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The *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (AJET) is a refereed research journal published 5-6 times per year by the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascilite). AJET retired its printed version (ISSN 1449-3098) at the end of Volume 23, 2007, and from Volume 24, 2008, the journal is open access, online only (ISSN 1449-5554), and does not have paid subscriptions.

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The logo for ascilite, featuring a stylized blue diamond shape above the word "ascilite" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

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Auckland, 6-9 December 2009 <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/auckland09/>

Editorial 25(5)

AJET's review process: 2009 progress report

Table 1 shows progress since our last report on AJET's review process, dated 4 May 2009 and presented in Editorial 25(2) [1]. The good news part of Table 1 is the continuing strong growth in the number of submissions, which has enabled a strong growth in the number of articles published each year. For 2009, AJET is finishing with 11 articles in 25(5), a new record number for an issue, surpassing the number of 10 published in 24(5) last year. The number of articles published per year has doubled since 2003-2004. That's the good news!

Table 1: Article review outcomes AJET 2003-2009

Year of receipt	No. rec'd	No. rejected editorially (b)	No. reject ext review (b)	No. with-drawn (c)	No. pending	No. accept(d)	No. publ-ished (d)	% accep-ted (e)
2003	61	34	14	0	0	13	24	21.3%
2004	97	51	13	2	0	31	21	32.0%
2005	91	47	9	5	0	30	30	33.0%
2006	100	59	9	3	0	29	29	29.0%
2007	119	67	14	4	0	34	30	28.6%
2008	127	71	20	1	0	35	42	27.6%
2009(a)	163	42	9	1	78	32	45	-

- Data for 2009 in columns 2-8 is at 10 Nov 2009, except that 'No. published' is finalised.
- Some of the rejected articles may appear again as receivals in a subsequent year. The reasons for counting these instances as rejections are to enable a clearer cut off for each year's outcomes, and to align data collection with the editorial advice, used in a significant proportion of cases, 'Reject. Invite resubmission of a revised or expanded work for a new review process'.
- Withdrawn means withdrawn at the request of the authors.
- The number of articles accepted from a particular year's receivals does not correspond to the number published in each year, owing to time taken for review and revisions, and fluctuations in the speed of these processes.
- % accepted is calculated from column 2 (No. rec'd) and column 7 (No. accepted).

The bad news part of Table 1 is the number of 2009 receivals that are "pending", that is, articles awaiting an editorial or an external review. This number is approaching an end of year peak, repeating an annual pattern that has occurred for a number of years. As explained in cautious words in AJET Editorial 25(2) just six months ago[1]:

After a difficult period due to review and publishing commitments to *ascilite Melbourne 2008* [2] and the reduced availability of reviewers during the traditional holidays period, we regret that we are a little outside our desired benchmark of three months maximum for AJET's review process. [1]

The core of the AJET review process problem is that the "review and publishing commitments" undertaken for the Conferences by AJET's Production Editor have grown rather substantially over the years in question (Singapore '07, Melbourne '08



Auckland, 6-9 December 2009 <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/auckland09/>



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and Auckland '09). A conference series that is on a successful growth path generates more work each year, inevitably and inexorably [3]. Although the "review and publishing commitments" that supported this series during 2007-2009 have been a joint contribution with Clare McBeath in the two person team, the ascilite Conference workload has grown to such an extent that the time has come for us to pass that baton to a new generation of volunteers, with an increase in team size becoming overdue!

Withdrawing the Production Editor from ascilite Conference duties will enable AJET to avoid the annual "blow out" in review process times that has occurred during the months of August to November, the peak time for the Conference's review and publishing duties. AJET's prospective authors, often left waiting patiently for a four month or sometimes five to six month "turnaround" on their submissions, will obtain a much improved service and support through 2010. The goal is a consistent attainment of "our desired benchmark of three months maximum for AJET's review process" [1], whilst also moving on towards six issues per year and better uniformity in the spacing of issue dates.

