Contents

Editorial ........................................................................................................ iii-x

Using blogging for higher order learning in large cohort university teaching: A case study ................................................................. 123-136
  Brett Farmer, Audrey Yue and Claire Brooks

Quantifying the reuse of learning objects ............................................. 137-142
  Kristine Elliott and Kevin Sweeney

Promoting staff learning about assessment through digital representations of practice: Evaluating a pilot project .................................. 143-149
  Rosemary Thomson and Gail Wilson

Using “plasma TV” broadcasts in Ethiopian secondary schools: A brief survey ................................................................. 150-167
  Getnet Demissie Bitew

Effects of remoteness on the quality of education: A case study from North Indian schools ................................................................. 168-180
  Sugata Mitra, Ritu Dangwal and Leher Thadani

Harnessing distributed musical expertise through edublogging .............. 181-194
  Eddy K. M. Chong

Is wiki an effective platform for group course work? ......................... 195-210
  Irina Elgort, Alastair G Smith and Janet Toland

Coherence or interest: Which is most important in online multimedia learning? ................................................................. 211-221
  Derek A. Muller, Kester J. Lee and Manjula D. Sharma

Student and staff perceptions of the effectiveness of plagiarism detection software ................................................................. 222-240
  Doug Atkinson and Sue Yeoh

ascilite 2008 Melbourne

Hello! Where are you in the landscape of educational technology?

30 Nov - 3 Dec 2008 at Deakin University Burwood Campus, Melbourne
  http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/melbourne08/
The Australasian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET) is a refereed research journal published four 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.

© 2008 Authors retain copyright in their individual articles, whilst copyright in AJET as a compilation is retained by the publisher. Except for authors reproducing their own articles, no part of this journal may be reprinted or reproduced without permission. For further details, and for details on submission of manuscripts and open access to all issues of AJET published since the journal’s foundation in 1985, please see http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/

For editorial inquiries, contact the Editor, Associate Professor Catherine McLoughlin, School of Education (ACT), Australian Catholic University, PO Box 256, Dickson ACT 2602, Australia. Email: C.McLoughlin@signadou.acu.edu.au, Tel: +61 2 6209 1100 Fax +61 2 6209 1185.

For review process, production, website and business matters, contact the Production Editor, Dr Roger Atkinson, 5/202 Coode Street, Como WA 6152, Australia. Email: rjatkinson@bigpond.com, Tel: +61 8 9367 1133. Desktop publishing (PDF versions) and HTML by Roger Atkinson.

AJET is managed by a committee nominated by ASCILITE. The AJET Management Committee comprises:

Dr Mike Keppell, Charles Sturt University, ASCILITE Executive
Ms Meg O’Reilly, Southern Cross University, ASCILITE Executive
Assoc Prof Geoffrey Crisp, Uni of Adelaide, ASCILITE 2003 Convenor
Dr Rob Phillips, Murdoch University, ASCILITE 2004 Convenor
Professor Peter Goodyear, University of Sydney, ASCILITE 2006 Convenor
Professor Ron Oliver, Edith Cowan University, AJET Editor 1997-2001
Assoc Prof Catherine McLoughlin (Editor), Australian Catholic University
Dr Roger Atkinson (Production Editor)

Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education
Editorial

Outstanding Paper Awards from ascilite Singapore 2007

Since the publication of AJET 16(1) in May 2000, we have commenced each volume with a recognition of the Outstanding Paper Award recipients from the previous December’s ASCILITE Conference. This year we are very pleased to recognise three Awards selected from the 126 full and concise papers accepted by the ascilite Singapore 2007 Conference review process [1, 2, 3].

Brett Farmer, Audrey Yue and Claire Brooks from the University of Melbourne wrote the full paper, Using blogging for higher order learning in large cohort university teaching: A case study. Their investigation is comprehensive and in supporting the educational value of well-designed uses of blogging, they provide evidence based recommendations for good practice.

