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## ORCID education: A departmental approach

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# ORCID education: A departmental approach

## **Abstract**

Purpose- This paper provides a case study of an ORCID promotion at the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science, providing context for the importance of education in ORCID outreach.

Design/methodology/approach- The 3-month ORCID promotion used workshops and individual appointments to educate faculty about ORCID, identity management systems and research impact and scholarly communications.

Findings- A targeted and personal approach to ORCID promotion focused on education about why you might use this author disambiguation system resulted in 80% of the faculty within the School of Optometry and Vision Science signing up for or using ORCID. Scaling an ORCID implementation to a larger group would likely benefit from a) a dedicated project group, and b) integration with existing institutional systems such as a requirement of an ORCID for internal grant applications.

Originality- Although time consuming, this small-scale ORCID promotion with one department reveals that a departmental approach to ORCID education may lead to larger conversations about scholarly communications and a stronger relationship between faculty and the library.

## **Introduction**

The University of Waterloo Library completed an ORCID promotion during the Spring 2018 with the School of Optometry and Vision Science, resulting in over 80% of faculty signing up for ORCID accounts. The successful integration led us to develop an effective approach for introducing faculty to this valuable author identification repository. This brief case study will discuss the project aims, timeline, outcomes and lessons learned. Our goal is to highlight project considerations when planning or scaling up an ORCID implementation at academic institutions.

## **About ORCID**

ORCID, or an Open Research and Contributor Identifier, is a unique 16-digit identifier that academics, researchers, and others can freely create and share. The primary purpose of ORCID is to disambiguate author names and it is especially useful for authors with common names, who have changed their name, or have used variations in their name when publishing. This disambiguated identifier helps to streamline the publishing, tracking and promotions undertaken during scholarly communications. ORCID also allows authors to enter and track their work history, education, funding/grants history, memberships/service, and publication history. This creates the potential for ORCID to be used in grant applications in addition to many other scholarly communication activities.

ORCID benefits from being a non-profit organization that is not associated with any publishers or organizations in the scholarly communication industry. This enables ORCID to integrate, unhindered by potential conflicts of interest, across platforms, organizations, and publisher systems. As such, ORCID integrates with most publishers (Boudry and Durand-Barthex, 2020) and over 400 journals, and granting bodies internationally (Akers et al., 2016). This widespread integration enables consistency across the scholarly communication lifecycle, starting with authors using their ORCID during the manuscript submission process. The ORCID enables systems to recognize and link publications associated with the author's ORCID, helping to them to accurately track and share their scholarly record, across systems.

## About the Project

The ORCID promotion at the University of Waterloo's School of Optometry and Vision Science took place May-July in 2018 and resulted in 25/31 (83%) of faculty in the school having ORCID accounts. Similar to other library efforts, the primary goal of the project was to sign faculty up with ORCID while educating them about the benefits of using ORCID to disambiguate their identity in scholarly communications (Argabright and Ashmore, 2017; Thomas et al, 2015). Faculty were asked for up to one hour of their time in which they learned about ORCID while signing up and populating their profile. The choice of the School of Optometry and Vision Science was made for a couple reasons. First, the librarian embedded in the department knew that the department was very interested in tracking researcher output and making research at the department more visible. Second, the School of Optometry and Vision Science is accredited and must keep track of faculty publications each year. By using ORCID, the library hoped to keep better track of faculty publications by disambiguating common author names, and thus, help the department profile their research. The project team consisted of the librarian embedded in the Optometry and Vision Science department and a MLIS co-op student.

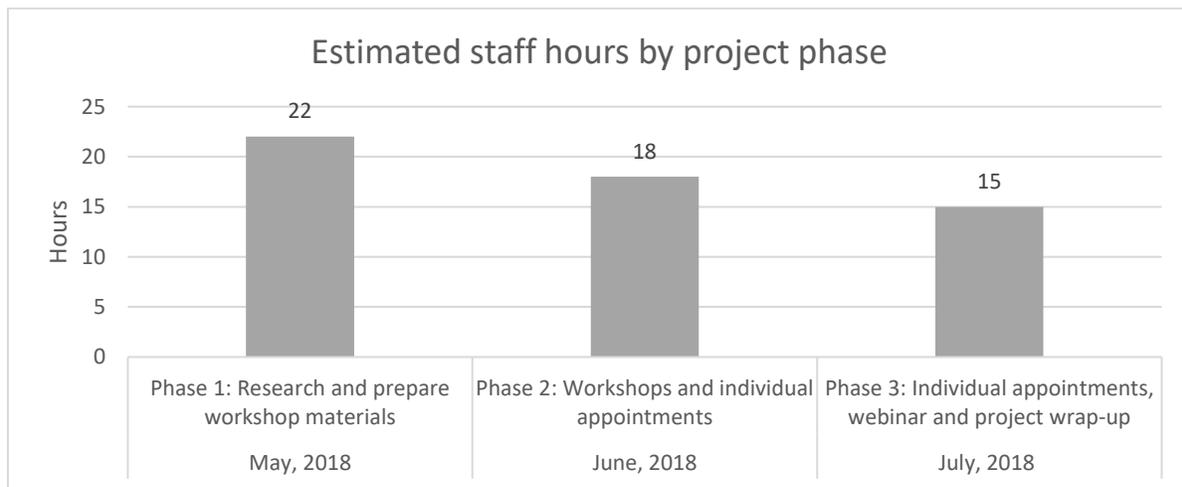


Figure 1: Bar graph of staff time commitment to ORCID promotion.

