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The *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (AJET) is a refereed research journal published 8 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.

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AJET's Editorial Board (see <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/about/editorial-board.html>) reflects the journal's commitment to academic excellence in educational technology and related areas of research and professional practice, our vision of an international journal with an Australasian regional emphasis, and our origins as a professional and learned society publication.



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Editorial 27(7)

AJET report to ascilite AGM 2011 [1]

There are two especially notable positive features evident in AJET's operations in 2011. Firstly, there is good news with AJET's *Impact Factor*, and secondly, AJET's attractiveness to prospective authors continues to increase at a rate which is both satisfying and alarming.

To remind Members about the context, AJET is being projected as the Society's flagship in scholarly publishing, in international reach, and in community service [2]. Beginning with eminence in scholarly publishing, AJET's current *Impact Factor*, 1.655 (an increase from last year's 1.278), provides one key performance indicator that suggests an improvement in AJET's standing relative to our major international competitor or peer journals [3]. Details are given in AJET Editorial 27(6), which also draws attention to the increasing divergence between *Impact Factor* rankings, and the now defunct *Tiers* rankings that were advanced by the Australian Research Council in previous iterations of its ERA process [3]. Ironically, the recent abandonment of *Tiers*, and consequential denial of opportunities to "review" *Tiers* ratings, may mean that AJET could be for some years locked into an "underground" perception that it is merely a *Tier B* journal [4]. Thus, unfortunately, the good news about current *Impact Factor* data improving AJET's standing is somewhat muted by the *Tiers* legacy.

AJET's international reach continues on an expansionary path, with increased representation from Taiwan and the beginnings of representation from China being notable features of 2011 operations [5]. Although 'community service' is not mentioned specifically in ascilite's constitution, AJET is one of the Society's most noteworthy examples of a community service, that is a service that reaches more widely into the world community at large, compared with the immediate community implied by the words 'computers', 'tertiary education' and 'Australasian' in the Society's title. Specifically, AJET continues to attract a strong input from learning technology research work in the primary and secondary sectors of education [6]. The 'international reach' and 'community service' perspectives are vitally important in pursuing the goal of being one of the world's 'top five' academic journals in educational technology.

AJET continues to record large increases in the numbers of submissions and numbers of articles published per year. The number of articles received increased by 26% from 2009 to 2010, and prospectively a 21% increase from 2010 to 2011. The number of articles published increased 20% from 2009 to 2010, with a prospective increase of



Hobart, 4-7 December 2011. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/hobart11/>



Singapore, 6-9 December 2011. <http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/tlhe/>

about 30% from 2010 to 2011 [7]. Similar increases have been recorded by most of AJET's competitors for positions in the 'top five' academic journals in educational technology [8]. From that perspective, the increases are "satisfying", but from the perspective of honorary staffing of AJET, the increases could be regarded as also "alarming".

However, there are a number of negative features apparent in AJET's operations in 2011. These include the *Tiers* legacy, which may for some years into the future discourage Australian authors from submitting to AJET [4]. We need to activate more urgent progress towards an expanded editorial team for AJET, and finding an optimum combination of a "corporate model of succession", as implied in the ascilite Executive Committee's review of AJET [9] announced in September 2011, and the "continuity model" as proposed by AJET's Production Editor in February 2010 and reiterated in Editorial 27(6) [9, 10]. There is a unique opportunity for AJET to consolidate a position as one of the world's 'top five' academic journals in educational technology [3], but it will require scaling up the size of our editorial team in order to continue matching the coverage, quality and numbers of articles being sustained by AJET's major international peer journals.

The time has come... : A change in AJET staffing [11]

To begin with an illustrative anecdote, the *AJET report to ascilite AGM 2011* provided above has been distributed to Members of ascilite, as an inclusion in *President's Report, 2011*, which was emailed on 4 November 2011. However, the version in the *President's Report* [12] deleted the text:

We need to activate more urgent progress towards an expanded editorial team for AJET, and finding an optimum combination of a "corporate model of succession", as implied in the ascilite Executive Committee's review of AJET [9] announced in September 2011, and the "continuity model" as proposed by AJET's Production Editor in February 2010 and reiterated in Editorial 27(6) [9, 10]. There is a unique opportunity for AJET...

This text was replaced with "However, there is a unique opportunity for AJET...". A similar editing occurred with *AJET report to ascilite AGM 2010* [2]. The version in *Annual Report, 2010* [13] omitted the text:



Sydney, 8-9 December 2011. <http://lams2011sydney.lamsfoundation.org/>



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Of the numerous priorities and action items identified in these Editorials, the one for the most concentrated attention in 2011 will be the expansion of AJET's editorial staff, to include a good number of Associate Editors. In doing this, we will be seek to further consolidate AJET's Australian and New Zealand 'base', and to draw in an increased representation from our principal 'Australasian' supporters in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong SAR and more recently Taiwan, as new 'bases' for linking into the broader continental Asian, South Pacific and Indian Ocean rim countries.