Quantifying the reuse of learning objects is by Kristine Elliott and Kevin Sweeney, also from the University of Melbourne. A concise paper, it describes a systematic procedure for comparing the reuse of learning objects with de novo development of one’s own, equivalent resources, finding in the example they studied, a substantial time saving in favour of the reuse of LOs approach.

Rosemary Thomson and Gail Wilson, University of Western Sydney, wrote Promoting staff learning about assessment through digital representations of practice: Evaluating a pilot project, also a concise paper. Their Assessment Snapshots Project provides a successful dissemination of “...knowledge and understanding of locally contextualised good practice in assessment...”. Gail is now Manager of Teaching and Learning Services at Bond University and we congratulate her upon the new appointment.

The Outstanding Paper Awards were nominated by reviewers [3], with a minor, moderating role adopted by the Program Committee. At the Conference’s closing [4], session Chairperson Marissa Wettasinghe, in announcing the Awards, stated the Committee’s impression that the 2007 Award recipients shared a particular distinction in the care the authors had taken to ensure that their research outcomes included useful and practical guides for rank and file practitioners.

The appearance of the Outstanding Paper Awards in AJET’s second issue for 2008, instead of the first issue as has been the practice during 2000-2007, is due to an unusual circumstance. Given the backlog of reviewed, accepted and revised articles that developed in the second half of 2007, we filled AJET 24(1) before the end of
November 2007. However, even though deferred until the second issue, this year's AJET publication of the asclite Singapore 2007 Outstanding Paper Awards is earlier than for previous years, which recorded first issue dates in the range 17 March (AJET 19, 2003) to 4 June (AJET 18, 2002).

**IM 25: Online preprints and open access for commercial journals**

As alluded to above, AJET has set a record this year for earliness. Publishing 24(2) on 22 February gives our second issue for 2008 a publication date over three weeks earlier in the year than any previous first issue date [5]. This indicates one of the more immediate, though little publicised, benefits of print retirement: AJET has avoided the spectre of an excessive backlog of accepted articles awaiting publication. In an *Idle Moment*, the first since Editorial 23(4) [6], we investigated the adoption of 'online preprints' by some major commercial publishers also experiencing backlogs, or appearing to, in their journal production queues. As the option to purchase 'open access' status is now becoming quite common, we checked that out too. Tables 1 and 2 record some informative examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Online preprint service name</th>
<th>Illustrative quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>iFirst [7]</td>
<td>…Taylor &amp; Francis' proprietary system for publishing journal articles online almost immediately after author proofs have been corrected … <em>iFirst</em> reduces the time from article submission to publication – sometimes by several weeks… <em>iFirst</em> also eliminates the problem of the backlog: accepted but unpublished papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwell Synergy</td>
<td>OnlineEarly [8]</td>
<td>…a Blackwell Synergy service where fully corrected, fully web-functional and complete articles are published online as and when they are ready, prior to their ultimate inclusion in a print issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springer</td>
<td>Online First [9]</td>
<td>The Online First service lets users access peer reviewed articles well before print publication. These articles are searchable and citable… significantly reduce the time it takes for critical discoveries to reach the research community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsevier</td>
<td>Articles in press (no specific name) [10]</td>
<td>…contains peer reviewed accepted articles to be published in this journal. … although &quot;Articles in Press&quot; do not have all bibliographic details available yet, they can already be cited using the year of online availability and the DOI…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 contains only brief quotations, and therefore you may wish to read further from the publishers' websites, in order to consider in more depth our key impressions. Firstly, major publishers appear to be reluctant to use the most obvious description for the practice under discussion here, namely 'online preprints'; obvious because the context is 'preceding print publication'. Perhaps the reluctance is due to the major publishers seeking to associate 'preprint' with a different activity, namely the
concession now widely offered to authors, whereby they are allowed to provide 'non-definitive', 'preprint' versions of their articles on publicly accessible websites, under certain conditions. To illustrate briefly, using Elsevier as a typical example [11]:

...we do not consider that a preprint of an article ... prior to its submission to Elsevier for consideration amounts to prior publication, which would disqualify the work from consideration for re-publication in a journal. We also do not require authors to remove electronic preprints from publicly accessible servers ... once an article has been accepted for publication.

