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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 matters and subscriptions contact the Production Editor and Business Manager, Dr Roger Atkinson, 5/202 Coode Street, Como WA 6152, Australia. Email: rjatkenson@bigpond.com, Tel: +61 8 9367 1133.

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Editorial

Idle Moment No. 22: Internationalisation revisited

Figure 1 extends by three years a similar figure AJET published in 2004 in *IM No. 8: Internationalisation*, a part of Editorial 20(3) [1]. What can we say about the progress towards internationalisation achieved in the past three years by AJET [2] and *Higher Education Research and Development* (HERD) [3]? The data suggests little change from the summary stated in 2004, "...progress in [the] desired direction has been slow and uneven".

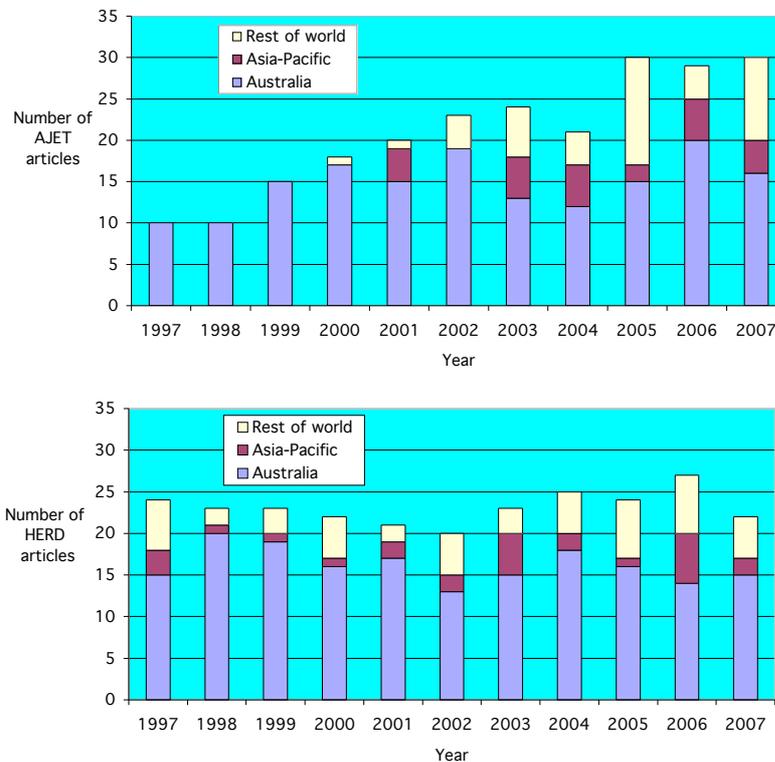


Figure 1: Number of articles in AJET[2] (upper) and HERD[3] (lower), 1997-2007, by first author's region of institutional affiliation

Notes: The classification of countries into the regions Asia-Pacific and Rest of World was based upon Australia Post's charging zones [4]. Data was obtained by inspection of printed copies of the journals. The HERD counts for 2007 are incomplete.

To help develop a deeper insight into our erratic progress towards internationalisation of AJET and developing its 'Australasian' character, we have initiated a routine, region based monitoring of our numbers of acceptances and rejections. Figure 2 provides a baseline picture, for which we have summed over four years and aggregated into a reasonably small number of regions, in order to counter the obscuring of key features that can occur under conditions of high variability in the fully detailed raw data.

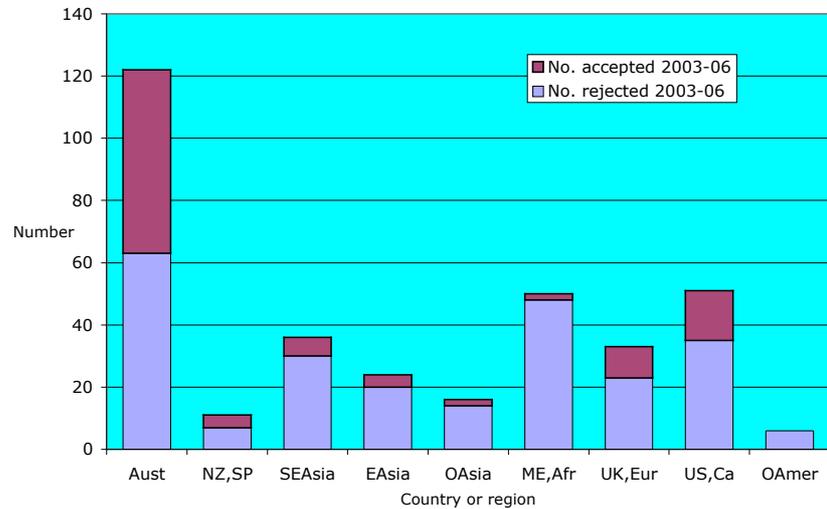


Figure 2: Number of rejections and acceptances from AJET submissions, 2003-2006, by country or region