The project proceeded in three phases. Phase one took about a month and consisted of preparatory work including researching ORCID, preparing the outreach plan and workshop materials. In phase two, the library ran two workshops for faculty and graduate students in the department and met individually with faculty who could not make the workshops. In phase three, the team met with the remainder of the faculty individually and wrapped up the project. In total, the project required approximately 55 staff hours over three months (see Figure 1) with a success rate of 25/31 (83%) faculty signed up for ORCID. Of the 25 faculty who joined ORCID, 6 (24%) attended the workshops, we met with 14 (56%) individually and 5 (20%) pursued ORCID independently (see Figure 2). Low workshop attendance created more work to meet with faculty individually, but the personal connection garnered during individual appointments allowed faculty to ask specific questions about their needs, the project, and the library. This both built and strengthened relationships between the library and faculty.

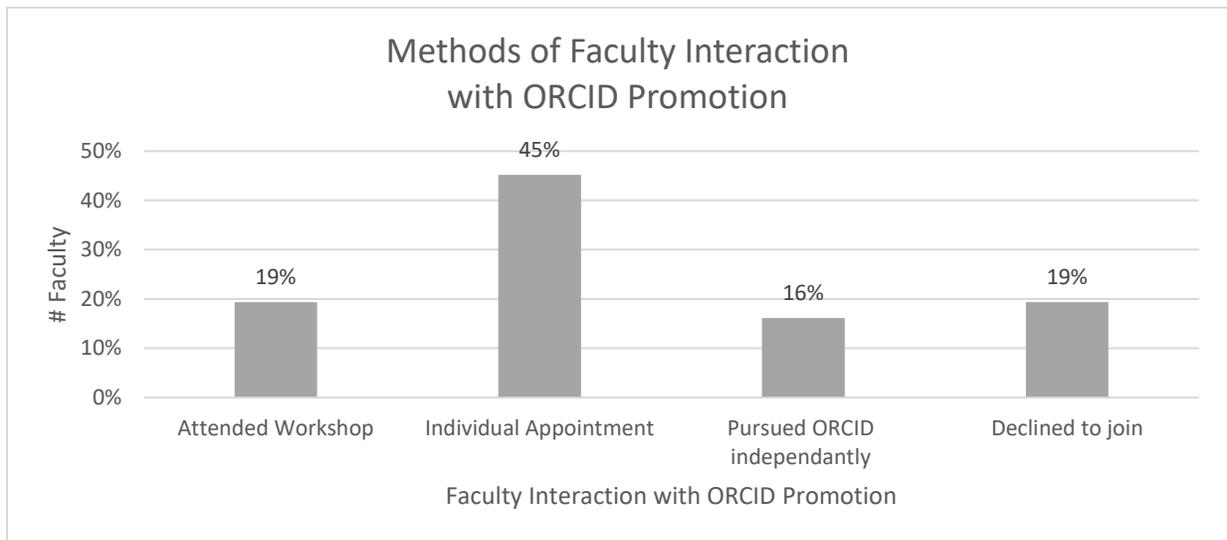


Figure 2: Bar graph of how faculty signed up for ORCID in which over 80% of faculty joined ORCID during the promotion, with most by individual appointment.

ORCID workshops and appointments followed a similar structure. We found that centering conversations about ORCID on education helped build faculty buy-in. All workshops and appointments started by defining ORCID, how it works, and emphasizing its increased popularity as a tool in scholarly communications. We found that equating ORCID to article DOI’s was useful to explain the concept. For example, “You know how most articles have a DOI so you can find it again? ORCID is like a DOI for you that connects your research works together, regardless of how you sign your name on the manuscript.” When explaining why faculty should consider ORCID, we found it effective to highlight that it is a non-profit company and that ORCID follows you from one institution to another. Moreover, we highlighted specific examples of what ORCID looks like in Optometry and Vision Science publications and where they may see ORCID in grant applications and manuscript submission software. These examples were relevant to faculty and helped them see how they might use ORCID. The remainder of the appointment walked faculty through registering for an account and populating their research profile. At the end of the workshop/appointment, we discussed how faculty could use ORCID, and they were given a sticker (see Figure 3) to keep track of their ID. Everyone enjoyed getting the stickers and they were often stuck somewhere prominent in their office or on their laptop.

