

Why Canada Needs a National PID Strategy

A persistent identifier (PID) is both a unique label for and a long-lasting link to a person (e.g., a researcher), a place (e.g., their organization), or a thing (e.g., a grant or a research output). PIDs are associated with additional information (known as 'metadata') and they point directly to online resources, including other PIDs, which can also be linked. If widely adopted, they have the potential to help make the entire research lifecycle more efficient and effective, enabling researchers to spend more time on research.

PIDs, like research, operate globally, but (also like research) they are often managed at the national level, for example, through national consortia. Momentum is therefore growing around the world for strategies to be developed at the national level to ensure that PIDs are used effectively, equitably, and for the benefit of researchers nationally. Countries in the Americas, Asia Pacific, and Europe are at various stages of developing and implementing national PID strategies. Many, like Canada, already have one or more nationally-negotiated access to one or more PID systems via consortia, so they have direct experience of the benefits of expanded PID adoption for their researchers and research organizations. However, while PIDs and their metadata are used in many Canadian research organizations, they are not yet ubiquitous and have not been adopted or implemented consistently.

Two recent cost benefit analyses for [Australia](#) and [the UK](#) show that the widespread use (80%+ adoption) of five key PIDs (for researchers, grants, outputs, organizations, and projects) will deliver significant benefits by enabling the automation and pre-population of fields. These savings are associated solely with rekeying grant, project, and article metadata; additional savings – for example through improved automation and aggregation/analysis – are likely to be as, if not more, significant.

As well as saving time and money, PIDs also support open research; improve our understanding of the research landscape; enable the management of research data; support research integrity; and more.

Key stakeholders across the Canadian research community – funders, institutions, publishers, researchers, and more – believe that the widespread adoption and implementation of PIDs at the national level across all researchers and their organizations would have significant benefits for the nation. A national approach to PIDs would also help address current inequities in Canada (the result of differences between disciplines, language, geography, institution type, access to resources, etc), by leveling the playing field for all stakeholders.

Developing and implementing a national PID strategy will support the Federal Government's '[Roadmap to Open Science](#)'. It will enable Canadian researchers to benefit from the same improvements in productivity, recognition, and working conditions that are being developed in other countries. It will also ensure that Canada has the opportunity to shape global priorities and to help PID and infrastructure providers better understand, and meet, the needs of the Canadian research system.