

Distinguish Yourself from Someone: Role of Researcher Profiles in the Academic Environment

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Abstract

The researcher profile is playing a significant role in mapping the scholarly life of an individual as well as an organisation. Having a researcher profile for an author or an organisation highly influence in measuring its research and academic impact and also generate a variety of different metrics. This paper discusses the different types of researcher profile platforms generally used by the academic community in the Indian higher education system. The article also discusses each profile system, its advantages, and its limitations in an academic environment. Further the paper explains the status of academic community in higher education on the awareness, usage, and application of researcher profiles for various utilities with reference to the faculties of Central University of Kerala. A general study on the available literature on various researcher profiles has been reviewed, and inputs are summarized by creating and analyzing each researcher profiles. Further, the data submitted by all the faculty members of Central University of Kerala as part of the IRINS instance (Faculty Profile) creation is being extracted to know the application of researcher profiles along with the input received from some selected faculties on not having a researcher profile. The study found that majority of the faculty members have created at least one or other researcher profile; however, faculties from Science discipline found to be more familiar with the researcher profile system, whereas Humanities, Arts, and Social Science disciplines are not explored the facility efficaciously. The study suggests that irrespective of the discipline in which the faculty belongs, libraries have to play a vital role in educating the academic community the importance of having a researcher profile to maximize their online reach.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every individual has one or other mechanisms to designate them with their identity, such as name, designation, or position (like Aadhar, PAN, Voter ID details) and social networking identity as a unique identification. However, the same cannot be work effectively with the scholarly communication scenario where the individual has to appear in a huge mass to a broader geographical space in the digital environment unless provided with a persistent universal digital identity. Further, the quantity of knowledge is being produced by the academic and scholarly community is expanding year by year. The same researcher is producing subject-specific and interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary literature and disseminating this research output through various means of publication. Research output generated globally is being available in different formats and follows a different model of communication channels to disseminate it to the wider audience. A set of new scientific tools are now providing a variety of metrics that measure all actions and interactions in which scientists take part in the digital space, making some hitherto overlooked aspects of the scientific enterprise emerge as objects of study (Alberto Martín). The model of scientific communication, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary network of collaborators and the way scientific and research outputs are evaluated had undergone a significant transformation. The best way of showcasing one's complete work in an online platform is to link the same with a universal identification system. There are various methods prevailing in the scientific evaluation system to measure the academic impact of an individual, such as impact factor, h-index, i-10 index, altmetrics, usage metrics, academic profiling services, etc. Hence the idea of individual researcher profile has emerged.

Researchers and faculties change their institutional affiliation and/or contact information and sometimes produce research publications and are published with name variants by the publisher. Up to some extent, various academic institutions, especially higher education institutions and R&D Organizations, made their effort to locally preserve their research output through institutional repositories, digital libraries, etc. by providing them individual identity. However, access to many of such initiatives is restricted to campus network only. Hence, their contribution to scientific research as a whole is invisible to the public and the impact of their intellectual output is being missed. Making an individual's research available to the widest possible audience to have a collaborative network is a challenging task. Many identifiers have been originated to make an individual's identity among the large group. The researcher identifier or researcher profile is mainly used to showcase the research impact of the individual and organization. Google Scholar profile, ORCID profile, Researcher profile, Scopus Author profile, ResearchGate,

ISNI profile, VIDWAN profile, IRINS profile, etc are examples for such identifiers. Government, academic bodies, and organizations of higher education systems are giving more emphasis on research activities, and efforts are being taken to bring research publications and scientific output of individuals and organizations to show their research impact for better visibility and recognition.

2. MAJOR RESEARCHER PROFILES

There is various researcher profile creating platforms are available for national and international coverage. Researchers are registering with these platforms to have a bibliometric portrait of their research life. However, profiles shown in these platforms depend to a great extent on the individual characteristics of the “mirrors” themselves. Google Scholar Citation Profile, Publons Profile (WoS Researcher ID), Open Researcher and Contributors ID (ORCID), Scopus Author Profile, VIDWAN Profile, IRINS Profile, and Microsoft Academic Search Profile are some of the extensively used researcher profile in the academic environment.

