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Although Production Editor Dr Roger Atkinson has now completed his retirement from current AJET activities, he may be contacted concerning errata in Volumes 1 (1985) to 28 (2012) inclusive, and AJET historical and archival matters:
Email: rjatkinson@bigpond.com Web: http://www.roger-atkinson.id.au/

For inquiries concerning year 2012 submissions, the interim editorial team is Associate Professor Sue Bennett (University of Wollongong; sue_bennett@uow.edu.au), Associate Professor Barney Dalgarno (Charles Sturt University; bdalgarno@csu.edu.au) and Associate Professor Gregor Kennedy (University of Melbourne; gek@unimelb.edu.au), with ascilite Secretariat support from Mr Andre Colbert (colbert.andre@gmail.com).

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Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education
AJET's ranking: Citation-based bibliometrics

This part of Editorial 28(8) is unusual, perhaps very unusual, because its purpose is to update an AJET data table that was provided to ascilite's President, Dr Caroline Steel, for President's Report 2012 [1]. The very unusual part arose from the item "BJET Announcement: Amendment to 2011 Impact Factor", that appeared sometime in the second half of 2012 on the British Journal of Educational Technology website [2]:

Following an appeal, Thomson Reuters have formally amended the 2011 Impact Factor for BJET:
Amended Impact Factor: 2.098
Amended Ranking: 12/203 Education & Educational Research
This compares to 1.539 in the initial release, and a ranking of 24/203.

Quoted below, a copy of the AJET Production Editor's 2012 advice to the ascilite President for her 2012 report [1], with an updated version of the matter now needing an update, namely Table 1:

This section, compiled by retiring Production Editor Roger Atkinson, summarises AJET's current position relative to its major competitors, according to a number of citation-based bibliometrics, including the 2011 values for one of the most influential, the Thomson Reuters Impact Factor (Table 1). Whilst AJET's 2011 Impact Factor, 1.517, is down slightly compared with 2010 (1.655), it compares well with 2009 (1.278), and AJET remains well-ranked on the 'ladder' of international educational technology journals (Table 1). AJET is also well-ranked amongst educational research journals generally, as may be seen from a wider searching of SCImago Journal Rankings and Google Scholar Metrics. However, there is a need to sustain the momentum that has been nurtured for some years, towards building the loyalty of researchers who will read AJET articles and cite AJET articles in their own submissions of work, whether to AJET or to a competitor journal. Following the demise of the Australian Research Council's Tiers for the Australian Ranking of Journals in mid-2011 (see Notes for Table 1), Australian researchers are likely, over time, to accord more attention to journal rankings derived from citation count-based bibliometric data, in contrast to rankings based upon other methodologies or unspecified methodologies (as occurred with Tiers) relating to "reputation".

Increased attention to citation based bibliometrics may prove to have two positive effects. Firstly, this trend could give more weight to the views of a broader and larger community, extending far beyond a journal's editorial staff and their immediate community, such as an editorial board and a sponsoring society's membership.
Secondly, bibliometric data can provide authors, readers and editorial staff with benchmarks or “key performance indicators” that can be valuable for refining perspectives and views that may otherwise be excessively dependent upon more subjective impressions. In particular, new perspectives will become available from systematic analyses of submission demographics, and from rigorous quantitative and qualitative studies of aspiring author behaviours. [1]