| | |
|---------|---|
| Aust | Australia only. |
| NZ, SP | New Zealand, South Pacific countries including Papua New Guinea. |
| SEAsia | Including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines. |
| EAsia | China incl Hong Kong and Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand. |
| OAsia | Other Asia including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka. |
| ME, Afr | Middle East including Israel, Africa including Mauritius. |
| UK, Eur | Europe including Eastern Europe, Balkan countries, Russia. |
| US, Ca | USA and Canada only. |
| OAmer | Mexico, Caribbean countries, Central and South America. |

All countries in the 'NZ,SP, SEAsia, EAsia, OAsia' categories are in Australia Post's 'Asia-Pacific' zone. All others are in Australia Post's 'Rest of World' zone [4].



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AJET's acceptance rate for 2003-06 was 29.5% (103 acceptances from 349 submissions; see Table 1 in Editorial 23(2) [5] for details). Figure 2 shows that there is a very large, regionally correlated variation in the ratio of acceptances (upper part of each bar) to rejections (lower part of each bar). It indicates quite forcefully that we will have to work harder on securing more acceptances of papers from the regions of the world that are the basis for AJET's aspirations to be a *front ranked international journal with an Australasian character*. That we are doing, through two main and complementary kinds of activities. Firstly, there is much effort going into formative advice to authors on how to improve their research projects and papers for an international academic readership, especially helping authors with a LOTE background. Secondly, we work continuously on general regional promotion of AJET. If AJET becomes a first submission choice for edtech and ICT researchers in our key regions, instead of a second or third choice (after a US or UK or European journal), as seems to happen often, AJET's acceptance rates for submissions from those regions will increase.

Idle Moment No. 23: Education journal banding study

In our IMs, we are allowed a little repetitiveness, and as pointed out above in IM 22, "we work continuously on general regional promotion of AJET". To expand upon that statement, one problem is that for the most part there is little feedback except from individual authors, which of course we like because it is, usually if not invariably, quite flattering. However, larger scale feedback based upon the aggregation of a good number of responses is much less frequent. Therefore we were especially interested in the findings from the *Education journal banding study*, conducted by the Centre for the Study of Research Training and Impact (SORTI), University of Newcastle, Australia [6].

The aim for the SORTI study was to develop "...esteem measures for Education journals, based on the collective wisdom of the profession." Firstly, we thank the educational researchers whose responses to the SORTI survey accorded AJET a high ranking in 'Area 11'. Secondly, we will resist the temptation to enter into methodological debates, and instead concentrate in this editorial upon the most immediate implications for the management and promotion of your journal. Table 1 lists the SORTI study's 'Area 11' journals in 'Esteem' ranked order [7] (first 27), to seek pointers about comparing print plus online with online only, comparing commercial (closed access) with open access, the Thomson ISI *Impact Factor*, and establishing an 'International Board'.

Table 1: Details for Area 11 journals (Educational Technology/Computing/ICT) [7]

