

Beyond Authorship: Partnering with the Publishing Community to Recognize Peer Review Service

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Peer Review Recognition welcomes collaboration from all stakeholders

The Peer Review Recognition collaborators invite any stakeholder that would like to join the initiative to reach out to ORCID at members@orcid.org.

As the research landscape continues to evolve, so too do the expectations placed on the digital infrastructure that facilitates the sharing of research outputs and scholarly communication. Addressing complex, interconnected challenges such as research integrity, fair recognition for academic contributions, and the responsible use of published research in AI applications requires engagement between publishers, researchers, institutions, and infrastructure providers.

While broad progress across these areas will take time, an issue that can be addressed quickly is to ensure peer reviewers receive full recognition for their critical contribution to quality control, leveraging the strong infrastructure already operating across the publishing ecosystem.

ORCID is working with Springer Nature, Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and Sage to launch *Peer Review Recognition*, an initiative that encourages wider adoption of high-quality, publicly available, publisher-backed acknowledgement of peer review. We invite additional publishers and community partners to join this collaborative effort as we grow the initiative.

By replacing non-standardized, private acknowledgments of review activity with tangible career recognition in the form of portable, verifiable assertions (Trust Markers), the initiative aims to allow researchers to demonstrate this important contribution in their public profiles, and this information can also be used in a variety of downstream workflows such as grant applications or institutional reporting systems.

Improving recognition for academic contributions beyond authorship and

citations

When a publisher adds peer review recognition to an ORCID record, it is accompanied by a “Trust Marker”—a signal to the world that a trusted organization has engaged with the reviewer, while also preserving the anonymity of specific reviews, where applicable.

The goal of the Peer Review Recognition project is to encourage wider use of these validated acknowledgements—improving recognition of academic contributions beyond authorship and citations, expanding the coverage and re-usability of standardized peer review data, reducing administrative effort through greater standardization and automation, and creating transparency to support publishers’ research integrity efforts. But how do Trust Markers figure into this?

Trust Markers create a richly woven tapestry for the entire research ecosystem

What makes an ORCID record truly powerful is *data provenance*, which simply means, “it’s easy for viewers to know exactly who added what.” While data can be added to ORCID records in several different ways, essentially it falls into two broad categories:

1. **Data that has been self-asserted:** Information manually entered by the record holder
2. **Validated data that has been automatically added by an ORCID member organization:** Information (including Peer Review service) added directly by ORCID members, such as publishers, research-performing institutions, and funders, with the record holder’s permission.

Each piece of data added by an ORCID member is accompanied by what ORCID calls a Trust Marker, indicated with a [green checkmark](#), that can let users see quickly which items were added by trusted organizations. But not only have we designed Trust Markers to be human-readable when a user views an ORCID record, they are machine-readable when that ORCID record is integrated with downstream systems.

Now, think of scholarly integrity as a tapestry; the more tightly woven it is, the more robust the integrity of the fabric.

A single thread of information is a vital, essential starting point—there will always be legitimate reasons for a researcher to self-assert data in their records. But the real strength happens when multiple independent, trusted organizations across the scholarly ecosystem interweave their data:

- A research institution adds data about education or employment
- A funding agency adds data about a grant award.
- A publisher auto-updates a new publication, acknowledges formal editorial service, or (as is the entire goal of the Peer Review Recognition project,) asserts validated data about

When these distinct strands of validated data are woven together over time, they form a robust mesh of information about a researcher's track record, accompanied by explicit provenance. As more trusted organizations contribute these high-fidelity stitches, the integrity of the scholarly record grows significantly stronger, creating a resilient and verifiable trust fabric. Trust Markers are the mechanism that weaves together this collective tapestry, allowing the community to verify identity and scholarly bonafides at a glance, and turning individual data points into a robust record of scholarship.

In short, the more Trust Markers that accumulate in an ORCID record, the stronger that record holder's digital scholarly presence becomes, and the stronger the scholarly record itself becomes as that validated data—and the Trust Markers—get shared and propagated throughout the research ecosystem.

Publishers are a key stakeholder in upholding trust in research

Publishers arguably have some of the largest demands being placed upon them to solve many of the integrity challenges currently facing the research community, but luckily they are also well-positioned to help address the issue. As publishers steward critical metadata about researchers' authorship and review activities, they are able to strongly facilitate the growth and propagation of Trust Markers throughout the research ecosystem—always in strict compliance with user permissions, privacy standards, legal requirements, and industry best practices.

Publishers have also proven their ability to navigate massive changes before, like the print-to-digital transition, or the transition to Open Access publishing models. Fully embracing the ORCID peer review workflow is low-hanging fruit with high impact by comparison. And speaking of challenging tasks, it's worth remembering that publishers played a significant part in the formation of ORCID to solve the complex problem of author disambiguation. So the expertise is here, and the tools that publishers set into motion are ready. By opening this initiative to additional interested organizations, the project hopes to share learnings and establish scalable frameworks that make it easier for publishers of all types and sizes to adopt best practices for peer recognition. The Peer Review Recognition initiative signals a next step towards proactively helping researchers build their academic records and demonstrate their trustworthiness.

A robust scholarly record is foundational to research integrity and transparency

The integration of validated peer review data into the scholarly record serves as a key underpinning of research integrity. In a transparent system where academic contributions

are publicly acknowledged and sourced with detailed provenance information, fraudulent activity has fewer places to hide.

ORCID acts as a neutral community-governed third party that compiles data and facilitates the seamless flow of verified information between researchers, funders, and academic institutions. To address the patchy and inconsistent nature of current peer review data found in ORCID records, the Peer Review Recognition program aims to standardize and strengthen how review activities are acknowledged—eliminating manual record-keeping and reducing administrative burden for researchers, publishers, and institutions alike. Ultimately, this will help to transparently foster a sustainable, trustworthy peer review ecosystem for the benefit of the entire research community.

Peer Review Recognition has a phased approach, and welcomes collaboration from all stakeholders

The Peer Review Recognition pilot is currently underway to test the universal adoption of existing ORCID peer review deposit mechanisms which respect researcher preference by moving from an opt-in to an opt-out model. The goal is to achieve a higher participation rate while maintaining a seamless, positive experience for researchers and maintaining their full control over inclusion. By embedding authenticated metadata from trusted organizational sources into the ORCID Registry, downstream processes—including research assessment workflows, funding decisions, and the STM Research Integrity Hub—can better recognize and use this verified data.

The initiative will follow a multi-phased strategic roadmap designed to ensure the scalability and long-term impact of the program:

- **Phase 1: Peer Review Validation Pilot.** Focuses on the immediate addition of validated peer review activity to reviewers' ORCID records across participating pilot journals.
- **Phase 2: Pilot data sharing.** Public communication of the benefits and learnings of the pilot journals and their peer reviewers to inform decisions by all stakeholders.
- **Phase 3: Broad adoption.** Widespread and long-term adoption of the pilot approach.

To ensure these infrastructure developments reflect the full diversity of the global scholarly community and provide reviewers with consistent, portable recognition across journals, the participating groups are actively looking to maximize participation from other publishers.

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AUTHOR



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Chris is our Executive Director. With more than 25 years of experience in product and platform development in scholarly communications and STM publishing, Chris brings to ORCID his deep expertise in product and technology strategy in a time of rapidly changing business models, technological advances, and increasing expectations from users and customers.