2.1 Google Scholar Citation Profile

Google Scholar Citation Profile, generally known as Google Scholar Citation, is a service provided by Google which enables a researcher to set up profile page and to showcase publications and citation metrics. Anybody having a google account can create the profile. Hence the audience group can be a researcher, practitioner, or general user. Publications can be added automatically by choosing the listed publication on the name while creating the profile or can be updated to the profile manually. However, the citation metrics of the profile automatically updated by the system on the content added which are simple and easy to understand. Authenticity cannot be completely assured unless the person keeps a watch on his profile and publications. Citation calculation can be altered by adding others’ contents, and whatever citing document is available online will be counted as a citation. Options are available to keep the profile public or private. If the profile is made public, then other researchers will be able to access and download the resources and also able to comment upon. Further, cited articles can also be viewed on the home page itself. Google Scholar covers all kinds of document types such as journal articles, books, conference proceedings theses, reports, etc., irrespective of the language, source, country of origin, and discipline in which the resource is produced. As it indexes a larger document collection with more restricted indexing policies shows a higher percentage of citation compared to other similar profile systems. Google Scholar Citations has a high growth rate and showcase graph citations over time. h-index, i10-index and also compute several citation metrics. The number of citations produced is always larger than other similar researcher profiles. However, the accuracy of these metrics may not be meaningful considering the quality criteria for what constitutes a citation. Further chances of citing another researcher work as your own or vice versa are more in a Google scholar profile. Google Scholar Citation lacks social features and transparency about data sources in its size and coverage. Metrics can be

easily influenced and open to manipulation. It inherits bibliographic mistakes from Google Scholar.

2.2 Publons Profile (WoS Researcher ID)

Publons Profile (Web of Science Researcher ID) is a researcher identification system launched by Thomson Reuters, a for-profit company in the year 2008. Researcher ID is mainly built upon data from Web of Science, and the researchers will not have a chance of creating an academic profile if their published work is not indexed by Web of Science. Quality is ensured as it considers only peer-reviewed publications. It cannot list out the source of citations for a particular researcher. Metrics are displayed on the profile page and provide an overview of the publication and review activities. However, Publons profile never identifies the researcher as the reviewer of a manuscript. It allows other researchers to see the publications, review metrics and Web of Science h-index on the profile. ResearcherID or Endnote or Web of Science account can be used to directly reach to Publons profile. If a researcher has ORCID, then it can also be linked to Publon profile so that the publications can be directly imported. If not, the profile can be created using the link <https://publons.com/about/home/>. Audience groups are selective and filtered and mostly fit for researchers only. Publons profile offers advanced bibliometric indicators. Publons profiles are not user-friendly as Google Scholar Citation Profile and not used by many researchers in his true sense. There is no mechanism in the Publons profile to automatically update the publications hence most of the profiles created are empty or outdated. The growth rate of profiles in the Publons profile is low. Researchers from Social Science and Humanities are found difficult in having a publication in the Web of Science core collection, and their profile cannot be updated much, even if they have plenty of publications. Further metrics available in Publons profile are limited to citation metrics only. However, through ResearcherID Labs, a researcher can view citation counts, average citations, h-index, and also can create visual collaboration networks and citing article networks, which is created from Web of Science data.

2.3 ORCID

Open Researcher and Contributors ID (ORCID) is an open community organization that was launched in October 2013 with an aim to provide unique digital identifiers to researchers and scholars and maintain its registry. It is a global level author identification system relies on open source code and open directory. Unlike other researcher profile systems, ORCID is not associated with any specific publisher, discipline, or geographic area and also not a social media platform. ORCID minimizes name ambiguity by generating a persistent unique identifier for individuals to attach to their scholarly output. Further, anyone can register for an ORCID, and there is no set of requirements that an individual has to pass to be classified as a researcher and do not need an official affiliation. "Researchers can register for a unique ID, which can be used by editors, funding

agencies, publishers, and institutions to reliably identify individuals in the same way that ISBNs and DOIs identify books and articles" (Taylor). ORCID profile can list the institutions an individual worked at, funding received, publications authored by the individual and the details of any peer reviews provided by the author. It is mandatory to produce an ORCID in many of the cases where a researcher is submitting a manuscript to some journals or applying for research funding or scholarship with some organizations. ORCID can be linked to a Scopus Author ID, Researcher ID, or ISNI. The individual has full control over the security of the data entered into and the details recorded in the profile can be marked as public or private or only available to a trusted party.