From time to time we consider the adoption of software support for AJET's review process, for example *MyReview* [4] as used for ascilite Singapore '07, Melbourne '08 and Auckland '09, or the PKP's *Open Journal Systems* [5]. However, AJET's number of submissions is relatively small, being under 200 per year, compared with the ascilite Conference's "deluge", receiving over 200 concentrated into only 4-6 weeks [6]. With AJET, adopting review system software would not change the times required for the most labour intensive steps, which include reading each submission, inviting appropriate reviewers, composing replies to authors, etc. Other factors are that reviewers and authors appreciate dealing with an editor, a real person rather than a software system, and the personalised approach helps to differentiate AJET from its competitor journals.

In conjunction with overcoming the August-December 2009 backlog, AJET's key priority in 2010 will be restarting the stalled process for recruiting and inducting a number of Associate Editors to share the work that constitutes the "most labour intensive steps". Started some two years ago, our search will resume after ascilite



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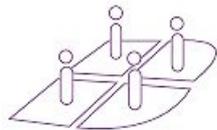
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Submissions close 7 Sept 2009

Auckland 2009, to assemble a small team of volunteers. A small team will suffice, we do not need to get into the large numbers serving some of our Australian peers, for example *Higher Education Research and Development* has 2 Editors and 20 Associate Editors. plus Editors for special issues and book reviews [7], and the *Australian Educational Researcher* has 19 persons in an 'Editorial Team' plus 4 'Advisory Editors' for production support [8].



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Revisiting Questions about the ranking of refereed conference publications

In Editorial 25(4) [9], we explored some questions about future directions in the Australian Research Council's plans for the ranking of refereed conference publications. At the beginning of October, ascilite President Professor Mike Keppell wrote to the ARC to obtain information and guidance [10]. The key question was:

We (and other academic societies, see a short list in the cc below) would very much appreciate receiving advice about ERA's intentions in the area of ranking of refereed conference publications, and the relativities between journal and conference proceedings publication. We would be happy to publish this advice, or URLs for it, in our Editorials and other communications to members. [10]

The core part of the ARC/ERA's reply [11] dated 29 October is the paragraph:

There is no relative weighting placed on articles published in journals, books, book chapters or conferences. The Research Evaluation Committee will consider the range of outputs and the quality of research for the field of research code for the institution. [11]

This restates the status quo, without giving any guidance on future intentions. In relation to members' concerns about "... shall I submit my research paper to AJET, or to ascilite Auckland 2009? ..." [9], we will have to await developments!



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of Computing in Education

AJET special issues

We are pleased to announce that AJET has commissioned its first special issue, with the title *Interactive Whiteboards: An Australasian Perspective*. The issue is being developed by guest editors Dr Michael Thomas (Professor of TESOL at Nagoya University of Commerce & Business in Japan) and Dr Anthony Jones (Cluster Leader in ICT in Education and Research, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne). Details will appear soon on AJET's website and in emailings to the ascilite members' list and other lists; interim inquiries may be directed to michael.thomas@gmx.co.uk, and we envisage a closing date around 1 April 2010.

Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin
AJET Production Editor and AJET Editor

Endnotes

1. AJET Editorial 25(2). <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet25/editorial25-2.html>
2. *ascilite Melbourne 2008*. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/melbourne08/>
3. Descriptive statistics indicating the growth of the ascilite Conference series will be given on 23 Nov 2009 at <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/auckland09/procs/>
4. The *MyReview* System. <http://myreview.lri.fr/>
5. Public Knowledge Project. *Open Journal Systems*. <http://pkp.sfu.ca/?q=ojs>
6. Descriptive statistics for ascilite Conference submissions appear each year in the *Proceedings* Editorial. For 2009, see <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/auckland09/procs/>
7. *Higher Education Research and Development*. Editorial Board (refer to HERD hardcopy for an up to date list). <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/journal.asp?issn=0729-4360&linktype=5>
8. *Australian Educational Researcher*. AER Editors. <http://www.aare.edu.au/aer/editors.htm>
9. AJET Editorial 25(4). <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet25/editorial25-4.html>
10. Letter from Professor Mike Keppell, President of ascilite, to Professor Sheil, CEO Excellence in Research for Australia [the ARC's agency in these matters], 2 October 2009.
11. Letter from Professor Sheil, CEO Excellence in Research for Australia, to Professor Mike Keppell, President of ascilite, 29 October 2009.



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