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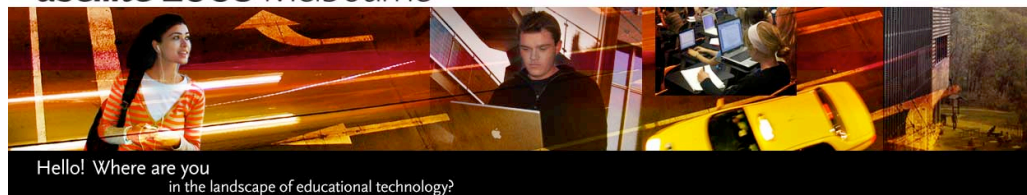
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The *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (AJET) is a refereed research journal published four times per year by the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascilite). AJET retired its printed version (ISSN 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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## Editorial

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### Outstanding Paper Awards from *ascilite Singapore 2007*

Since the publication of AJET 16(1) in May 2000, we have commenced each volume with a recognition of the Outstanding Paper Award recipients from the previous December's ASCILITE Conference. This year we are very pleased to recognise three Awards selected from the 126 full and concise papers accepted by the *ascilite Singapore 2007* Conference review process [1, 2, 3].

Brett Farmer, Audrey Yue and Claire Brooks from the University of Melbourne wrote the full paper, *Using blogging for higher order learning in large cohort university teaching: A case study*. Their investigation is comprehensive and in supporting the educational value of well-designed uses of blogging, they provide evidence based recommendations for good practice.

*Quantifying the reuse of learning objects* is by Kristine Elliott and Kevin Sweeney, also from the University of Melbourne. A concise paper, it describes a systematic procedure for comparing the reuse of learning objects with *de novo* development of one's own, equivalent resources, finding in the example they studied, a substantial time saving in favour of the reuse of LOs approach.

Rosemary Thomson and Gail Wilson, University of Western Sydney, wrote *Promoting staff learning about assessment through digital representations of practice: Evaluating a pilot project*, also a concise paper. Their *Assessment Snapshots Project* provides a successful dissemination of "...knowledge and understanding of locally contextualised good practice in assessment...". Gail is now Manager of Teaching and Learning Services at Bond University and we congratulate her upon the new appointment.

The Outstanding Paper Awards were nominated by reviewers [3], with a minor, moderating role adopted by the Program Committee. At the Conference's closing [4], session Chairperson Marissa Wettasinghe, in announcing the Awards, stated the Committee's impression that the 2007 Award recipients shared a particular distinction in the care the authors had taken to ensure that their research outcomes included useful and practical guides for rank and file practitioners.

The appearance of the Outstanding Paper Awards in AJET's second issue for 2008, instead of the first issue as has been the practice during 2000-2007, is due to an unusual circumstance. Given the backlog of reviewed, accepted and revised articles that developed in the second half of 2007, we filled AJET 24(1) before the end of



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*Refereed full papers due 28 January*

November 2007. However, even though deferred until the second issue, this year's AJET publication of the *ascilite Singapore 2007* Outstanding Paper Awards is earlier than for previous years, which recorded first issue dates in the range 17 March (AJET 19, 2003) to 4 June (AJET 18, 2002).



Cadiz, Spain 25-27 June 2008. <http://lams2008.lamsfoundation.org/>

## IM 25: Online preprints and open access for commercial journals

As alluded to above, AJET has set a record this year for earliness. Publishing 24(2) on 22 February gives our *second* issue for 2008 a publication date over three weeks earlier in the year than any previous *first* issue date [5]. This indicates one of the more immediate, though little publicised, benefits of print retirement: AJET has avoided the spectre of an excessive backlog of accepted articles awaiting publication. In an *Idle Moment*, the first since Editorial 23(4) [6], we investigated the adoption of 'online preprints' by some major commercial publishers also experiencing backlogs, or appearing to, in their journal production queues. As the option to purchase 'open access' status is now becoming quite common, we checked that out too. Tables 1 and 2 record some informative examples.

Table 1: Some examples of online preprints in commercial journals

Publisher	Online preprint service name	Illustrative quotation
Taylor & Francis	<i>iFirst</i> [7]	...Taylor & Francis' proprietary system for publishing journal articles online almost immediately after author proofs have been corrected ... <i>iFirst</i> reduces the time from article submission to publication – sometimes by several weeks... <i>iFirst</i> also eliminates the problem of the backlog: accepted but unpublished papers.
Blackwell Synergy	<i>OnlineEarly</i> [8]	...a Blackwell Synergy service where fully corrected, fully web-functional and complete articles are published online as and when they are ready, prior to their ultimate inclusion in a print issue.
Springer	<i>Online First</i> [9]	The <i>Online First</i> service lets users access peer reviewed articles well before print publication. These articles are searchable and citeable... significantly reduce the time it takes for critical discoveries to reach the research community.
Elsevier	Articles in press (no specific name) [10]	...contains peer reviewed accepted articles to be published in this journal. ... although "Articles in Press" do not have all bibliographic details available yet, they can already be cited using the year of online availability and the DOI...

