Identifier Functionality for EThOS at the British Library

Rachael Kotarski*[1], Sara Gould*[1], and Laura Reuda[2]

[1]British Library (BL) – 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, United Kingdom
[2]DataCite – Germany

Abstract

The Horizon2020-funded THOR project (http://thor-project.eu) is developing the infrastructure for persistent identifiers for all objects and actors within the research landscape, from organisations to individuals, from big data collections to individual sections of code. Linking identifiers together not only makes it possible to acknowledge the contribution of each party but it enables individuals to track the impact and influence of their work.
Doctoral theses are a strategic area of focus for THOR. As theses and their underlying data become available as independent objects, there is a need to maintain the relationship between them, while providing a method for each to be cited and identified in its own right. At the same time, the limited research output of the authors up to that point can make disambiguating them particularly difficult. Identifiers for thesis authors will enable them to demonstrate their personal impact right from the start of their careers.

Initial changes to the British Library EThOS service have already been made to support persistent identifiers for theses, thesis data and their authors. We will present the outcomes of that work in a full conference paper at ETD 2016.

This poster will introduce the follow up work that has begun in this area, with the aim of generating discussion on the future development of identifiers for PhD students and their outputs.

Aims

Now that UK thesis metadata has been extended to support persistent identifiers, it is vital that functionality is further developed to enable maximum benefit to be achieved. Building on this, our aims are to:

Investigate the number of theses within EThOS that have already been claimed by researchers via their ORCID records to gauge current take-up and to identify the potential impact of improvements to the claiming process

Enable authors to claim their thesis on their ORCID record via EThOS

Engage with UK higher education institutions to further encourage assignment of DOIs to theses and their data, and encourage submission of that information to EThOS

---

*Speaker

Work with an institution to test end-to-end assignment and sharing of identifiers between the institution and EThOS

Expected results and impacts

Strengthening support and functionality of persistent identifiers for theses will fundamentally encourage good data management practice at the start of research careers. It will also allow us to look in more detail at how theses are cited at present. Building on that foundation, we hope to be able to track the career path of PhDs and impact of PhD funding. If we can encourage international adoption of this work through a venue such as ETD, then this tracking can also be achieved globally.

On the authors:

Sara Gould is a Development Manager at the British Library and manager of some key services for researchers. She manages EThOS, the UK's national database of doctoral theses or ETDs. This role involves managing the development of EThOS within the Library, as well as working with UK universities to ensure their requirements are reflected in the service. Sara is a Board member of NDLTD and DART Europe, the European database of ETDs.

Keywords: Persistent identifiers, THOR, DOIs, ORCID