| Journal and URL | SORTI EScore | Open access | Impact Factor | Internat Board |
|--|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| British J. of Educational Technology (BJET) http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0007-1013&site=1 | 16.35 | No | Yes 0.406 | Yes |
| Australasian J. of Educational Technology (AJET) http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ | 14.84 | Yes | Pend | Pend |
| ALT-J: Research in Learning Technology. http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09687769.asp | 14.36 | No | No | Yes |
| Computers & Education. (C&E) http://www.elsevier.com/locate/issn/03601315 | 14.02 | No | Yes 1.085 | Yes |
| Educational Technology, Research & Development. (ETRD) http://www.springer.com/east/home/education/learning+%26+instruction?SGWID=5-40666-70-50612191-detailsPage=journal description | 12.76 | No | Yes | No |
| Australian Educational Computing. http://www.ace.edu.au/JournalDB/Publication.asp?JournalID=1 | 11.35 | Yes | No | No |
| J. of Computer Assisted Learning. http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/toc/jca/ | 11.35 | No | Yes 0.532 | Yes |
| Educational Technology & Society. (ETS) http://www.ifets.info/others/ [online only] | 11.00 | Yes | Yes 0.469 | Yes |
| J. of Technology & Teacher Education. http://www.ace.org/pubs/jtate/ | 10.62 | No | No | Yes |
| Technology, Pedagogy & Education. http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/1475939X.asp | 10.20 | No | No | Yes |
| E-learning. http://www.wwwwords.co.uk/elea/ [online only] | 9.74 | No | No | Yes |
| J. of Interactive Learning Research. http://www.ace.org/pubs/jilr/ | 9.23 | No | No | Yes |
| International J. of Educational Technology http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ijet/ [ceased] | 9.23 | Yes | - | - |
| J. of Research on Technology in Education. http://www.iste.org/jrte/ | 8.64 | No | No | Yes |
| Interactive Learning Environments. http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t716100701 | 7.97 | No | Yes | Yes |
| Computer Assisted Language Learning. http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t716100697 | 7.97 | No | No | Yes |
| Contemporary Issues in Technology & Teacher Education. http://www.ace.org/pubs/cite/ [online only] | 7.17 | Yes | No | ? |
| Innovations in Education & Teaching International. http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/routledge/14703297.html | 7.17 | No | Yes | Yes |
| Information Technology, Education & Society. http://www.jamesnicholaspublishers.com.au/itesjrn.html | 6.19 | No | No | Yes |
| Access (not found) | 6.19 | - | - | - |
| International J. on E-learning. http://www.ace.org/pubs/ijel/ | 6.19 | No | No | Yes |

| | | | | |
|---|------|----|----|-----|
| J. of Educational Multimedia & Hypermedia. http://www.aace.org/pubs/JEMH/ | 6.19 | No | No | Yes |
| International J. of Computers for Mathematical Learning. http://www.springerlink.com/content/102910/ | 6.19 | No | No | Yes |
| The Internet and Higher Education. http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/620187/description#description | 6.19 | No | No | Yes |
| J. of Computers in Mathematics & Science Teaching. http://www.aace.org/pubs/jcmst/ | 6.19 | No | No | Yes |
| Computers in Education Journal. http://www.asee.org/publications/divisions/coed.cfm | 6.19 | No | No | ? |
| Computers in the Schools. http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sid=21EX6XWJ827N8KHXC4NF2FC4J2KA78A4&sku=J025&AuthType=4 | 6.19 | No | No | No |

Notes: *Impact Factor* values are for 2006 and are as quoted on each journal's website.

Online only journals are well-represented in Table 1, albeit in a 'middling band'. As foreshadowed previously [8], sometime in the relatively near future, AJET will have to make the transition to online only. Table 1's data suggests that we can be confident about a successful transition. Open access journals fare well in Table 1, helping to reinforce our confidence about open access as a key point in differentiating AJET. The *Impact Factor* [9] is perhaps not as powerful an influence in Table 1 as we had expected, and in any event AJET has obtained an *Impact Factor* place [5]. Lastly, in the 'International Board' column, we have described AJET's status as 'Pending'. It is a matter which can be addressed relatively quickly. We are preparing urgently an analysis of Editorial Board compositions for the leading journals in Table 1, and a number of kindred journals, as a basis for a list of AJET Board invitees and a statement of duty expectations, for recommendation to AJET's Management Committee. We do have a well-established review routine with a large *Panel of reviewers* containing a very good level of international and front line practitioner representation, which is very important for AJET [10], and we will seek to have it complemented by the proposed new Board.

Although the matter of an Editorial Board for AJET was noted by AJET's Management Committee during its 23 April to 4 May 2007 meeting as an action item, it was not sufficiently advanced or important to present to Society members and readers in our Editorial 23(2) report on Committee's resolutions [5]. The reason for an *international* Editorial Board for AJET suddenly becoming an urgent matter can be seen in SORTI's 'QScore' tables [11]. In Area 11 (Educational Technology/ Computing/ ICT), conversion of 'EScore' (Table 1) to 'QScore', on the basis that "ISI rating and having an international editorial board were taken to be additive indicators of

journal quality" [6], impacted upon AJET's ranking. This was knocked down from second to third by *Computers & Education* [12], an Elsevier journal with 8 issues per year costing US\$341 for a personal subscription and US\$1,749 for an institutional subscription. Not cheap, but it has an *Impact Factor* and an *international Board*, and in 2007 published about 124 articles amounting to about 2104 pages.

Increased Australian interest in journal rankings has been stimulated by the *Research Quality Framework* (RQF) [13] drawing nearer and nearer to having a real impact upon scholarly publishing. The aim for Australia's RQF is "develop the basis for an improved assessment of the quality and impact of publicly funded research and an effective process to achieve this" [DEST, 13]. A grand aim, but for journals and editors, the devil is in the detail. Take, for example, this description (you need to know that "A research 'outlet' refers to the avenues in which an output appears, such as journal name, conference, book publisher, theatre, art gallery, etc") [14]:

What is Research Outlet Analysis?