Table 1 contains only brief quotations, and therefore you may wish to read further from the publishers' websites, in order to consider in more depth our key impressions. Firstly, major publishers appear to be reluctant to use the most obvious description for the practice under discussion here, namely 'online preprints'; obvious because the context is 'preceding print publication'. Perhaps the reluctance is due to the major publishers seeking to associate 'preprint' with a different activity, namely the

concession now widely offered to authors, whereby they are allowed to provide 'non-definitive', 'preprint' versions of their articles on publicly accessible websites, under certain conditions. To illustrate briefly, using Elsevier as a typical example [11]:

...we do not consider that a preprint of an article ... prior to its submission to Elsevier for consideration amounts to prior publication, which would disqualify the work from consideration for re-publication in a journal. We also do not require authors to remove electronic preprints from publicly accessible servers ... once an article has been accepted for publication.

Our policy however is that the final published version of the article as it appears in the journal will continue to be available only on an Elsevier site. [11]

Secondly, the publishers in Table 1 appear to be reluctant to address questions of the kind: "Will you retire the print version if the reading of articles via (*insert online preprint service name*) is found to greatly exceed reading of articles via the printed, hardcopy version?" We could add, perhaps a little mischievously but pertinently, "If so, will you pass on to subscribers the cost savings from print retirement?" We can reiterate, in AJET's case the cost savings from print retirement were significant for Ascilite, as outlined in Editorial 24(1) [12], though *time saving* is perhaps even more significant, as illustrated splendidly by this year's record for AJET's 'earliness'.

In contrast to Table 1, the key impressions from Table 2 are reasonably clear without undertaking a great deal of follow up reading from the website references. Firstly, major publishers for the most part seem willing to test and develop new markets in the sale of open access status for individual articles in journals, even inventing their own product names, although in Table 2's set of examples Elsevier appears to be the party pooper [13].

Table 2: Some examples of open access purchase in commercial journals

Publisher	Open access service name	Illustrative quotation
Taylor & Francis	<i>iOpenAccess</i> [14]	...all authors whose manuscripts are accepted for publication in one of these <i>iOpenAccess</i> journals will have the option to make their articles available to all via the Journal's website, and to post to repositories, for a one-off fee of \$3250.
Blackwell Synergy	<i>Online Open</i> [15]	Authors of accepted peer-reviewed articles may choose to pay a fee in order for their published article to be made freely accessible to all via our online journals platform... For 2007, the <i>Online Open</i> fee is fixed at US\$2600...
Springer	<i>Open Choice</i> [16]	...offers authors to have their journal articles made available with full open access in exchange for payment of a basic fee ('article processing charge')... The basic fee for Springer <i>Open Choice</i> is \$3,000 USD
Elsevier	(no open access option offered by Elsevier) [17; see also 11]	...[Elsevier] uses a traditional model of subscription fees ... As well as traditional print and online publishing of the article, the final, pre-print version of the article is released to the author for his or her distribution, usually online, free of charge. Elsevier has been using the Open Access Green Route with its authors since June 2004. ...In other studies, authors have been polled to discover the amount they are willing to pay... Most do not want to pay anything, but those who are willing to pay limit their willingness to US\$500. The actual cost of publishing is US\$3000-4000 per article.
CSIRO Publishing	<i>Open Access</i> [18]	...authors may choose to publish their papers as <i>Open Access</i> . CSIRO PUBLISHING charges an Open Access Author Fee for this service... Fees vary by journal. [generally US\$2500]

Secondly, in this small sample (though it encompasses some especially influential publishers) there appears to be a relatively narrow range quoted for fees, or estimated costs in the case of Elsevier, compared with the wider range found for subscription charges. One can ask, quite legitimately, "Why is that so?", and furthermore, as with Table 1, the examples in Table 2 suggest various other interesting questions that the parties may be reluctant to address. To begin with, let's suppose that purchase of open access becomes popular, maybe as a consequence of government agencies seeking more 'bangs' (dissemination and publicity) for their 'research grant bucks'. Could a commercial publisher fill an entire issue of a prestigious journal with articles for which open access has been purchased by the authors (who thereby sacrificed a small proportion of their publicly funded research budget)? Will the publisher then let subscribers have that issue of the journal for free? To continue, authors may ask, 'Will I get good value for money from (*insert name of commercial publisher's open access service*) compared with (*insert name of an open access journal*, e.g. AJET, having a fee of \$0/€0/¥0, etc)?



