The ORCID, why we need yet another ID?

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Editorial

The research, writing and publications are of value only when the data can be easily searched and connected to the contributor without hurdles. The accessible websites and search engines varies in time, place and countries, and even when accessible, the correct identification of contributor becomes more valuable for the reader, peer and publisher. The university, funding agency, or institute where we wish to apply for a job or grants want a 'quick review' of the works published, and subsequently the link to the searchable full articles. With a click, all past publications which are linked to a digital identifier are accessible by ORCID[1] – the Open Researcher and Contributor ID. It is a free, worldwide registry. It identifies author and researcher by unique set of numbers as a digital signature. It also embeds research works published across various platforms, and all branches of science and humanity. It is persistent, lifelong identifier which do not change with time, place or geographic region.

By virtue, science and for that matter, research publication belongs to mankind, or simply the universe, and is not personal, or national or disciplinary. It is definitely interdisciplinary and international. We are all aware of the hard work in publishing in peer-reviewed scientific journals. There are many reasons we publish our research writing, and one of them, probably the most important is being visible in scientific community, searchable through various search engines (e.g. Google, Baidu) from the various repository (e.g. PubMed , NepJol, university and professional society websites etc) where our works are archived. We are aware that there are many people with the same name, and this becomes difficult for the readers to locate actual author. Because of ambiguity in name, mistaken identity is a problem. This is more so, when we observe the change of maiden name/s after marriage, and there is cultural issue of listing name first vs. surname first, and then there are numerous combination of initials, to add to the confusion.

The ORCID (ORCiD, logo) is a non-profit, open source global organization managed by a board, supported by research organizations, publishers, funders, professional associations, and various stakeholders that constitute the research ecosystem. The goal is to promote openness and transparency in publishing where the authors can link all publications

accessible in one place. The logo attached with author name is hyperlinked and by clicking it, the whole list of research work/published articles by a researcher can be assessed if they are publicly available. This is up to the author, and fully in control, what is made public or private. Besides manually uploading the publications, author may choose to grant permission to Crossref which will link the publications automatically via the ORCID ID. Increasingly, more and more publishers have now joined ORCID, and made it mandatory for authors to include their ORCID ID when submitting their scientific work. The Journal of Patan Academy of Health Sciences (JPAHS) has made it mandatory for authors to have ORCID which will benefit all involved in scholarly communication. This is to make research easily discoverable and visible. Most of the influential publishers, institutions and funding agencies in western countries, now have integrated their systems with ORCID registry, and among the BRICS[2] countries China and South Africa have actively adopted it.[3]

So how we can have the ORCID? It's simple, visit the ORCID website (https://orcid.org), and signup with functional email. All the name/s we use, and alternative emails can be included. For e.g. many journals as per their style and system of referencing, the name can be - Jay Narayan Shah, Jay N Shah, Jay N. Shah, Shah JN, Shah J.N., Jay Shah, Shah Jay and so on, the list can go on. This becomes convenient when all these styles of name/s, already published in journal articles are identified by one unique identifier to the right author. Sharing same name is common in some culture, for example, the Chinese surnames used in China and in societies with Chinese culture influence around the world, have their surname written first followed by name. This is opposite of Western style naming with surnames at last and then, there is 'transliteration' done differently over the time, the accents and diacritics expressed in English alphabets, and changes in name after marriage (though most Chinese women do not change surnames upon marriage), also there are cultures in which multiple family names are used.[4-6] The ORCID solves these confusions.

The ORCID registry provides unique and persistent identifier, the web services which enables sharing of information about research, researcher and organization involved. What makes it more attractive is that it is useful to the community at large, governed by the community, a non-proprietary open system, and implemented in a reliable manner. The researcher plays important role to the research community in a responsible way and also benefit from it by having an identifier.[7]

Figure 1. The virtuous circle of interoperability (ORCID CC0 image)[7]

Transparency and responsibilities to contributions made by authors are important for the integrity of scientific publication. The ORCID helps in linking the published works, something like bio-data of research work and can track the output and authorship. The authorship carries credit and accountability, even though it is seen variably across disciplines, cultures and group of researchers, leading to authorship misconduct which is pandemic.[8-10]

Signing for ORCID is first step and then maximizing its functionality by building the record. This can be done manually. Also, there are organizations and platforms we already interact with which can do most of the updating work, save time, and reduce possibilities of errors.[11]

Finally, make good use of ORCID. It's a 16-digit, persistent, unique identifier to link your works, awards, affiliations, and alleviate mistaken identity. You are the owner of your ID and in

full control of what information to share, what to keep private. It improves your recognition and discoverability of the work, and for free.[12] Unlike other identifier which may be limited to organization, discipline, geographic region, or proprietary system, the ORCID works across disciplines, institutions, and globally. It provides a registry for researchers and scholars with persistent, unique identifier and is easy to use. It supports linkages across multiple datasets, and function as a switchboard for researchers, publishers, funders, and employer for managing and disseminating research findings.[13] Most importantly it is a researcher-driven system, and allows the researchers to engage themselves in using their identifier in various platforms and services that embed ORCID.[6] It provides 'Who's who - and what are they doing?'[14]

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