

Editorial: Volume 33 Issue 4

The endeavour of academic publishing

In his valedictory [editorial](#) Barney Dalgarno reviewed AJET's recent history and outlined some of the challenges of journal publishing in a context of increasing time pressures and accountability measures in academia. Looking at annual submission and acceptance numbers Barney estimated that for every article published in AJET 28 hours of volunteer time would have been invested by reviewers and editors. This amounts to a substantial workload carried by academic colleagues who volunteer their time to the knowledge exchange afforded by academic publishing. This editorial reflects on the forces that shape academic publishing, from financial models and sustainable ways of interacting with our researcher community to challenges around quantitative versus qualitative measures.

AJET is in the fortunate situation of being funded by ASCILITE, the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education. ASCILITE finances AJET by paying for copy editing, website hosting and DOIs. Together with managing the publishing process ourselves instead of working with a commercial publishing house, this allows AJET to follow the *platinum* or *diamond* open access publishing approach in which neither subscription nor article publishing charges are imposed. This compares favourably with journals that offer *gold* or *green* open access, typically charging authors around US\$ 3,000 for making their article available under open access or imposing embargo times of 12-18 months before open access applies. Like AJET, these journals use volunteer labour for reviewing and editorial work. Only about 10% of the typical article publishing charges would be required to cover AJET's publishing costs, indicating that a high percentage of the fees authors pay go towards financing the commercial publishing houses.

AJET is also in the fortunate position of being able to attract high-level researchers into its volunteer workforce. Yet, as outlined earlier, the workload for AJET is high, and our associate editors are very familiar with the challenges of finding reviewers who can provide high quality reviews in the timeframes required. The pressures of academic life are apparent in the responses of many reviewers who have to decline requests due to workloads. The giving of time for the good of knowledge development and exchange is still prevalent in academia, but certainly shaded by accountability for time and demand for outputs.

How should AJET respond to the challenges? AJET is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal. Our review process means that at least four individuals, two editors and two reviewers, have evaluated an article before acceptance. This process is at the heart of high quality academic publishing and not up for discussion. Where we can influence the workload of our associate editors and reviewers is in increasing the threshold submissions have to pass before being admitted into the full review process. Like other journals, AJET operates a screening step in which unsuitable submissions are rejected without undergoing full review. Many screening decisions are clear, where articles do not address [AJET's focus and scope](#) or are simply not at the high level of quality required. For submissions that lie around the threshold we have implemented a mechanism of double-checking to confirm our decisions. Moving fewer submissions into the full review process lowers volunteer workloads and therefore makes our operations more sustainable. The price we pay as the academic community lies in lowering the service to developing researcher capabilities. A brief screening note cannot provide the same level of feedback as two full reviews would. As lead editors, we are acutely aware of the important role a journal plays in assisting researcher development, but also need to be realistic in seeing what we can ask from our reviewers.

Academia is increasingly affected by measurements and accountability. This is evidenced by the rise of systems like [publons](#) that formalise the counting of reviews provided by individuals. Against payment of an annual fee by a journal, publons automatically registers reviewer contributions and publishes data on its website. Without payments, individual reviewers can still use publons, yet have to catalogue their reviews manually. Subscription to publons, or a similar system, would add a substantial expense to AJET's budget, and, at least at the moment, we are not convinced we should subscribe. Not too long ago, it was sufficient for an academic to list their reviewing contributions in their curriculum vitae. Now, in the age of accountability and data analytics, automated services are on the rise. Are we replacing a trust

model, or are we adding transparency? What is the value of quantitative measures that do not tell us about the quality of the reviewing work?

Only a year on from Barney Dalgarno's review the AJET editorial team faces new challenges that are grounded in a complicated network of contexts: Publishing models that distribute payment burdens and benefactors in fundamentally different ways; the ever-changing landscape of information technology that enables new ways of working; the climate of accountability and quantification that seems to gain an ever-increasing grip on academia.