2.4 Scopus Author Profile

Scopus is one of the largest citation database available for the academic community launched in the year 2004. It is a product of Elsevier, a Dutch publishing and analytics company specializing in scientific, technical, and medical content. Scopus Author ID is a unique ID automatically generated by Scopus for the authors/collaborators who publish articles indexed by them. Any publication which is available in Scopus indexed list of journals, all the authors will get a Scopus Author ID. Scopus can be searched with ORCID. Scopus ID can be available for individuals as well as institutions. Normally, it is an eight-digit number for affiliation and eleven-digit number for an author. Scopus can be directly connected to ORCID from the individual profile page. (www.orcid.scopusfeedback.com). The same system can also be used to make a request to merge name variants of an individual to a single to integrate with Scopus ID.

2.5 VIDWAN Profile

VIDWAN: Expert Database and National Researcher's Network is the premier database of profiles of scientists / researchers and other faculty members working in leading academic institutions and other R & D organizations involved in teaching and research in India. It is a network of subject specialists and experts' database of Indian researchers and faculties developed by Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre with the support of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) and was launched in the year 2012. It is a network of expertise from different disciplines such as Engineering and Technology, Social Science, Medical and Health Science, Agricultural Science, Physical Science, Chemical Science, Arts and Humanities and Biological Science from various institutes such as institute of national importance, research & development organizations, state and deemed universities and technical institutes. VIDWAN ID is a unique profile ID for Indian Experts who have registered with it. The profile contains information about a particular expert, such as personal details, qualifications, experiences, expertise, publications and research activities. Every expert whose profile is available in the database can be logged in to their respective profile with a persistent URL enabling them to update their profiles.

2.6 IRINS Profile

IRINS: Indian Research Information Network System is an extended and revised version of VIDWAN Profile. IRINS is a web-based Research Information Management (RIM) service provided by the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre. The portal facilitates the academic, R&D organizations and faculty members, scientists to collect, curate and showcase the scholarly communication activities and provide an opportunity to create a scholarly network. The IRINS is available as free software-as-a-service to the academic and R&D organizations in India. Those who have registered with the VIDWAN profile will be allotted IRINS profile. New members will have five or six-digit ID of numeric in nature. Profile has the option to incorporate with other researcher profiles such as ORCID, Scopus Profile, Google Scholar and Microsoft ID.

2.7 Microsoft Academic Search Profile

Microsoft Academic Search Author Profile is a free citation-based academic search engine that is not much popular among the academic community. Creating an account on Microsoft Academic allows the researcher to build a profile around the publications and an identification number randomly assigned. However, it automatically creates a profile for authors who have published in the universe it searches and allows the profile editing using any of the credentials used for Microsoft, Yahoo, Facebook or Google. The profile can be used to list the publications and to get the details of who is citing that publication. It is better for disciplinary studies than for analyses at institutional and individual levels. It adopts a restricted model in which the researchers only can suggest changes or merges in their automatically supplied profiles