Our policy however is that the final published version of the article as it appears in the journal will continue to be available only on an Elsevier site. [11]

Secondly, the publishers in Table 1 appear to be reluctant to address questions of the kind: "Will you retire the print version if the reading of articles via (insert online preprint service name) is found to greatly exceed reading of articles via the printed, hardcopy version?" We could add, perhaps a little mischievously but pertinently, "If so, will you pass on to subscribers the cost savings from print retirement?" We can reiterate, in AJET’s case the cost savings from print retirement were significant for Asciilite, as outlined in Editorial 24(1) [12], though time saving is perhaps even more significant, as illustrated splendidly by this year’s record for AJET’s ‘earliness’.

In contrast to Table 1, the key impressions from Table 2 are reasonably clear without undertaking a great deal of follow up reading from the website references. Firstly, major publishers for the most part seem willing to test and develop new markets in the sale of open access status for individual articles in journals, even inventing their own product names, although in Table 2's set of examples Elsevier appears to be the party pooper [13].

Table 2: Some examples of open access purchase in commercial journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Open access service name</th>
<th>Illustrative quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>iOpenAccess [14]</td>
<td>…all authors whose manuscripts are accepted for publication in one of these iOpenAccess journals will have the option to make their articles available to all via the Journal’s website, and to post to repositories, for a one-off fee of $3250.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwell Synergy</td>
<td>Online Open [15]</td>
<td>Authors of accepted peer-reviewed articles may choose to pay a fee in order for their published article to be made freely accessible to all via our online journals platform… For 2007, the Online Open fee is fixed at US$2600...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springer</td>
<td>Open Choice [16]</td>
<td>…offers authors to have their journal articles made available with full open access in exchange for payment of a basic fee ('article processing charge')... The basic fee for Springer Open Choice is $3,000 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsevier</td>
<td>(no open access option offered by Elsevier) [17; see also 11]</td>
<td>…[Elsevier] uses a traditional model of subscription fees ... As well as traditional print and online publishing of the article, the final, pre-print version of the article is released to the author for his or her distribution, usually online, free of charge. Elsevier has been using the Open Access Green Route with its authors since June 2004. …In other studies, authors have been polled to discover the amount they are willing to pay… Most do not want to pay anything, but those who are willing to pay limit their willingness to US$500. The actual cost of publishing is US$3000-4000 per article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIRO Publishing</td>
<td>Open Access [18]</td>
<td>…authors may choose to publish their papers as Open Access. CSIRO PUBLISHING charges an Open Access Author Fee for this service... Fees vary by journal. [generally US$2500]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Secondly, in this small sample (though it encompasses some especially influential publishers) there appears to be a relatively narrow range quoted for fees, or estimated costs in the case of Elsevier, compared with the wider range found for subscription charges. One can ask, quite legitimately, "Why is that so?", and furthermore, as with Table 1, the examples in Table 2 suggest various other interesting questions that the parties may be reluctant to address. To begin with, let's suppose that purchase of open access becomes popular, maybe as a consequence of government agencies seeking more 'bangs' (dissemination and publicity) for their 'research grant bucks'. Could a commercial publisher fill an entire issue of a prestigious journal with articles for which open access has been purchased by the authors (who thereby sacrificed a small proportion of their publicly funded research budget)? Will the publisher then let subscribers have that issue of the journal for free? To continue, authors may ask, 'Will I get good value for money from (insert name of commercial publisher's open access service) compared with (insert name of an open access journal, e.g. AJET, having a fee of $0/€0/¥0, etc)?'

