ORCID as unique author identifier: what is it good for and should we worry or be happy?

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This was the title of the session with **Geoff Bilder**, **Gudmundur Thorisson** and myself at the Science Online London Conference last Saturday. Geoff first introduced the ORCID initiative, including these principles:
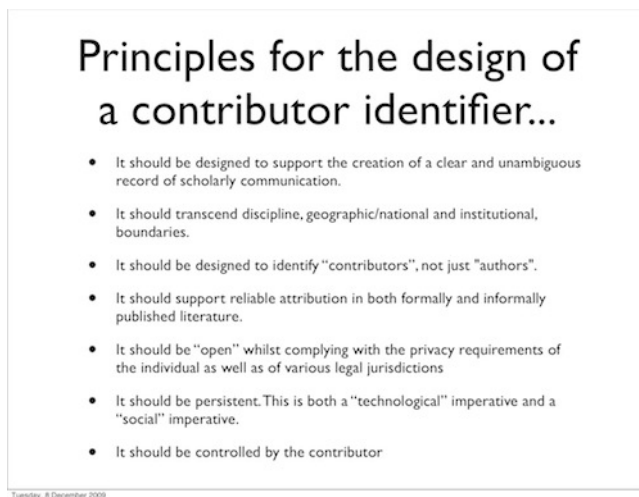

Figure 1:

From Slideshare presentation by Geoff Bilder.

We then talked about two use cases for ORCID. I started with the manuscript submission scenario (my Slideshare presentation), and I suggested that a critical mass of journals using ORCID would have these benefits to researchers:

1. Reduced submission work
2. Automated CVs and publication lists
3. Find related works by author
4. Semantic meaning of authorship

Semantic meaning of authorship ("corresponding author" or "analyzed microarray data") is not a goal for the first ORCID release, but an interesting future perspective.

Gudmundur followed with a similar presentation about the research dataset submission scenario (his Slideshare presentation).

The process is similar to journal submission, but interacts with repositories instead of journals. Gudmundur showed how this workflow could integrate the submission of a manuscript and the corresponding research data. He also demonstrated how datasets in repositories associated with a particular author could be discovered with the help of ORCID.

But most of the session was dedicated to discussion. As open data was one of the main themes of the conference, the meaning of "open" in ORCID was one of the topics. We talked about how the identifier ORCID could be combined with authentication such as the OAuth system. Phil Lord wanted a modification of the journal submission use case, in that the ORCIDs of authors should be provided with the manuscript, and not entered in the journal submission system. And we talked about whether ORCID should also be used for blog posts, Wikipedia submissions, Slideshare presentations, etc. – I argued that not everything needs to be attributed and measured (see my previous blog post).

Figure 2: Flickr photo by malin_c.

Today the ORCID initiative reached another important milestone. ORCID is

now an official non-profit organization with a first board of directors. I am looking forward to serve on this board of directors.