3. ADVANTAGES OF RESEARCHER PROFILES

The impact of the researcher profile is significant to academic and research communities to improve the discoverability of the research outputs. A researcher profile with a unique identity distinguishes one researcher from others with similar names in the scholarly communication environment. It acts as a reliable identity for an individual as well as an organization regardless of similarity in names, changes in names, cultural differences in name order, changes in disciplines, and variations of the ways that names are presented. It connects and maintains the link between that particular researcher and his entire scholarly activities hence eliminates any kind of author identification issue. It can showcase the research activities of an individual to have a network of collaborators. Researcher Identification differentiates authors with common names and to connect with their potential collaborators. Hence, variant names of authors or researchers or organizations can be grouped together. Having a researcher profile helps in getting citation details, h-index, etc. and is one of the easiest ways to get credit for their scholarly activities. Some researcher profiles providers enable visually produced/ listed network of collaborators. Few researcher profiles platforms automatically compile a 'Research CV' of papers, data, code and other

research materials by a particular researcher. It documents the collaboration and funding histories of individual researchers. It makes it easier for authors to list their affiliation consistently. Some researcher profile identifiers can be used as a search term for others so that it makes outputs more discoverable in specific research fields. Recently funding agencies, grants, and awards, fellowships, etc. use researcher profile IDs, which considerably reduce the administrative burden of having to identify an individual work to multiple systems and organizations. Some of the researcher profiles support automated linkages between the author and his/her professional activities, ensuring that the work is recognized and attributed to the same author. In total, researcher profiles can be used not only to showcase the research output but other activities in an academic environment such as to submit project proposals, award and grant applications, ranking and other evaluation systems, transferring research activities, consortium-based access to library resources and bibliometric studies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis has been done using the data pertaining to each faculty member of the Central University of Kerala on awareness, usage, and application of researcher profiles for various utilities, as a sample. Details submitted by all the faculty members of Central University of Kerala (CUK) as part of the IRINS instance (Faculty Profile) creation during the Month of October 2019 is being extracted to know the application of researcher profiles along with the input received from some selected faculties on not having a researcher profile. There were 125 faculties responses available for the analysis. Among them 87 (69.6%) were male, and 38 (30.4) were Female. Table 1 depicts the gender-wise responses received from the faculty members.

Table 1: Gender-wise Responses of Faculties of CUK

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>
Male	87	69.6
Female	38	30.4
Total	125	100

Among the responses received, 66.4% responses were from the category of 'Assistant Professor' 16% were from 'Associate Professor,' and 17.6% were from Professors. Table 2 depicts the count and percentage responses of different categories of faculties.

Table 2: Designation-wise Responses of Faculties of CUK

<i>Category</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>
Assistant Professor	83	66.4
Associate Professor	20	16
Professor	22	17.6
Total	125	100

It is found from the study that out of 125 faculty members of the Central University of Kerala, only 12 (9.6%) had registered with VIDWAN database as an expert in their subject area prior to the creation of IRINS. Since the registration to the database was not made mandatory to the faculty members/experts could be one of the reasons why fewer members. Many of the faculty members were unaware of the existence of such an expert database. However, IRINS profile is created for all the faculties, and the same details have been updated with the VIDWAN also. It is assumed that the initiative is taken by the University Library made all the faculties to create profiles. Further, more than fifty percent of faculty members have created their profile in Google Scholar Citation. Creating a profile in google scholar found to be very simple if a faculty has an email account with Google. 65 (52%) faculty members have their profile with google scholar citation. Many faculties have stated that it is easy to create a profile even if they do not have publications in the reputed journals. In terms of its registered faculties, Publons profile stands above VIDWAN and Microsoft Academic as it indicates 14 (11.2%) faculty members have created their profile to get their ResearcherID. ORCID has 44 faculty profiles, which are more than 35 percent of the total faculty members in the University. It is indicated that 46.4 percentage of the entire faculty community published their research works with Scopus indexed collection hence automatically received their Scopus ID. Microsoft Academic profile is found to be the lowest in which very few (3.2%) faculties have created their profile. Fig. 1 depicts the complete scan of the researcher profile status of faculty members of Central University of Kerala.