Conference theme: Engaging Communities
Call for contributions closes 26 February

IM 26: Obituaries for the RQF

Will Australia's Research Quality Framework attract eloquent obituaries? Probably not, if the DEST/DEEWR's website three-liner sets the standard:

The Australian Government announced on 21 December 2007 that it would not be proceeding with the former Government's Research Quality Framework (RQF) project.

In light of this decision material regarding the RQF has been removed from the website.[19]

Actually, the "removal" of RQF was not especially thorough. Another Idle Moment search revealed that Your search for ' "research quality framework" ' returned 48 results [20], so the RQF documents are lurking in there, although the main URL we have quoted in the past for RQF matters is now "broken" [21]. This is a matter on which we have to declare a degree of ambivalence. On the one hand, small journals such as AJET have a better chance to grow at a more reasonable and orderly pace, because the pressure to publish only in the 'high impact factor' journals has been lessened - see, for example, concerns stated in AJET Editorial 23(1) [22]. On the other hand, researchers interested in the history of the RQF and forecasts about a successor, if any, may have to resort to paper archives if the 'electronic' archives are not preserved in an accessible way. It's likely to be a challenge for the archivists! Like DEET and DETYA from earlier decades, DEST itself is now 'an archivable', displaced by DEEWR. As announced under DEST and DEEWR website addresses [23]:

A new Government led by the Leader of the Australian Labor Party, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, was sworn in by the Governor-General on 3 December 2007.

The Government has announced the creation of a new Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.[23]
IM 27: Some monitoring of citation frequencies

Idle Moment No. 26 revisits IM 12: Citation frequencies, a topic last discussed in Editorial 22(2), dated June 2006 [24]. The purpose for Table 3 is to update our monitoring of the extent to which authors of AJET papers and ASCILITE Conference papers are citing references from AJET and ASCILITE Conferences, compared with a small sample of other journals (any volume). Table 3’s data suggests we have no reason to modify the general observations made in Editorial 22(2) [24]. In summary,


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJET 2007 (30 papers, 1030 refs)</td>
<td>cits</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJET 2006 (29 papers, 1084 refs)</td>
<td>cits</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJET 2005 (30 papers, 1003 refs)</td>
<td>cits</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30[35]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJET 2004 (21 papers, 586 refs)</td>
<td>cits</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC Conf Procs 2007 (127 papers, 2705 refs)</td>
<td>cits</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC Conf Procs 2004 (119 papers, 2207 refs)</td>
<td>cits</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The number counted in column 2 excludes posters in the case of ASCILITE Conferences, and excludes editorials in the case of AJET. The “cits” row records the number of times a particular journal or proceedings was cited in AJET or ASCILITE Conference for the given year. The “cits” count includes all citations without regard to year of publication. The “%” row is calculated from “cits” and the corresponding number of references in column 2.
whilst AJET and ASCILITE Proceedings articles continue to ‘outcite’ others, for the reasons outlined earlier, the two provide only a relatively small share of the total number of citations in AJET and ASCILITE Proceedings articles. Citations continue to be drawn from a wide and diverse range of sources, although in many individual cases authors may be drawing upon selections from the educational research literature that may be relatively narrow and less than systematic than is desirable. Also, we can say that AJET and ASCILITE Conferences are not ‘naughty’ with excessive ‘self citation’, as defined by Thomson Scientific, owners of the Impact Factor [36].

IM 28: Abstracted & Indexed In…

Many websites for educational research journals provide a list of the publications or ‘database products’ in which they are ‘Abstracted & Indexed’ [37]. The purpose is to inform prospective authors that the journal provides an impressive array of literature searching tools for readers to find the author’s paper. The bigger the ‘Abstracted & Indexed’ list, the better your chances for being read and getting cited. Naturally, editors of journals are keen to expand their journal’s ‘Abstracted & Indexed’ list, and we would expect that the publishers of ‘Abstracting and Indexing’ services would be keen to expand their coverage of journals. However, whilst the latter will use phrases such as (for example) “…comprehensive coverage of the world’s most important and influential journals” [38] in their marketing, there is a problem in agreeing upon the identities of the “most important and influential”.