Thus, for two consecutive years, our formal advice to ascilite Executive, and its relaying to Members, has had key sentences about AJET staffing deleted. Regrettably, this conversation 'petered out', as has been the case with other quite important conversations about AJET [9].

Now another factor in AJET staffing has emerged. For health, family and personal reasons, the Production Editor has to downsize, more urgently than was anticipated prior to mid-2011, from an AJET commitment that is currently about 0.7 FTE (FTE is 'fulltime equivalent', well known in Australian academic jargon). Unfortunately, the staffing cupboard for AJET is rather bare. The drive to recruit and induct a team of associate editors faltered when ascilite Executive announced its review of AJET [9]. The initial version of the "TOR" included the timeline "Provide the finalised report to the ascilite Executive: April 1, 2012", which in the final version became "Provide the finalised report to the ascilite Executive: June 1, 2012". That is a rather long delay when the formal advice to ascilite Executive about AJET staffing has contained the quite explicit phrase "... need to activate more urgent progress..." (see above). Now we are quite surprised and very disappointed to find that the 2011 *President's Report* [12] contains the sentence:

It is anticipated that the outcomes of the review will be communicated to the ascilite membership at the 2012 AGM and implemented throughout 2013. [12]

I have advised ascilite Executive formally that "implemented throughout 2013" is much too far in the future in relation to the "health, family and personal reasons"



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that are a growing concern [14]. As an interim solution, I have proposed that, effective from 24 December 2011, all newly arriving submissions of articles to AJET will be redirected to the ascilite Secretariat for recording, acknowledging, and initiating an editorial or external review process. The Production Editor and Editor will continue with the status "Retirements pending", to become effective after the completion of review processes for all submissions that arrived prior to 24 December 2011. We estimate that four months will be required to finalise review outcomes and publication (in the case of acceptances, including Special Issue acceptances) for all submissions that arrived prior to 24 December. This is not the best form of continuity in AJET staffing, but it does offer continuity and fair treatment for the authors of pre-December 24 submissions, and provides one month's notice to ascilite Secretariat of the need to initiate additional staffing, perhaps initially at the level of 1-2 full time person days per week, or equivalent. With new arrivals redirected, we can concentrate more intensively upon faster resolution of 2011 submissions, which will be a considerable relief to the authors concerned.

Our mention of authors' interests is very important and deliberate, because the day to day operations of a journal and ultimately its successful survival are very much centred upon authors. Journals prosper if their reviewers and editors are very good at encouraging and developing authors. Does the review process provide the best possible formative advice, fairly and at least reasonably promptly? Will authors find that their accepted articles are "in good company", that they secure a good number of readers, as measured by citation counts and other data and that their selection of AJET serves them just as well or perhaps even better than the selection of one of the numerous other journals in educational technology and closely related fields of research? From this perspective, it is not enough to have a journal publication process that is *very good at selecting the best research*; it is essential to also be *very good at improving the research* that is submitted. But it is the latter that is by far the most time-consuming part of day to day operations.

Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin
AJET Production Editor and AJET Editor

Endnotes

1. This report was invited by ascilite Executive for inclusion in the *ascilite President's Annual Report 2011*. This Editorial version has endnotes added to facilitate access to references.
2. AJET Editorial 26(7). AJET report to ascilite AGM 2010.
<http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet26/editorial26-7.html>
3. AJET Editorial 27(6). *Impact Factor* revisited: AJET ranking improved.
<http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/editorial27-6.html>
4. AJET Editorial 27(6). Draft ERA 2012 Journal List released.
<http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/editorial27-6.html>
5. AJET Editorial 27(4). AJET's acceptance rate: A regional analysis updated.
<http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/editorial27-4.html>



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International Society of the Learning Sciences (ISLS)
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Centre for Research on Computer Supported Learning and
Cognition (CoCo), University of Sydney, 2-6 July 2012
<http://www.isls.org/icls2012/>

6. AJET Editorial 27(2). Educational sector representation in educational technology journals. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/editorial27-2.html>
7. AJET Editorial 27(4). AJET review process outcomes: 2010 data. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/editorial27-4.html>
8. AJET Editorial 27(1). Revisiting the 'growth spurt' in educational technology journals. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/editorial27-1.html>
9. AJET Editorial 27(6). ascilite's Executive Committee initiates its review of AJET. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/editorial27-6.html>
10. Atkinson, R. & McBeath, C. (2010). Notes on Program Committee work for ascilite Sydney 2010. Document submitted to ascilite Executive, dated 18 Feb 2010, filename 'Notes-Program-Committee2010.doc'. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/about/ajetcommittee/notes-program-committee2010.pdf>
11. After Lewis Carroll (1872), lines from *The Walrus and The Carpenter*:
"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--
Of cabbages--and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--
And whether pigs have wings." (<http://www.jabberwocky.com/carroll/walrus.html>)
12. ascilite file '2011_President_Final.pdf'
13. ascilite file '2010_asc_President_Report.pdf'
14. Email to ascilite Executive from Roger Atkinson, 27 November 2011.



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