In this issue

As always, this issue is filled with a wide range of topics and contexts. The following three papers are excellent representations, spread across three nations, and focusing on non-formal, formal, professional, community and tertiary education settings. **Intarat, Chanchalor** and **Murphy** challenge us to look beyond sectorial divisions of education to that of education as lifelong learning, and particularly in terms of formal, non-formal and informal education. In their study, located in rural Thailand, they focus on comparing the formality of education in terms of student content knowledge, interaction and satisfaction. In a different approach to engaging with distributed learners, Atiya **Khan's** study explores the role of blogging in professional development of teachers in Mumbai. In particular Khan considers reflective practice, networking, and collaboration in relation to the potential of blogging and concludes it can support a valuable, self-organising learning community. In contrast with the previous two papers, **Cooper** and **Scriven** focus on tertiary education, and how the community of inquiry model has been applied to redesign a digital learning environment. Unsurprisingly they conclude that it is not a cure-all, but they do provide a valuable insight into the potential of such models as communication and design heuristics.

While Khan's paper focused on blogging for in-service teachers, the study by **Cho, Lim** and **Lee** focuses on the use of blogs to enhance pre-service teacher collaborative learning. In particular, they apply an approach to regulation theory to support student self- and co-regulation with positive results. Usefully they also offer a discussion of teaching and learning strategies when using a blog for collaboration. Staying with a teacher education theme, Shaista **Bibi** and Shahadat Hossain **Khan's** paper adopts the framework of Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) to exploring teacher educators' planning of digital technology use. They conclude that TPACK is a useful approach to helping facilitate teachers planning for technology integration.

In this issue there are a range of well-established technologies and others that are still finding their place in education. **Lokuge Dona, Gregory** and **Pechenkina** explore the growing trend in lecture-recording in higher education and note that students were generally positive about the affordances of the lecture-recording system, whilst lecturers remained undecided. In their paper they challenge the efficacy of a one-size-fits-all lecture-recording system, particularly given their observed differences in disciplinary activities, lecturer styles and approaches to teaching. In a different tack, **Hardy** and **Totman** explore the use of simulations in the form of role play exercises in social science education. They found that despite an increased workload, students registered greater satisfaction and engagement and found the exercise valuable in terms of their perceived learning. Kun-Hung **Cheng's** paper explores yet another technology, that of augmented reality (AR), specifically an AR book reading activity. Cheng found in general that students perceived less cognitive load, stronger motivation, and held more positive attitudes towards the experiences using AR.

Paul and **Glassman's** paper responds to the complex and significant concern that internet anxiety may inhibit learning behaviours in web enhanced environments. They found that both reactive/generative self-efficacy and search self-efficacy are unique predictors of internet anxiety. This has significant implications for educators and designers who plan to use web based environments for learning activities. Gary **Cheng** provides an exciting study of a system that generates immediate and individualised feedback on students' reflective entries about their second language (L2) learning experiences. Cheng found that the classification accuracy of the system is comparable to that of human annotators and that both teacher and machine feedback types have strengths and limitations. Ekaterina **Pechenkina** offers a typology of mobile applications (apps) in higher education. She notes that study management and navigation apps are most common, with augmented and/or virtual reality apps forming another key category. Her conclusions

are particularly noteworthy pertaining to the complex terrain of HE mobile apps, and problematic areas arising from this research, such as safety, student support, privacy, and equity.

Acknowledgments and changes to AJET's editorial team

Over the past months we had several changes to our editorial team. Due to increased work commitments, Dr Chwee Beng Lee (CB) had to step back from the role of lead editor. We thank CB for her contributions in this role and are pleased to report that she will continue to serve AJET as associate editor. Associate Professor Petrea Redmond, previously associate editor, has now joined the lead editor team. For now, Petrea has taken on the screening portfolio and will also lead AJET's new social media team.

The three lead editors work with a dedicated team of associate editors who facilitate the reviews and author revisions. The associate editors are: Associate Professor Shirley Agostinho, Dr Thomas Donald Cochrane, Dr Helen Farley, Associate Professor Paul Gruba, Dr Chwee Beng Lee, Associate Professor Lina Markauskaite, and Dr Stephen Marshall.

We are also proud to announce three additional team members: Dr Linda Corrin, Dr Michael Phillips, and Professor Judi Harris. Judi, who is located in the United States, is our first team member from outside Australia and New Zealand. Giving the truly international nature of AJET this is very appropriate and hopefully only the start of adding colleagues from further countries to our team.

Behind the scenes we also have two wonderful copyeditors: Antonina Petrolito and Kayleen Wood. And finally, but not least, we need to thank our large number of expert reviewers who ensure our articles are of high standard and offer valuable new understandings in the field.

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