

3. **RIS File-** RIS (Researcher Information System) file extension is used for a specialized citation format. This is a standard tag format. This service is very useful to make author's publication list complete. If any publication/s are not indexed in Web of Science database, then it can be added to ResearcherID profile by uploading RIS file of that Publication.

3.3 Other Services of ResearcherID:

A Citing Articles Network depicts who is citing your articles. An interactive world map shows the top geographic locations. And a graphical display shows your top citations by author, category, country/territory, institution or year.

A Collaboration Network displays your collaboration associates. An interactive world map shows the top geographic locations. And a graphical display shows your top collaborators by author, category, country/territory, institution or year.

A Badge: feature that allows you or others to place an interactive badge on any web page. When moving the cursor over the badge, a window will pop up which will display a summary of your profile and recent publications - enabling you to elevate your professional profile overall by promoting your ResearcherID environment and highlighting your scholarly works.

4. ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID):

The Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), is a unique identifier founded by academic institutions, professional bodies, funding agencies and publishers. As interdisciplinary, open and non-profit organization ORCID started in November 2009 aiming at solving the name ambiguity problem in research and scholarly communications by creating a central registry of unique identifiers for individual researchers. It is not only open to all research community but also has transparent linking mechanism between ORCID and other current researcher ID schemes. ORCID is supported by the major indexing and abstracting services and large corporate and society publishers. An ORCID identifier is a unique, 16-digit machine-readable number segmented in to four digit group and including a checksum.

ORCID is made open and freely available identifier tool that anyone who authored scholarly publications can have his/her Unique Author ID. To register with ORCID, one has to visit the ORCID website so that they can create Identifier. Once the unique ORCID has been created it can be used as a linking identifier throughout the entire chain of the scholarly communication process to allow reliable attribution of researcher.

4.1 ORCID Registration:

ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other researcher. Registration for an ORCID is free and very simple. One can register for an ORCID at https://orcid.org/register by completing the fields below.

First Name: Your given or first name. For more information about names see Names and the ORCID Registry.

Last Name: Your family or last name.

Email: Your email address, entered twice to confirm it. You will use your email address to login to ORCID.

Password: A password of your choice, you must enter it twice to confirm it. Passwords must be at least 8 characters long and contain both a number and an alpha character or symbol. For more information about what can be included in a password click the Question Mark Icon next to the password box. As you type a password, it will be given a rating, only passwords rated as "Good" and "Strong" will be accepted by the system.

After the required fields are filled you can control the privacy. This determines the default privacy setting assigned to works you add or import to your profile. Registration is free; the only thing is that you have to agree to ORCID's privacy, Policy and Terms of use conditions before you can register. Once you complete this process, you will receive your ORCID to your registered e-mail ID. If you have already registered for an ORCID with the email you provided, a red warning message will appear. You can't create a second account with the same email, but you can login using that email address.

4.2 Connect ORCID with Other Identifiers:

ORCID will interact with other scholarly author identification systems (figure 3). If you have registered with other author identifiers such as Scopus's AuthorID, Thomson Reuters ResearcherID you can link/ associate your ORCID ID with them by importing or exporting your profile information and publications.
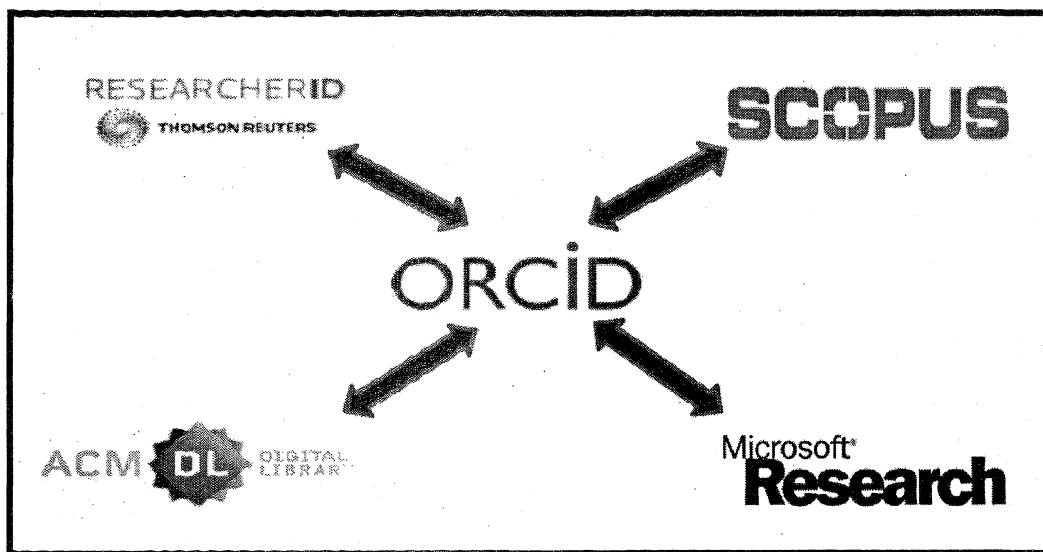

Figure 3: ORCID's connect with other author identification systems

5.   Conclusion:

"Unique Research Identifier" as the name itself suggests aims at individualizing the identity of each researcher. Given the crises associated with name ambiguity, this is a solution, which can be accounted as need of the hour. These unique IDs are of recent origin and it is yet to be popularized amongst the scholarly author community. Off late, research paper submission procedures of few important publishing groups ask for these unique IDs at the time of paper submission. This helps in building publications profile of individual author's in the long run.

Experienced authors who have been publishing scholarly papers should consider registering themselves to one of the UAI and manage their publications. It should be made mandatory for the younger authors to register first and then submit their research papers for publications. Such an action will avoid any confusion related with name ambiguity. It is always better for any given author to stick to any of these UAI's. Registering in more than one UAI may also lead to future confusion.

On the other hand it is better to merge UAIs, say for example merger of researcherID and ORCID may be the best solution so that the entire publishing world and authors across globe will have one and only **Unique Author Identifier.**

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