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## IM 26: Obituaries for the RQF

Will Australia's *Research Quality Framework* attract eloquent obituaries? Probably not, if the DEST/DEEWR's website three-liner sets the standard:

The Australian Government announced on 21 December 2007 that it would not be proceeding with the former Government's Research Quality Framework (RQF) project.

In light of this decision material regarding the RQF has been removed from the website.[19]

Actually, the "removal" of RQF was not especially thorough. Another Idle Moment search revealed that *Your search for ' "research quality framework" ' returned 48 results* [20], so the RQF documents are lurking in there, although the main URL we have quoted in the past for RQF matters is now "broken" [21]. This is a matter on which we have to declare a degree of ambivalence. On the one hand, small journals such as AJET have a better chance to grow at a more reasonable and orderly pace, because the pressure to publish only in the 'high impact factor' journals has been lessened - see, for example, concerns stated in AJET Editorial 23(1) [22]. On the other hand, researchers interested in the history of the RQF and forecasts about a successor, if any, may have to resort to paper archives if the 'electronic' archives are not preserved in an accessible way. It's likely to be a challenge for the archivists! Like DEET and DETYA from earlier decades, DEST itself is now 'an archivable', displaced by DEEWR. As announced under DEST and DEEWR website addresses [23]:

A new Government led by the Leader of the Australian Labor Party, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, was sworn in by the Governor-General on 3 December 2007.

The Government has announced the creation of a new Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.[23]



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**IM 27: Some monitoring of citation frequencies**

Idle Moment No. 26 revisits *IM 12: Citation frequencies*, a topic last discussed in Editorial 22(2), dated June 2006 [24]. The purpose for Table 3 is to update our monitoring of the extent to which authors of AJET papers and ASCILITE Conference papers are citing references from AJET and ASCILITE Conferences, compared with a small sample of other journals (any volume). Table 3's data suggests that we have no reason to modify the general observations made in Editorial 22(2) [24]. In summary,

Table 3: Frequency of journal citations in AJET, 2004-2007, Vols 20-23, and in ASCILITE 2004 and 2007 Proceedings

Publication, year and data type (no of citations, % of all references)		Journal or conference proceedings										
		AJET [25]	ASC Conf	HERDSA Conf [27]	BJET [28]	C&E [29]	DE [30]	ET [31]	ETRD [32]	JALN [33]	JECR [34]	
AJET [25]	2007 (30 paps, 1030 refs)	cits	38	20	1	10	7	8	8	3	12	4
		%	3.7	1.9	0.1	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.3	1.2	0.4
	2006 (29 paps, 1084 refs)	cits	23	19	2	7	6	4	8	18	2	3
		%	2.1	1.8	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.7	1.7	0.2	0.3
2005 (30 paps, 1003 refs)	cits	30	17	4	15	11	9	10	16	30[35]	5	
	%	3.0	1.7	0.4	1.5	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.6	3.0	0.5	
2004 (21 paps, 588 refs)	cits	19	10	6	5	0	1	4	7	5	2	
	%	3.2	1.7	1.0	0.9	0	0.2	0.7	1.2	0.9	0.3	
ASC Conf Procs [26]	2007 (127 paps, 2705 refs)	cits	56	77	7	10	16	14	6	21	14	10
		%	2.1	2.8	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.4
2004 (119 paps, 2207 refs)	cits	48	84	17	5	-	12	10	18	9	6	
	%	2.2	3.8	0.8	0.2	-	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.3	

Notes: The number counted in column 2 excludes posters in the case of ASCILITE Conferences, and excludes editorials in the case of AJET. The "cits" row records the number of times a particular journal or proceedings was cited in AJET or ASCILITE Conference for the given year. The "cits" count includes all citations without regard to year of publication. The "%" row is calculated from "cits" and the corresponding number of references in column 2.



Keynote speaker  
 Carl Bernstein  
 Pulitzer Prize Winning  
 Author and Journalist



Keynote speaker  
 Marc Prensky  
 The Original "Digital  
 Natives" Author

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whilst AJET and ASCILITE Proceedings articles continue to 'outcite' others, for the reasons outlined earlier, the two provide only a relatively small share of the total number of citations in AJET and ASCILITE Proceedings articles. Citations continue to be drawn from a wide and diverse range of sources, although in many individual cases authors may be drawing upon selections from the educational research literature that may be relatively narrow and less than systematic than is desirable. Also, we can say that AJET and ASCILITE Conferences are not 'naughty' with excessive 'self citation', as defined by Thomson Scientific, owners of the Impact Factor [36].