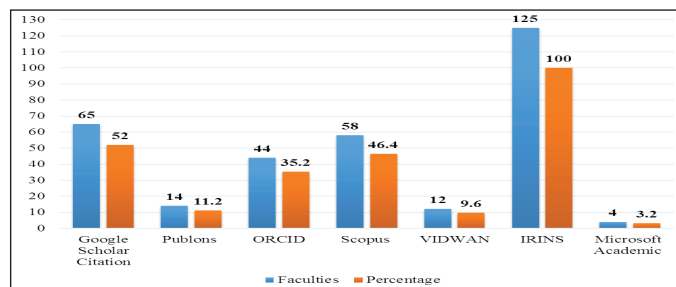


Fig. 1: Researcher Profile Status of faculties-CUKerala

Further from the analysis of responses received from the faculty community, examined the majority of the faculty members having at least one researcher profile to showcase their research activities. However, faculties from Science discipline are more familiar with the researcher profile system, whereas disciplines under Humanities, Arts and Education are not being utilized effectively. One of the faculty members commented that 'Though I have many publications, I do not have any Scopus or WoS indexed articles to my credit as I belong to an Arts department, hence never bothered of researcher profiles.' One faculty from the department of language said 'I have created Google Scholar Citation out of curiosity and never updated it, as it is meant for those who have publications in

referred journals.’ The case is same with many of the faculties that they do not remember the profile they created and not updating too. Analyzing the replies received from the faculty members, it emphasizes the need for educating them that the researcher profiles are designed to highlight not only the publication output but also covers the areas of expertise including research, teaching, mentoring, leadership and administration. Further a policy to be formulated to integrate author identifier with the book and manuscript submission system mandatorily to streamline the workflow and to track the status. The authority that maintains the profiles and details of researchers must place priority for formulating the regulations to maintain the privacy policy in order to get the personal details more secure and confidential. The system should involve researchers, librarians, publishers, funders at distinguished levels.

Different research profile platforms are available in the public domain, and each one offered distinct and complementary data on the impact of scientific and academic activities as a consequence of their different user bases, document coverage, specific policies, and technical features. Some profiles have a homogenous coverage of all scientific disciplines, but some are selective. Some profiles are frequently updated and added with improved features, but some are static for a long time. A universally accepted open, user-friendly and static researcher identification system with more sophisticated features needs to be evolved in order to properly attribute the scholarly activities of a researcher. Such a system should facilitate to produce reliable, accurate and transparent metrics on the publication impact. It should also be accepted by all universities, research and development institutions, national and international funding agencies, publishers and to be used as a universally accepted tool to evaluate and measure the performance of an author. Publishers should adopt to embed such universally accepted identification in their manuscript submission system as mandatory publication policy. Publishers and funding agencies should make mandatory to include the universally accepted ID for publication and releasing grants, fellowships, etc. It should automatically update the profile without any errors and should never stop the service. Further, the veracity and exhaustiveness of the data available in a profile need to be verified frequently. If there is an existing national level identification system, options to be available to exchange and integrate the data. The system should be capable of integrating and supporting all the stakeholders in a research ecosystem, including students’ community, researchers, faculties, and scientific communities from academic and R&D organizations, publishers, scholarly societies, and funding agencies. Researchers from arts, humanities, and social science should get their preferences compared to science. The mechanism should be there to produce citation and other metrics which cannot be mishandled by the researcher or others.

5. CONCLUSION

Research identifier profiles are one of the transparent methods of linking research activities and outputs of a researcher for scientific discovery and impact tracking.

Proper attribution of authors and researchers is very much required throughout the research ecosystem. The researcher profile is an excellent way for scholars and academic communities to disambiguate their credentials and also track activities such as publications throughout their careers. There is a tendency among universities, professional associations, libraries, publishers and funding agencies to adopt and integrate the unique academic identifiers into their systems. Research impact varies widely by discipline, and the scholars are making their effort to create individual profiles to make their scholarly identity and work visible to the general public and collaborators. Library professionals working in an academic system should be able to adapt to scholarly communication developments to offer an effective and efficient services to the academic community. They should play a key role in promoting such services among the faculty groups and also to educate them on their advantages in the scholarly environment from time to time. The researcher profile is one of the key resolutions of the problems now facing the academic community to distinguish from someone and to showcase their academic activities.

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