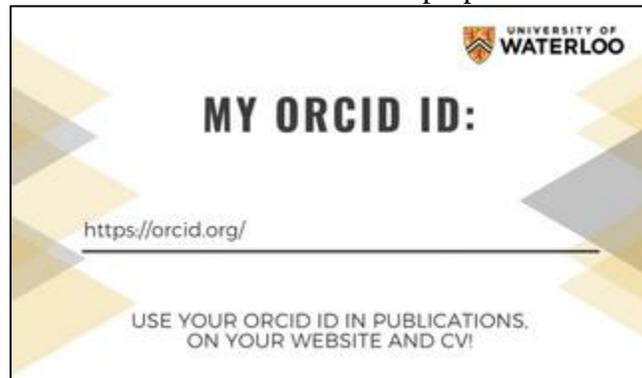


Figure 1: ORCID promotional sticker in which participants can track their unique 16-digit ORCID

## **Project Outcomes**

The success of the project at Waterloo can be attributed to its small scale and focus on the broader scholarly communications conversations. By working with just one department and focussing significant efforts on the education around ORCID, we were able to bring a high level of awareness about ORCID, scholarly communications and research, and the role of the Library to faculty. Faculty also found the project beneficial and applicable to their research. In the words of one faculty member, “I did not know I would need this identification pathway, but since obtaining the ID, I have been asked for this number three times on diverse projects” (personal communication). One of the unexpected benefits of the ORCID project was that it prompted many conversations about research impact and academic profile management with faculty. For example, in having faculty use the Scopus integration with ORCID to populate their profile, many faculty saw their works profiled in Scopus for the first time and were able to clean up their Scopus Author Profiles by merging and de-duplicating accounts. This has made tracking faculty publications easier for the department as many faculty publications are more accurately represented in ORCID and Scopus. Not only that, but many faculty members asked questions about how to calculate or understand their research impact during appointments. This highlighted the skills that the library brought to the table while fostering a stronger relationship between library and faculty, as suggested by Akers et al (2016).

## **Challenges**

There were several challenges experienced in this project. Chief amongst them was the amount of staff time required to complete the ORCID promotion. As many faculty members did not attend the workshops, making individual appointments required more time. Although time consuming, individual appointments provided an opportunity for more tailored discussions and relationship building within the department, reinforcing the value of the library and our services. Therefore, the added effort of individually meeting with each faculty may be counterbalanced by the overall benefit. Furthermore, although the workshops would be more efficient, we could argue that they are no more effective than meeting with faculty individually. Therefore, we advise using a two-pronged approach to an ORCID implementation, such as we have described here, would be most effective.

A second challenge was that the ORCID had not yet been integrated into any internal policies or workflows at the University of Waterloo, making the systemic support and sustainability of ORCID uncertain, regardless of its increasing use within specific units across the university. This finding is similar to Powell, Hoover, Gordon & Mittrach (2018), who found that successfully implementing ORCID at an institution depends on its integration with other systems at the institution and the mandatory use of ORCID in internal funding requests.

## **Lessons Learned**

Since this project was completed in 2018, enough time has passed to really reflect on lessons learned. The success of this project relied upon a receptive department that was already interested in profiling their research, faculty collaboration, and the dedication of a local ORCID champion in the library. One of our key learnings was that faculty highly valued the time taken to educate them on the benefits of using ORCID. Faculty often have the technical know-how to sign up for the ID, but without the context for why they would do so, they may not choose to. Second, working with faculty on ORCID reminds faculty that the library supports them throughout their research lifecycle. Third, we found that the faculty that seem to be most interested in ORCID were those with a vested interest in their own or department level research impact, and/or those early in

their career. Although our workshops were targeted for faculty, they were open to graduate students at the School as well. Similar to Ashmore and Argrabright (2017), we found that graduate students provided a lot of positive feedback on the workshop and ORCID in general. This high interest resulted in the decision to expand the project to include a dedicated promotion of ORCID to the graduate students at the School in the Spring of 2019. ORCID promotion amongst graduate students had a very similar capture rate, with approximately 80% of the 40+ graduate students creating ORCID profiles, as the faculty promotions discussed here. Capturing the graduate students had the added benefit of catching researchers early in their career so they may use ORCID moving forward.

### **Practical Tips for ORCID Education**

Are you thinking about expanding education about ORCID? Here are some practical tips that you can use in your workshop/website and promotional material:

- When explaining what ORCID is, compare it to a DOI for an article.
- Show faculty examples of what ORCID looks like in publications in their field, and give examples of journals with ORCID integrations
- Conversations around ORCID tend to lead to conversations about research impact. Therefore, be prepared to talk about citation counts, h-index, and other similar metrics, as well as the research databases that help track them.
- While working with the faculty to create their ORCID profile, consider tackling a review of the researcher's Scopus ID and cleaning it up through merging multiple accounts.
- Include graduate students in any promotions about ORCID, as it greatly benefits early career researchers, and they will show up if invited.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the ORCID promotion at the School of Optometry and Vision Science was a success, resulting in over 80% of faculty using ORCID, a graduate workshop on ORCID embedded in the curriculum, and stronger relationships between the department and library relating to research impact. Success of this project is attributed to its small scale, educational focus, and openness to discussions about how author profiling relates to research impact. Scaling an ORCID implementation to a larger group would likely benefit from a) a dedicated project group, and b) integration with existing institutional systems such as a requirement of an ORCID for internal grant applications.

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