



How Many Norman Lloyd Johnsons Are There in the Mathematical Reviews Database?

Norman Richert

Do you know your MR Author ID? The proper identification of authors of scientific papers has become increasingly important in the digital era. Mathematical Reviews (MR) has been working on “author authority” since 1940. In fact, in the basement of our Ann Arbor, Michigan, office there are file cards on authors, which Otto Neugebauer, our founding editor, brought with him from Germany in the 1930s. At the founding of Mathematical Reviews in 1940, the “author database” was a file card system. That file card system was translated into an electronic database in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Our identification of authors is not simply a machine algorithm, although it begins with extensive computation. The results of that computer analysis for each author of each paper are examined by MR staff members in the Cataloging Department. As of the writing of this column, there were 634,104 distinct authors in the MR author database. By the time you read this, there will be at least 10,000 more. Keeping these authors separate involves a careful look at the published name string of an author, coauthors, institutional codes, Mathematics Subject Classifications (MSC), and sometimes direct communication.

We are hoping that your MR Author ID will become a mathematical “unique personal academic identifier”, reliably identifying your published

research. Beginning in 2013, AMS publications will ask for your MR Author ID and those of your coauthors when your paper is accepted for publication. Providing this information will not only improve the information associated with your published paper (i.e., by providing a link from the publisher site rather than into MathSciNet) but will also assist us in keeping up with the ever-growing volume of mathematical publications around the world.

Each distinct author in the MR database has an associated author profile page. For example, the author profile of Saunders Mac Lane can be found at www.ams.org/mathscinet/search/author.html?mrauthid=117515. Saunders’s MR Author ID 117515 can be seen in the URL, as well as on his profile page. These profile pages can be found in various ways. The most direct approach is to select the Authors tab in MathSciNet, enter the name of the author, and select from the various options if more than one. An author profile page is a series of snapshots and tools associated with that author’s publications. For example, there is a complete list of published names.

One of the most important reasons for the accurate identification of authors is that authors may publish under various names: using a first name only, using a first name and middle initial, and using a first initial only, to name just a few possibilities. Saunders Mac Lane published under both Mac Lane and MacLane, as well as Makleřn. Sometimes authors publish under pseudonyms. MR1507467 is a DML (Digital Mathematics Li-

Norman Richert is managing editor of Mathematical Reviews. His email address is nrichert@ams.org.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1090/noti922>

brary) item. The article link in MathSciNet takes you to a digitization of this *American Journal of Mathematics* "Correspondence" from 1956. This "Correspondence" is signed, "Yours, etc., X.X.X." It came to our attention that the author of this correspondence is Jean-Pierre Serre, so X.X.X. is one of the "published as" names for Professor Serre. Tom Odda is a pseudonym for Ron Graham (MR Author ID: 76025) in **MR0557896**, as Professor Graham's author profile shows. A search for "Odda, Tom" in the Author field under the Publications tab shows that there is still work to be done. The search returns three papers. In addition to **MR0557896**, there are **MR1538085** and **MR1537614**. In these latter two items the author names are not links, because the author authority work has not yet been done. In fact, most of the DML items in MathSciNet have not yet had their author authority work done; that is a project for the future.

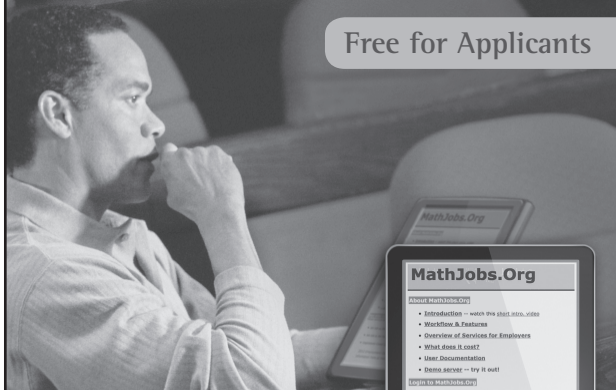
To answer the question of the title, there are two authors named Norman Lloyd Johnson in the Mathematical Reviews database. Their MR Author IDs are 193061 and 193190. Both are prolific authors. The hard work of MR staff has kept all their publications correctly identified.

Of course, mistakes can be made. Should you find a mistake in author identification (or any other error), please report it to us using the Support Mail link found on every MathSciNet page. Be sure to include as much information as possible, in particular, why you believe that it is a mistake. This can be with reference to any author in the database, not just yourself. Perhaps Tom Odda will write.

MathJobs.Org

The automated job application database sponsored by the AMS

Free for Applicants



MathJobs.Org offers a paperless application process for applicants and employers in mathematics

Registered Applicants Can:

- Create their own portfolio of application documents
- Make applications online to participating employers
- Choose to make a cover sheet viewable by all registered employers

Registered Employers Can:

- Post up to seven job ads
- Set all criteria for required documents, and add specific questions
- Receive and upload reference letters
- Manage applicant information and correspondence quickly and easily
- Set limited access permissions for faculty and EOE administrators
- Search for and sort additional applicants in the database
- Choose an advertising-only account, or a discounted single ad account

Visit mathjobs.org for pricing information

Contact: Membership and Programs Department

American Mathematical Society
201 Charles Street
Providence, RI 02904-2294 USA

800.321.4267, ext. 4105
Email: mathjobs@ams.org

