The right Wright, not the wrong Wong: CDU rolls out researcher identifiers

There are lots of Rights and Wrongs in the world, or Shall I say Wrights and Wongs.

and distinguishing between them, in the context of scientific research, is becoming increasingly difficult. Fortunately, researcher identification systems provide the answer.

A researcher identifier is a unique, persistent, international ID assigned to a researcher that stays with them throughout their career and beyond.

The tattoo is optional!

Worldwide there is mounting enthusiasm for the adoption of these systems to increase the recognition, promotion and analysis of researchers’ outputs.

In October 2013 Charles Darwin University (CDU) launched an ambitious plan to sign up all of its 400 odd research staff to both ResearcherID and ORCID.

The project was initiated by CDU’s Research Office who were very keen to make the collation of researchers’ publications a less onerous task, particularly in anticipation of the ERA 2015. CDU Library readily collaborated because of the potential automatic entry of publications into their IR, CDU e-space.

Briefly, ResearcherID is owned by Thomson Reuters; it was launched 6 years ago and there are now ca. 350,000 profiles; it is easy to amass Web of Science publications; it has neat metrics; and it has bidirectional data flow with ORCID.

ORCID, in contrast a non-profit organisation, was launched just 15 months ago and has experienced phenomenal growth. At the end of 2012 there were just 45,000 profiles at the end of 2013 this number had risen more than ten-fold to 470,000 profiles. It has attracted huge support in the academic community, including prestigious universities such as Harvard and Oxford, government grant agencies such as NHMRC and ARC, and publishers such as Wiley and Nature, as well as CSIRO and the Australian National Data Service (ANDS).

So our aim was to have all CDU’s research staff signed up to both RID and ORCID ready for ERA 2015 and we believe that we are one of the first Australian universities to attempt to sign up all our research staff to both schemes.

So we know that researcher identifiers will help the administrators of research, but how do we convince our time-poor researchers and keep them happy?

The key advantages to researchers are threefold:

1. RDs remove name ambiguity. (Researchers are able to assert ownership of their research and draw a boundary around their scholarly output, making it easier to find and be referenced more accurately).

2. They Enhance work flows: entering, for example, your ORCID should in 6-12 months or so lead to at least partial automated data entry, making the submission of grant applications and manuscripts less time-consuming.
They enable a researcher to gather their work in its entirety in one place. (Essentially, it acts as the glue that pulls the multiple fragmented sources of information about a researcher together).

We decided that the best strategy was to work with Thomson Reuters to automatically generate ResearcherID profiles for all our research staff, and direct them to set up their own ORCID profiles from within ResearcherID, a very straightforward process.

After about six weeks of education about the advantages of both systems, we uploaded our spreadsheet to ResearcherID and each researcher was then sent an automated email inviting them to follow a link to complete their registration.

Have we succeeded in our aim to have all signed up? Not entirely, but we’re also not disappointed. We launched the profiles on the 4th December and so far 21% of our staff have accepted their profiles. 30% now.

We strongly believe that researcher identifiers will go from strength to strength and within a relatively short period of time we are confident that they will become mandatory either for ERA exercises, or when submitting grants or publications.

These may well be the forces that will help us reach 100% acceptance!

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