



Contents

Editorial	iii-iv
Information technology skills in the workplace: Implications for Bachelor of Arts degrees	87-103
<i>Robyn Lawson and Christine de Matos</i>	
Using multimedia to assist students with communication skills and biopsychosocial integration: An evaluation	104-125
<i>Teng Liaw, Gregor Kennedy, Mike Keppell, John Marty and Ruth McNair</i>	
Learning tool or potplant stand? Students' opinions of learning from a CAL program in a distance education context	126-146
<i>Robert Lyall and Suzanne McNamara</i>	
Issues involved in developing a project based online unit which enhances teamwork and collaboration	147-160
<i>Rob Phillips and Joe Luca</i>	
When using sound with a text or picture is not beneficial for learning	161-172
<i>Slava Kalyuga</i>	
Factors affecting students' satisfaction on a web course	173-200
<i>Robin Mason and Martin Weller</i>	

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Editorial

There is a very seductive attractiveness about "double clicking" upon a "hot link" during screen reading from a list of references in a journal or proceedings article. Within a few seconds the reference you have selected will start displaying on your workstation's screen. You can read the reference immediately, or discard it, or dump it to a printer to create your own hardcopy. You can use your viewing software to search within the article for a word or phrase, and you may save a personal copy for future reference. You may find additional references via an associated search facility at the website which hosts the article. No need to trudge around the library shelves or to wait for inter-library loans.

That's the "best case" scenario. Naturally there are a number of "not so good" and "worst case" scenarios. These may include one or more of:

- delays due to network problems and slow data transfer rates - sometimes characterised as the "world wide wait" problem
- file or server "not found" - the original item has been removed or moved to another, unknown location, or the original server has been disconnected from the Internet, or the citation contained an error
- the URL cited is for a publisher's home page or other "high level" page and the reader has to navigate through further links to obtain the desired reference article
- the online version provides only an abstract, not a complete article
- the content has changed since the original reading by the person who cited the reference
- access restrictions may be imposed by passwords or domain name permissions, or "pay per view" procedures may be in force
- a reference is available online but the author did not provide the URL
- you tend to read from hardcopy and use of URLs during screen reading isn't relevant for you
- not applicable because many articles cite few or even no online references.



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Nevertheless, citation of online references will continue to increase, in response to the continuing growth and increasing acceptance of electronic publishing for journals and proceedings (Atkinson and McBeath, 2000). In particular, the relatively small numbers of electronic journals, pioneered mainly by universities and professional societies, are now being increased by major commercial publishers of journals adopting Internet based delivery on a large scale. For example, Elsevier promises its subscribers:

"Science at the Speed of the 21st Century... Desktop access to the full text of more than 1100 of our scientific, medical and technical journals." (Elsevier, 2000).

AJET's editorial policy is to promote and facilitate the citation and use of online references. Editorial action may include the following:

- check the URL, and if necessary and possible, correct it - make it a live link only if it is valid and free from a permanent or long term restriction of access
- omit the phrase "Available online" or similar expressions, on the expectation that these will become regarded as redundant, in the same way that the words "volume" and "issue" usually are omitted from reference citations of hardcopy journal articles
- retain the date of access given by the author and add a date of verification
- if the author did not give an URL for a reference which is available online without restriction, add the URL and the date of most recent verification
- include in the web versions of AJET articles a "Please cite as" section at the end, to enable readers to "copy and paste" a reference citation, including the URL, to minimise the possibility of errors due to copy typing of URLs
- to facilitate the reading of individual articles called up from reference lists in articles, or at sites elsewhere on the Internet, AJET's web version does not use a frames environment, instead giving navigational links via headers and footers.

A particular editorial effort is made to add URLs for references from conferences conducted by Australian and New Zealand societies and organisations. In areas of particular interest to AJET's readers, over 60 online proceedings are available for Australian and New Zealand conferences held during the past decade (ASET, 2000).

Roger Atkinson

References

Atkinson, R. and McBeath, C. (2000). Electronic journals and proceedings: Is there a future for small publishers? In *Flexible Learning for a Flexible Society*, Proceedings of ASET-HERDSA 2000 Conference. Toowoomba, Qld, 2-5 July. ASET and HERDSA. <http://cleo.murdoch.edu.au/gen/aset/confs/aset-herdsa2000/procs/atkinson.html>

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