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Editorial

42 ways to fill idle moments in the life of an editor

> 'Forty-two!' yelled Loonquawl. 'Is that all you've got to show for seven and a half million years' work?' (Adams, 1979:136)

1. Look at journals announcing new publishing policies

After 29 years of print only publication, *AER* went online in 2003.

> …the Executive of the Australian Association for Research in Education and Editorial Board of *The Australian Educational Researcher* are now pleased to announce that *The Australian Educational Researcher* will be distributed online for the next three years. Print as well as online issues will be distributed during 2003 as the transition is made to full electronic distribution. Open access to the journal will be available on the Association's website. (Kenway, 2003)

AER contains little detail on its "process of extended and wide-ranging discussion and debate" (Kenway, 2003) or the precedents considered for this decision, though the options AARE identified for the journal were:

- Print only and still put out by AARE;
- Print and digital and still put out by AARE;
- Digital only and still put out by AARE;
- Print and digital and put out by a commercial publisher;
- Responsibility for digital access to the journal passed over to ACER [Australian Council for Educational Research]. (Kenway, 2003)

In contrast to a number of other professional associations in Australian education (Atkinson, 2001a), AARE rejected the fourth option and thus *AER* was not 'carfaxed'. Whilst their adoption of the second option is to be applauded, it's a pity that AARE did not record in the public arena some more detail about their decision. For good examples of detailed reviews of the decision to 'go online', free to the Internet, see the inaugural editorial for *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* (Willis & Bull, 2000) and the 'online for five years' report for the *Journal of Extension* (1999).

2. Read interesting editorials in other scholarly journals

John R. Cannon, founding editor and publisher of the *Electronic Journal of Science Education*, encountered some kind of editorial writer's block with EJSE Editorial June 2001, titled 'Summer time...strikes again!'

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> Summer time, in all her wisdom, has struck once again. There are absolutely no excuses for this lackluster editorial in June 2001. I admit it; summer time has me under her spell once again. (Cannon, 2001)

After some eminently sensible advice on how readers should spend their summer time (North American academic calendar), John Cannon exited to another task: "Please... suffer a bit from the spells of summer time... don't let it pass you by. It's not passing me by... I have to mow the lawn."

The reader cannot miss the unmown lawn, as the editorial's background image is a tiled jpg showing a lawn that is like a knee deep pasture for cattle. But the reader should not immediately heed the advice in the *Editorial*. Defer mowing the lawn until after reading the same issue's *Guest Editorial*, because it explores a theme having some universal relevance, including *AJET* (just try replacing 'science teacher' with any other professional descriptor):

> At a recent seminar a well-published science education researcher questioned why the group was discussing constructivism since it is old hat and everything that is needed to be known about constructivism was already known. This may or may not be true, but knowing does not mean applying! ...
>
> ...The gap between research findings and implementation of the results into science teacher education programs, curricula, and professional practices is the central focus of this editorial pep talk. (Yore, 2001)

3. Check out a trendy new term

When 'blended learning' crossed my screen recently, it raised an eyebrow. Whilst at first it seemed to me like something to do with *The Naked Chef*, *Consuming Passions*, *Nigella Bites*, *Kylie Kwong: Heart And Soul* or other trendy gems from *Cooking on ABC TV* [1], it is, according to a Google search, an established academic term. Google [2] indicated:

> Searched the web for "blended learning". Results 1 - 10 of about 169,000. Search took 0.15 seconds.
>
> *[selecting 1 result of the 169.000]*
> Executive Update Online - Special Section - Blended Learning
> Blended Learning An old friend gets a new name. ... Blended learning is a fairly new term in education lingo, but the concept has been around for decades. ... www.gwsae.org/Executiveupdate/2001/March/blended.htm (Smith, 2001)

Blended learning? Other citations in this search implicated numerous influential connections - ANTA, Sun, ASTD, etc (acronym deciphering is left as an exercise for your favourite search engine). But will 'blended learning displace an 'old friend'? See the next Idle Moment, below.

4. Play with 'Googlefight'

According to 'Googlefight' [3]:

> Number of results on Google for the keywords *blended learning* and *flexible delivery*:
> blended learning (233 000 results)
> versus
> flexible delivery (2 590 000 results)
> The winner is: flexible delivery

> Number of results on Google for the keywords *flexible delivery* and *distance education*:
> flexible delivery (2 590 000 results)
> versus
> distance education (7 880 000 results)
> The winner is: distance education

There we have it! Distance education beats flexible delivery, and flexible delivery beats blended learning, by large margins. 'Old friends' beats 'new lingo'. No surprise there. On the other hand this extra-trivial pursuit also positions the constructivists in their place relative to the traditionalists, by an overwhelming margin [4]:

> Number of results on Google for the keywords *constructivism* and *traditional:*
> Constructivism (151 000 results)
> versus
> traditional (31 200 000 results)
> The winner is: traditional

And Googlefight really loses it on this one [5]:

> Number of results on Google for the keywords *australian journal of educational technology* and *british journal of educational technology*:
> australian journal of educational technology (262 000 results)
> versus
> british journal of educational technology (439 000 results)
> The winner is: british journal of educational technology

ASCILITE 2003

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5. Run Google search for: link:www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/

Want to know what pages out there on the Internet are linking to your pages? Try one of the less well known capabilities in present day search engines. To illustrate, search [6] for *link:www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/*

> Searched for pages linking to www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/. Results 1 - 10 of about 204. Search took 0.15 seconds. [6]

Most of the output will be navigational links within AJET, for example from contents pages for each issue to AJET's home page. However, this search also shows numerous links from web sites prepared by university libraries and others interested in compiling lists of journals by subject areas, or lists representing specific features, especially 'online' and 'open access'. These are of editorial interest, for example, AJET is listed by the AERA SIG Communication of Research, having satisfied its criteria for a particular feature in the communication of educational research:

> To the best of our ability to discern, we have included only links to electronic journals that are scholarly, peer-reviewed, full text and accessible without cost. We have excluded professional magazines that are largely not refereed, and commercial journals that may only allow access to a very limited number of articles as an enticement to buy. By restricting membership in this way on the list that follows, we hope to do what little we can to promote free access world wide to scholarship in education. [7]

Google's facility to search for website pages that link to a specific web file has potential as an automated way to obtain information about citation frequencies. The limitations are that only open access journals are accessible to the search engine, and that authors and editors often omit URLs from reference lists (Atkinson, 2001b). Let's hope that these are major limitations, because a search for citations of AJET Vol 17 articles showed a very low frequency. The search term was of the form:

> link:www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet17/firstauthor.html
> (where firstauthor is andrewartha, felix, franklin, etc, as in Vol 17 contents [8])

The 20 articles in Vol 17 have to date obtained only 5 'known to Google' citations by web pages at sites other than AJET's site, plus 6 citations by other articles in subsequent AJETs. Not a high score!

Owing to a shortage of idle moments and print version space, we regret that Idle Moments 6 to 42 will be held over until a later issue of AJET ☺

Roger Atkinson, *AJET Production Editor*
Catherine McLoughlin, *Editor*

Endnotes

1. http://www.abc.net.au/tv/food/ [viewed 19 Oct 2003]
2. http://www.google.com/ [viewed 1 Sep 2003]
3. http://www.googlefight.com/ [viewed 18 Oct 2003]
4. http://www.googlefight.com/ [viewed 19 Oct 2003]
5. http://www.googlefight.com/ [viewed 24 Sep 2003]
6. http://www.google.com/ [viewed 21 Oct 2003]
7. http://aera-cr.asu.edu/links.html [viewed 3 Sep 2003]
8. http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet17/ajet17.html

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