ORCID
Historical Reference Document

API Working Group

Historical Technical Working Group

The 2015 technical development plan included several updates to the ORCID API. The key objective in these updates was to enable greater scalability, particularly in how API users interact with the items attached to an ORCID Record, such as works, funding, and affiliations.

During the updates to the API for scalability, we also made changes that made the API easier to use, made terms more consistent with those used in ORCID communications and membership materials, or made the API more consistent with general API best practices.

There are often multiple approaches that can be taken to achieve these objectives, each with their own sets of benefits and consequences. We established an API working group to provide input on the changes made, and the ways in which these changes might affect the current and prospective API users. The working group was also tasked with commenting on communication plans with API users, the migration plan for rolling out changes, and helping to communicate these decisions to the greater ORCID API community.

The API Working Group provided technical and policy guidance on design and implementation of the APIs:

- Small group of 5-7 individuals, including those who already used the ORCID APIs, and/or had experience in designing and maintaining nimble OAuth, RESTful APIs
- Approximate engagement timeframe: March 2015 through December 2015
- Outcomes/deliverables: feedback and suggestions on API changes, and communication/ migration plans; guest blog posts and/or quotes for communications published about the API changes; statement on ORCID API changes

Why convene this group?

To better understand the breadth of possible changes to the API, we listed possible projects below. *It was noted that some projects may not be completed in 2015 or at all.*

- **Per-work API** *(change to existing API)* - allow works, funding, affiliations and other things in lists to be updated individually rather than as a list. Included because lists of works were growing increasingly difficult to manage, particularly for researchers that have long lists of items on their record.
- **Notifications API** *(new API)* - enable someone to post a specific notification to a researcher's "inbox" on the ORCID website. In this first iteration, notifications were limited to those indicating that the API user has items that could be added to the user's ORCID Record. Note that this functionality would be limited to a subset of API users and would be governed by policies on sending messages to users.

- **API Scope simplification** *(change to existing API)* - reduce the number of API scopes used when asking users for permission to access their records. Included because at the time, there were 15 different scopes (access permissions) that API users used to interact with the API. This work would reduce the number of scopes to closer to 6.
- **API error handling** *(change to existing API)* - update to how error messages are expressed so they are more verbose and provide better guidance to the API user.
- **Public API - Search** *(change to existing API)* - move API searching and possibly other unregistered public API use under the registered, public client, enabling ORCID to better monitor resource use and control potential overuse if it occurs.
- **Biographical Information API** *(change to existing API)* - improve update protocols, provenance handling, and history tracking for API changes. This change may affect internal processing more than API user interaction.
- **RDF Support** *(extension of API)* - add support for RDF content types including FOAF, CERIF, and possibly Dublin Core for content negotiation.

Working Group Members

- **Karl Ward**, CrossRef **CHAIR**
- **Deepak Chaturvedi,** Thomson Reuters
- **Jan Dvořák**, Charles University in Prague
- **Tom Demeranville**, ORCID
- **Peter Flynn**, Boston University
- **Pellumb Kllogjeri**, University of Elbasan
- **Laura Paglione**, ORCID Technical Director
- **Rob Peters**, ORCID Technical Lead
- **Will Simpson**, ORCID Open Source Team
- **Peter West**, Digital Repository Services Ltd