

## ORCID

### TL;DR

SUNET is looking into the possibility to enter into a consortium agreement with ORCID. We have reached an agreement with ORCID to sign data protection agreements (PUBA) with all SUNET customers.

### WHAT IS ORCID?



ORCID is a non-profit organization created by (mainly) a group of large publishers (eg Thomson-Reuters), universities (eg MIT, CERN, Harvard) and library organizations (eg OCLC) to establish a universally recognized identifier for scientific authors.

Before ORCID existed there was no way to consistently distinguish (say) the Leif Johansson who wrote a couple of obscure math papers in the early 00s from the Leif Johansson who is writing (much more widely cited) articles about geology. E-mail is not a very good choice as a permanent identifier in the academic disciplines since academic professionals tend to change jobs (and email addresses) quite often.

Precise, stable and trustworthy identifiers for authors is important because of citations. Scientific authors seldom have expectations of privacy – on the contrary, research funding is often based on metrics derived from the number and quality of citations – aka bibliometrics.

ORCID is the only initiative to establish author identifiers to achieve any uptake and is quickly becoming the defacto standard. This puts ORCID in a unique position; it will hardly be possible to be an active scientist for very much longer without having an ORCID.

Nevertheless the ORCID model is based on individual initiative. Most ORCID IDs are created by individual users self-registering at the orchid.org site. ORCID talks about this as an example of consent but it is doubtful that this would "hold up in court" today given the status ORCID has in the scientific community. In fact several organizations (including CERN and our own Vetenskapsrådet) have or has at some point made having an ORCID ID a requirement. Others are likely to follow suit. This makes it hard to claim that having an ORCID ID is optional as a scientist.

The unique nature of ORCID makes it very important for the stakeholders of ORCID to keep a close eye on what ORCID is doing and how they do it. SUNET is taking an active role here and yours truly is involved in an external review group focusing on ORCID trust and security.

### THE ROLE OF SUNET

The ORCID user-facing business model is very simple: ORCID IDs are free for the individual. In order to recover the cost of operating the ORCID service, ORCID provides a number of payed APIs that enable deeper interaction with the ORCID dataset from e.g. a University CRIS system. To access these "enterprise" APIs, ORCID charges a membership fee. This membership fee is what pays for the ORCID service (the organization is by all accounts solvent) and there is a pretty steep downward price curve if an organization acts as a consortium member and fronts for several universities.

However, these APIs sometimes touch PII (Personal Identifiable Information) and under Swedish law is therefore covered by the Personal Data Protection Act (PUL). This legislation requires Data Protection Agreements (aka PUBA) between ORCID and the API consumer (the University).

**SUNET is pleased to announce that ORCID and SUNET have reached an agreement which commits ORCID to signing data protection agreement (PUBA) with SUNET customers that come in under a consortium agreement.**

### NEXT STEPS

In order to sign a consortium agreement with ORCID, we need at least 5 initial ORCID members willing to join the consortium agreement. Depending on how many organizations that choose to join, the price per organization will be in the 4k-6k USD range for the "premium" membership level.

We plan to make a final decision on weather to sign a consortium agreement by October 1st so please make your interest in this approach known to Sunet by then!

Skriven av



**LEIF JOHANSSON**

Blogs about past, present and future technology  
initiatives in the CTO-blog.