

Frequently Asked Questions - Author Identifier

What is the Scopus Author Identifier?

Many authors share the same name and the Author Identifier distinguishes between these author names, it gives each author a separate ID and groups together all the documents written by that author.

This feature is especially useful for distinguishing between authors who share very common names like Smith or Wang or Lee.

Additionally author names in Scopus can vary in the way they are formatted, for example, the same author could appear in one document as Lewis, M; in another as Lewis, M.J; and another as Lewis, Michael. The Author Identifier matches the documents of this author and groups these name variants together so that one author is identified with their specific papers.

This enables the user to find and recognize an author, despite variations in name spelling.

The user can find a person, not just a name, so the user has access to high quality accurate information for their desired author.

How does the Author Identifier work?

Scopus uses a sophisticated algorithm which recognizes authors based on various data elements associated with the article, including affiliation, publication history, subject area and co-authors.

The author profile details page delivers up-to-date details of the author that are available in Scopus. These details are derived from the published papers covered by Scopus.

Why are some of my documents by themselves and not grouped with the others?

Some documents in Scopus do not have sufficient information for the Author Identifier to accurately match them together, even though they are written by the same author.

For instance some documents do not have citations, or some affiliation information may be inaccurate or missing. Lack of information such as this makes it impossible for our software to confidently create a relationship between the document and the author (or the document and other documents)

In this case they are likely to be seen in the author results list alongside the larger groups. It is possible to include these single documents in a 'show documents', 'citation tracker' or 'feedback' request, by placing a tick in the checkbox next to the name and clicking the appropriate button.

How does Scopus determine unmatched authors?

The system performs an exact search on an author's name and the other name formats. This is just a simple text search, with no profiling taking place in the background.

For example, a user searches for "Witten, E" and "Princeton". The search then returns two profiles: 1) "Edward Witten" with "E Witten" as a second format, and 2) "Ed Witten".

When going to the profile page of the first hit and trying to locate unmatched authors, the user will not find the second hit, although both refer to the same person, subject area and affiliation. This is because the system searches exactly for "Edward Witten" and "E Witten" only and will not therefore find "Ed Witten".

How are international variations and spellings dealt with?

The algorithm behind the author profiling function matches

- alternate spellings and variations of the author's last name
- international name variations
- author names with and without initials and middle names
- all possible combinations of first and last names

It does this by matching the author information using a whole range of attributes. Despite international variations, for example, an author will be matched based on various data elements associated with the article, including affiliation, publication history, subject area and co-authors.

This enables the user to search for Muller, CM and retrieve Müller, C if that is a variation that is matched with Muller, CM, and vice versa.

What happens if an author believes the information in their profile to be incorrect?

A feedback link on the author result page and on the details page enables the author to email any corrections to the Scopus team. These will be reviewed and, if appropriate, updated.

Once the Scopus team receives the information, they will review and verify the request/feedback. Where the request is correct the Scopus team will endeavour to make the change, whether it be in the underlying data or in the matching algorithm.

It may take some time to implement these changes, especially if the volume of requests is very high and if the verification process proves to be difficult.

However, the information displayed on the author profile page is generated by the author information in their published papers. Authors should be encouraged to ensure these details are correct upon publication.

Is there a procedure for advising users who have submitted feedback on author profile revisions if and when changes to the main database have been made?

When a user makes a submission via the author feedback button, the input is registered in a call tracking system and the respondent provided with a call number. Once the corrections are approved and implemented on Scopus, he or she will be informed.

Please note that it might take some time for the merges and splits to appear on Scopus itself as the correction involve a manual validation step by the author identifier team and requires processing. Actual data correction requests and missing content requests can

take somewhat longer to implement as a result of the need to potentially request re-supplies of the original article from the publisher and complete reprocessing. As far as possible, users are kept informed of the status of their feedback.