An illustrative example was given in Editorial 23(3), “IM 21: More on databases” [39]. As there is quite a number of ‘Abstracting and Indexing’ services to deal with, we have found that a simple classification and check list is useful (Table 4).

Table 4: A simple classification of abstracting and indexing services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Some key features</th>
<th>Open access</th>
<th>Automation of data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Google [40]</td>
<td>Internet search engine. No licensing, no pay per view applied to ‘found’ items, no formal agreements, no sales to libraries. Easy and quick to ‘deal with’.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very highly automated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERIC [41]</td>
<td>Formal licensing, no pay per view applied to ‘found’ items, relatively simple formal agreements, no sales to libraries. Needs a long time to ‘deal with’.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Little automation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Scopus [42], CC [43], ERA [44]</td>
<td>No licensing, no pay per view applied to ‘found’ items, minimal formal agreements, sells to libraries. Times to ‘deal with’ vary, may be long.</td>
<td>No*</td>
<td>Little automation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>EBSCO [45], Gale Group [46]</td>
<td>Formal licensing, offers royalties, offers to apply pay per view to ‘found’ items (though publishers may decline those option, as AJET does), more complex formal agreements, sells to libraries. Needs time.</td>
<td>No*</td>
<td>Little automation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: All major publishers provide open access search facilities within their own set of journals, allowing readers to obtain bibliographic information and abstracts, but full text access requires a subscription or pay per view.
Table 4 subdivides the general problem of managing relations with 'Abstracting and Indexing' services into smaller activities. For example, Types 1-3 are routine matters for the Production Editor, whilst Type 4 is a matter for AJET Management Committee to act upon after consideration of briefing papers from the AJET Editors, for example "Including AJET in EBSCO Publishing databases" (AJET Editorial 23(2) [47]; in passing we could record that a similar agreement with the Gale Group is being developed).

Table 4 is a little unusual because Google and Google Scholar do not appear in the typical list of 'Abstracted & Indexed' noted at the beginning of this Idle Moment [37]. Perhaps that's because Google and Google Scholar are ultra-comprehensive, including everything, or nearly everything, albeit with insufficient selectivity? But these services do provide 'Abstracting and Indexing', with a degree of selectivity, if used by readers with at least modest skills in searching academic literature. As John MacColl from the Edinburgh University Library pointed out several years ago [48]:

Its [Google Scholar's] coverage, however, is of academic material - journal articles, reports, conference proceedings, and e-theses and dissertations... It ranks results by relevance, as with the general Google engine, but its algorithm in this case includes citedness, and so it is engineered for the academic quality and reward system in which academics and researchers work.... It therefore contains all of the elements of the sort of search service which we in our libraries are trying to provide by purchasing federated search tools.

...for known item searching - for that paper by this author on this topic for instance - it is often as good as any of the abstracting and indexing services we take, and better in that it is Google - easy and free and used by everyone. [48]

Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin
AJET Production Editor and AJET Editor

Endnotes

2. Specifications for full and concise papers are given at
   http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/papers/papers.htm#Categories
3. Review criteria for papers and advice to reviewers are given at
   http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/papers/papers.htm#review
   http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/papers/papers.htm#advice
4. ascilite Singapore 2007 closing session photos are available at
   http://cedmedia.ntu.edu.sg/ascilite/main.php?g2_itemId=16&g2_page=6
5. Since 1997 the date of publication of each issue of AJET has been recorded in its contents page.
   http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/iFirst
10. Elsevier. For an example, see Computers & Education, which on 16 Feb 2008 listed 34 articles
    http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03601315
    http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/authorshome.authors/preprints
13. A genteel definition of this term may be found in The Macquarie Dictionary.
30. DE. Distance Education. DE. http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/01587919.asp
34. JECR. Journal of Educational Computing Research.
Distance Education. http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/journal.asp?issn=0360-1315&linktype=2
42. http://info.scopus.com/

Note: All URLs last viewed 20 February 2008.