Research outlets will be classified into four tiers against which output counts will be presented to the Assessment Panels. The distribution of the tiers is expected to vary slightly across disciplines, however, they will approximate: Tier A* (top 5%), Tier A (next 15%), Tier B (next 30%) and Tier C (bottom 50%).

Outlets are to be ranked according to the quality of the outputs appearing in them, not their importance to the discipline.[14]

You also need to know that research 'outputs' are "... individual journal articles, conference publications, book chapters, artistic performances, films, etc" [14]. A question that has been uppermost in the minds of editors is handled deftly by DEST:

How are the ranked outlet lists developed and agreed?

The outlet rankings are developed and agreed by relevant discipline bodies, not DEST. [14]

What is the relevant discipline body for AJET? That is detailed in DEST's *Rankings Contacts* [15]. Quoting two cells from this document:

| Discipline | Ranking Organisation |
|--|--|
| Education Studies; Curriculum Studies; Professional Development of Teachers; Other Education; | Australian Association for Research in Education; Centre for the Study of Research Training and Impact (SORTI). Rankings can be viewed at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/sorti |

So, that takes us back to the beginning of this Idle Moment No. 23! *Journal banding survey* seems to translate to *Research Outlet Analysis* and the result, in RQF newspeak, is *the ranked outlet list*.

As all authors will tend to make the initial submissions of their work to a Tier A* (top 5%) or Tier A (next 15%) journal, the years ahead for editors and journals are likely to be years of blood, sweat and four tiers [16].

Idle Moment No. 24: Growth rates for some leading journals

Are we likely to encounter an accelerating trend towards a smaller number of larger journals? To provide a baseline picture relating to AJET's future, Figure 3 charts an indicator of growth, number of pages per year, for five leading journals in educational technology, computing and ICT. Within this group, there does appear to be a 'growth spurt' beginning in 2004-2005. AJET is well-positioned for a 'growth spurt', as we indicated in Editorial 23(3), though the key prerequisite is retirement of the printed version, or the introduction of special issues which are online only [8]. All journals in Figure 3 have completed their 2007 planned number of issues, except for ETS. Early completion of the planned number for the year is also a 'growth spurt' indicator (AJET is nominally four issues per year; we are investigating a possible special fifth issue for 2007, online only).

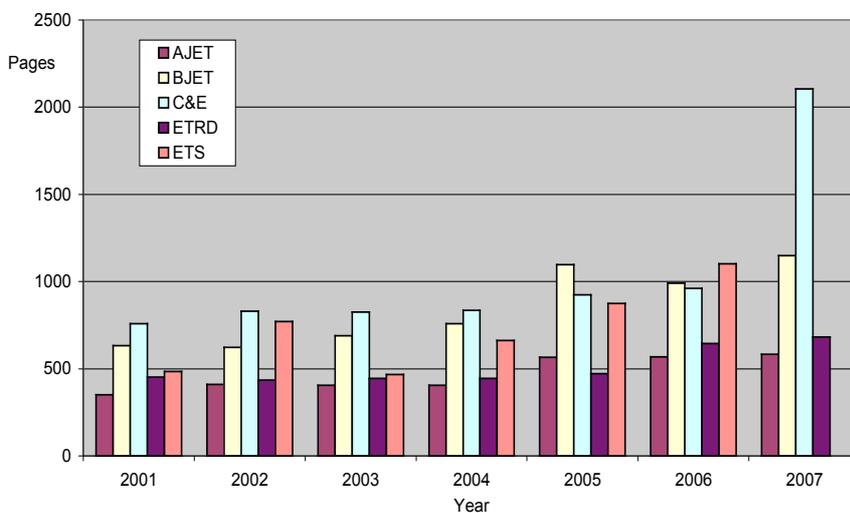
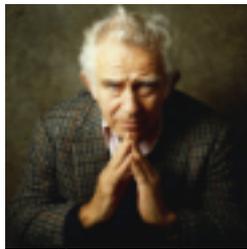


Figure 3: Number of pages per year for five leading educational technology journals. See Table 1 for full names and URLs. Page counts are from each journal's website, excluding Roman numbered pages but including book reviews and other non-Roman page numbered content. The 2007 counts are complete, as at 17 October 2007, for all except ETS.

Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin
 AJET Production Editor and AJET Editor

Endnotes

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