ALT-C 2008: *Rethinking the Digital Divide*  
Leeds, UK, 9-11 September 2008  
<http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008/>

## IM 28: Abstracted & Indexed In...

Many websites for educational research journals provide a list of the publications or 'database products' in which they are 'Abstracted & Indexed' [37]. The purpose is to inform prospective authors that the journal provides an impressive array of literature searching tools for readers to find the author's paper. The bigger the 'Abstracted & Indexed' list, the better your chances for being read and getting cited. Naturally, editors of journals are keen to expand their journal's 'Abstracted & Indexed' list, and we would expect that the publishers of 'Abstracting and Indexing' services would be keen to expand their coverage of journals. However, whilst the latter will use phrases such as (for example) "...comprehensive coverage of the world's most important and influential journals" [38] in their marketing, there is a problem in agreeing upon the identities of the "most important and influential". An illustrative example was given in Editorial 23(3), "IM 21: More on databases" [39]. As there is quite a number of 'Abstracting and Indexing' services to deal with, we have found that a simple classification and check list is useful (Table 4).

Table 4: A simple classification of abstracting and indexing services

Type	Examples	Some key features	Open access	Automation of data collection
1	Google [40]	Internet search engine. No licensing, no pay per view applied to 'found' items, no formal agreements, no sales to libraries. Easy and quick to 'deal with'.	Yes	Very highly automated
2	ERIC [41]	Formal licensing, no pay per view applied to 'found' items, relatively simple formal agreements, no sales to libraries. Needs a long time to 'deal with'.	Yes	Little automation
3	Scopus [42], CC [43], ERA [44]	No licensing, no pay per view applied to 'found' items, minimal formal agreements, sells to libraries. Times to 'deal with' vary, may be long.	No*	Little automation
4	EBSCO [45], Gale Group [46]	Formal licensing, offers royalties, offers to apply pay per view to 'found' items (though publishers may decline those option, as AJET does), more complex formal agreements, sells to libraries. Needs time.	No*	Little automation

Notes: All major publishers provide open access search facilities within their own set of journals, allowing readers to obtain bibliographic information and abstracts, but full text access requires a subscription or pay per view.



Table 4 subdivides the general problem of managing relations with 'Abstracting and Indexing' services into smaller activities. For example, Types 1-3 are routine matters for the Production Editor, whilst Type 4 is a matter for AJET Management Committee to act upon after consideration of briefing papers from the AJET Editors, for example "Including AJET in EBSCO Publishing databases" (AJET Editorial 23(2) [47]; in passing we could record that a similar agreement with the Gale Group is being developed).

Table 4 is a little unusual because *Google* and *Google Scholar* do not appear in the typical list of 'Abstracted & Indexed' noted at the beginning of this Idle Moment [37]. Perhaps that's because *Google* and *Google Scholar* are ultra-comprehensive, including everything, or nearly everything, albeit with insufficient selectivity? But these services do provide 'Abstracting and Indexing', with a degree of selectivity, if used by readers with at least modest skills in searching academic literature. As John MacColl from the Edinburgh University Library pointed out several years ago [48]:

Its [Google Scholar's] coverage, however, is of academic material - journal articles, reports, conference proceedings, and e-theses and dissertations... It ranks results by relevance, as with the general Google engine, but its algorithm in this case includes citedness, and so it is engineered for the academic quality and reward system in which academics and researchers work... It therefore contains all of the elements of the sort of search service which we in our libraries are trying to provide by purchasing federated search tools.

...for known item searching - for that paper by this author on this topic for instance - it is often as good as any of the abstracting and indexing services we take, and better in that it is Google - easy and free and used by everyone. [48]

Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin  
AJET Production Editor and AJET Editor

## Endnotes

1. *ascilite Singapore 2007*. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/>
2. Specifications for full and concise papers are given at <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/papers/papers.htm#Categories>
3. Review criteria for papers and advice to reviewers are given at <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/papers/papers.htm#review>  
<http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/papers/papers.htm##advice>
4. *ascilite Singapore 2007* closing session photos are available at [http://cedmedia.ntu.edu.sg/ascilite/main.php?g2\\_itemId=16&g2\\_page=6](http://cedmedia.ntu.edu.sg/ascilite/main.php?g2_itemId=16&g2_page=6)
5. Since 1997 the date of publication of each issue of AJET has been recorded in its contents page.
6. AJET Editorial 23(4). <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet23/editorial23-4.html>
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*Note: All URLs last viewed 20 February 2008.*

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