



## Thomson Scientific Tagging Researchers: ResearcherID.com

by [Barbara Quint](#)

Posted On January 21, 2008

With the explosion of research worldwide and the multiplication of outlets for content, verifying who wrote what has re-emerged as a core problem in scholarly communication and publication. Thomson Scientific (<http://scientific.thomson.com>) has opened up a new web service called ResearcherID.com ([www.researcherid.com](http://www.researcherid.com)) that allows researchers to establish their own identities and, with some restrictions, to identify their writings. The service will soon open to outside sponsors, including universities, publishers, associations, etc., "via a standard Web Services API." Even in the few short weeks that the system has been open to invitees, James Pringle, vice president of product development at Thomson Scientific, says he has already seen some ResearcherID's on Google search results.

Thomson expects registrants to use their ResearcherIDs as a "digital calling card," placing it on institutional pages, personal homepages, resumes, articles, blogs, etc. Pringle described the system as stemming from researcher interest. "Researchers expressed to us a need for a place to manage their professional profile—it needed to be free, open to all their colleagues, yet with total control over their own privacy," said Pringle.

Speaking of privacy, the system currently assumes that registrants may want to see promotional material from Thomson Scientific and other units of the Thomson Corp. However, Pringle assured me that there is an "opt-out" option, which I confirmed in the privacy statement under the "How to Contact Us" section. Also, Pringle explained that when other sponsors adopt ResearcherID.com, registrants coming through those conditions may find variations in terms and conditions for use.

To use the ResearcherID service, a researcher registers at the site and receives a unique alphanumeric identification that includes the year of registration. Once registered, users can build custom profiles, upload lists of their publications, or build publication lists by searching Thomson Scientific's Web of Science. Once created, the Web of Science will automatically generate citation metrics based on the publication list, i.e., add counts of the times other scholars have cited works. All users of the site will have access to registrants' first and last names, institution, primary role, etc., but mailing address and email identifications will remain private. Once registrants have set up an account, however, they can change the settings using the "Manage My Profile" feature to allow others to see more information. Since Thomson Scientific is promoting the service as an opportunity for collaboration among scientists, the greater the details available, the more other researchers can share. Even nonregistered users can search the registry and view public profiles.

Currently, all the registrants must have authorized access to Thomson Scientific's Web of Knowledge. In addition, all the registrants on the site are there by invitation only, but Pringle expects the service will be open to all Web of Knowledge users by the end of the month. Since Thomson estimates the access to that service to be 20 million users worldwide, this restriction would still make the service broad-based, if researchers choose to use it.

Only full registrants, i.e., interested and invited Web of Knowledge users at present, can use the "Add Publications" function. Registrants can transfer citations from a Web of Science search using this function. All such citations will appear in the RIS tagged format. If registrants want to add individual entries or upload bibliographies on their own, all the citations must also be in the RIS format. At present, there is no way to correct a bibliographic citation outside of deleting the entire entry and re-entering it, but registrants can edit their profiles at will. Registrants can also enter keywords to describe their work.

Anyone can search the Registry, either by entering a ResearcherID, if known, or by searching for last name and first initial combination, keywords, or institution. They can also click on a keyword from a keyword list on the homepage.

### **Future Expansion**

The service was opened during the first few weeks in January. Future sponsors will join ResearcherID.com soon, possibly in the next few months, according to Pringle. He spoke about Thomson Scientific's connection with ResearcherID as the first sponsoring application. "Other sponsors could be universities, publishers, associations, who would serve as an entry point for researchers who want to create profiles. This is important for issues of validation and trust. We created the whole thing with a Web services architecture for integrating it with other trusted environments. The Web of Knowledge is just the first instance." Pringle envisioned ResearcherID.com as having a dozen university partners fairly soon, and the company has also seen interest in sponsorship from publishers and others.

The current ResearcherID.com is just the first release, according to Pringle. "In successive releases, we may add the ability to create links to social networks, blogs, and other user-generated content. This is just the foundation as we move forward to other kinds of collaboration and mash-ups." Thomson may also add DOI's for full-text links. Pringle indicated, "We're following the research community on this, testing social networking and other integration points to see what the community really wants. But we're working from a stable foundation and a persistent link. This very first 1.0 release is just the kernel of the future tree it will become."

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