Table 1: Comparing Impact Factor and Tiers rankings for some peer journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Impact Factor (a)</th>
<th>IF rank order (b)</th>
<th>Tiers 2010 (c)</th>
<th>SJR(d) Q(rank)</th>
<th>GSM h5-index(e)</th>
<th>URL for obtaining Impact Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computers &amp; Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 (same as 2010)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>0.056 Q1 (21)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td><a href="http://www.journals.elsevier.com/computers-and-education/">http://www.journals.elsevier.com/computers-and-education/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British J. of Educational Technology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (same as 2010)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>0.045 Q1 (44)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td><a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/ISSN1467-8535">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/ISSN1467-8535</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Science</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 (up one from 2010)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>0.042 Q1 (55)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td><a href="http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/journal/11251">http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/journal/11251</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasian J. of Educ. Technology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1.517</td>
<td>4 (down one from 2010)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.041 Q1 (64)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Technology, Res &amp; Devt</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6 (same as 2010)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>0.043 Q1 (52)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td><a href="http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/journal/11423">http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/journal/11423</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Technology &amp; Society</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7 (same as 2010)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.038 Q1 (84)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ifets.info/">http://www.ifets.info/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research in Learning Technology</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not ranked</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td><a href="http://www.researchinlearningtechnology.net/">http://www.researchinlearningtechnology.net/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. of Technology &amp; Teacher Education</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not ranked</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aace.org/pubs/jtte/">http://www.aace.org/pubs/jtte/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology, Pedagogy &amp; Education</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not ranked</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.030 Q2 (211)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rtpe20/current">http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rtpe20/current</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Based on statements given at journal websites; values from Thomson Reuters 2011 Journal Citation Reports: Social Science Edition.
b. Journals are ranked according to IF values as published at the URLs listed in column 7 (13 Sep 2012). Thomson Reuters may regard the publishing of tables of IF values as an infringement of copyright and therefore readers not having institutional library access to 2011 Journal Citation Reports: Social Science Edition need to consult the individual journal home pages to ascertain their IF values.

f. Earlier versions of Table 1 were provided in various AJET Editorials, including Editorials 27(6), 28(2) and 28(4). See also Editorial 27(3), concerning the demise of Tiers. Data compilation by Roger Atkinson, 13 Sep 2012 (updated 9 Nov 2012).

Of course, the update for Table 1 is a routine, minor matter (BJET up on place on the Impact Factor ladder, IS down one place), perhaps akin to an errata item. Nevertheless, there are interesting matters arising. For example, what was the basis for Thomson Reuters acceding to the BJET appeal? Is there a previously unseen problem with the algorithm for Impact Factor calculations, or the definitions of “countable publications” that underly Impact Factor calculations? However, in the future it is probably unlikely
that we will encounter an increasing number of instances in which a journal succeeds with an appeal concerning data published by any party which has become widely recognised as an authority in matters pertaining to bibliometric-based rankings. The reason for this estimate is that journal editors are more likely to put their main efforts into securing an increased number of citations, using a number of strategies that go beyond simplistic notions that “better quality articles” will generate more citations, and its converse, namely that “more citations” establishes “higher quality”. The relationships are complex, though of course with current trends it seems safe to reiterate that researchers will “accord more attention to journal rankings derived from citation count-based bibliometric data, in contrast to rankings based upon other methodologies or unspecified methodologies.”

Retirement pending becomes retirement completed!

One of the problems with AJET Editorials, not hitherto recorded, is that nearly always they have been “last minute” jobs, completed only after all articles and tables of contents for each issue were ready for publication (though I hasten to add that often the research reading and data preparation extended over a much longer time). For quite a number of years there have been no volunteers offering to write Editorial items (other than for Special issues). So, it is with an element of relief that I sign off on writing AJET Editorials (above, a concluding update on some of AJET’s benchmarks or “KPIs”), which were just one part of my editorial staffing engagement with AJET extending over 16 years. During that period, especially in the latter half, AJET grew in a way that became “outside the box” of traditional ASCILITE/ascilite mainstream membership (that is, the annual conference participants).

My historical perspective on those years can be presented elsewhere: the draft title for the first topic is “Journals with borders, journals without borders: Under-representation of Asian countries in educational research journals”, and there are other topics arising from “systematic analyses of submission demographics, and ... studies of aspiring author behaviours”.

But here the most important matter is to formally thank all of AJET’s authors and reviewers. Without you there is no journal! Though at times in the past two years AJET editorial work grew to be near a full time activity, it has been always a pleasure to have worked with you and for you.

Roger Atkinson
AJET Production Editor (AJET retirement completed!)
http://www.roger-atkinson.id.au/

Endnotes

Asia-Pacific Society for Computers in Education and Nanyang Technological University


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http://www.ask4research.info/icalt/2013/