Editorial

The long path to journal viability

From time to time we compare AJET's development with some kindred journals, for example AJET Editorial 20(1) [1] compared AJET with three Australian based, not for profit journals in educational technology, under the criterion 'consistent sustainability'. Only one of those three, e-JIST, has sustained into this year's comparison, presented below in Table 1. Table 1 compares five Australian produced journals, including two recent startups [2], in an attempt to provide some insight into the question: How many years are required to attain a viable number of issues and articles per year? Table 2 explores this question further, using two prominent non-OA and two OA (open access, or 'free to the Internet') journals as illustrative examples.

Table 1: Numbers of issues and articles in five Australian journals, 1995-2005

Year	HERD [3] first issue 1982		e-JIST [4] first issue 1995		JLD [5] first issue 2005		JUTLP [6] first issue 2004		AJET [7] first issue 1985	
	issues	artics	issues	artics	issues	artics	issues	artics	issues	artics
1995-2000	16	129	9	22	-	-	-	-	14	79
2001	3	20	1	7	-	-	-	-	3	20
2002	3	21	1	8	-	-	-	-	3	23
2003	3	22	1	5	-	-	-	-	3	24
2004	4	25	2	13	-	-	2	8	3	21
2005	4	26	1*	4*	1*	7*	3	13	4	30
Totals	33 (95-05)	243 (95-05)	15 (95-05)	59 (95-03)	1* (05)	7* (05)	5 (04-05)	21 (04-05)	30 (95-05)	197 (95-05)
* 2005 count is incomplete. Last updated 2 Dec 2005.										

The concept of 'viable number' is quite subjective, but if we supplement the data in Table 1 with comparable data for journals that are likely to be widely regarded internationally as viable journals (Table 2), the target for viability becomes more sharply defined at around 4 issues and 25 to 40 articles per year. The HERD, AJET and e-JIST records suggest that quite a number of years of growth may be required for attaining viable numbers. Of course, 'viable numbers' of issues and articles constitute only two of many measures that may be applied in evaluation of journal performance. Another measure of interest to authors is listing or 'indexing' by a well known abstracting service. Table 3, summarising AJET's experience with ERIC, ERA and CC and HWW indicates that the path towards this form of recognition may be quite lengthy.

Table 2: Numbers of issues and articles in five international journals, 2001-2005

Year	BJET [8] first issue 1970		ETRD [9] first issue 1953		JALN [10] first issue 1997		JETS [11] first issue 1998		AJET [7] first issue 1985	
	issues	artics	issues	artics	issues	artics	issues	artics	issues	artics
2001	5	41	na	na	2	17	4	41	3	20
2002	5	44	4	20	2	10	4	80	3	23
2003	5	41	4	21	3	23	4	43	3	24

2004	6	45	4	21	4	36	4	43	3	21
2005	6	59	4	21	3*	24*	4	69	4	30
Tots	27	230	na	na	14*	110*	20	276	16	118

* 2005 count may be incomplete. Last updated 2 Dec 2005.

Table 3: Progress towards securing AJET's listing by some abstracting services

Abstracting service	Sub US$	No. jnls (a)	Publisher	Date init (b)	Status
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) [12]	Not applic	Not avail	US Dept Education	13 Nov 2000 (c)	Pending
Educational Research Abstracts (ERA) [13]	$4869	789	Taylor & Francis	6 Dec 2002	Listed Oct 2005
Current Contents/Social & Behavioral Sciences (CC) [14]	(d)	1712	ISI Thomson	4 June 2004	Pending
Education Index/ Abstracts/ Full Text (HWW) [15]	(d)	623 (e)	H.W. Wilson Databases	Publisher initiated	Listed Jan 2005

a. The number of journals abstracted (at 7 Oct 2005). A count of the number of journals currently abstracted by ERIC was not attempted for this table.
b. Date initiated is the date of first communication between AJET (represented by the Production Editor) and the publisher of the service.
c. ERIC was subjected to a major restructuring occupying several years of this period, which may have caused delays. [16]
d. Publicly accessible information about subscription prices for 'electronic products' appears to be unavailable on the website (7 Oct 2005).
e. An estimate made by the Production Editor.

Perhaps AJET has had a 'lucky', or 'unlucky' experience with abstracting services, or the Production Editor has not been sufficiently diligent in lobbying for attention? To investigate those possibilities, consider Table 4, which presents a 'status summary' for thirteen illustrative cases. The first ten rows of Table 4 (AJET to JIME) are the Production Editor's 'top ten' OA (open access) journals [17, 18], in alpha order, whilst the last three rows are illustrative examples from commercial publishers. Needless to say, the 'top ten' is quite subjective and changes frequently. Some readers may feel that it strays too far away from edtech or even from education generally, and that some of the 'ten' are more like 'magazines' than research journals. We can revisit those topics later on; here it is sufficient to note that regardless of the possible influences of 'luck' and 'diligence', AJET is in a middling to good position, compared with a number of peers.

Table 4: Some abstracting service coverages for ten OA and three non-OA journals

Abstracting service (data compiled October 2005)	CC	ERA	ERIC	HWW
Australasian Journal of Educational Technology [7]	no	yes	no	yes
Contemporary Issues in Technology & Teacher Ed[19]	no	no	no	no
EDUCAUSE Quarterly [20]	no	no	was	no
EDUCAUSE Review [21]	no	no	yes	yes
First Monday [22]	no	no	no	no
Innovate [23]	no	no	no	no
Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks [10]	no	no	no	yes
Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication [24]	no	no	no	no

	yes	yes	no	yes
Journal of Educational Technology & Society [11]	yes	yes	no	yes
Journal of Interactive Media in Education [25]	no	no	no	yes
Higher Education Research and Development [3]	no	yes	yes	no
British Journal of Educational Technology [8]	yes	yes	yes	yes
Educational Technology Research & Development [9]	yes	yes	yes	yes

Table 5 presents a list, also idiosyncratic, of recent startups we have noted for AJET editorial reference. Table 5 shows that the two recent startups noted in Table 1, JLD and JUTLP, have plenty of company as saplings in the great forest of scholarly journals.

Table 5: Some recent startups of open access journals

Name and URL	Year	Country
Asia Pacific Cybereducation Journal http://www.acecjournal.org/	2004	Various Asia-Pacific
Bulletin of Applied Computing and Information Technology http://www.naccq.ac.nz/bacit/	2003	New Zealand
Information, Technology and Educational Change http://ejournal.cite.hku.hk/	2004	China Hong Kong
International Journal for Educational Integrity http://www.unisa.edu.au/EducationalIntegrity/journal.htm	2005	Australia
International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology http://ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/	2005	West Indies, South Africa, others
International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning http://www.itdl.org/	2004	USA
Journal of Learning Design http://www.jld.qut.edu.au/	2005	Australia
Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice http://jutlp.uow.edu.au/	2004	Australia
Malaysian Online Journal of Instructional Technology http://pppjj.usm.my/mojit/	2004	Malaysia
Pedagogies: An International Journal http://www.crpp.nie.edu.sg/course/view.php?id=211	2006	Singapore
Spreadsheets in Education (eJSiE) http://www.sie.bond.edu.au/	2003	Australia

AJET review process outcomes

In AJET Editorial 21(2) we discussed AJET's review process outcomes, 2003-2005 [25], with particular reference to our increasing use of 'editorial rejections'. Table 6 below provides an update on the review process outcomes discussed in Editorial 21(2), this time to consider the number of articles in the 'pending' column. Currently (3 Dec 2005) at 34, the number 'pending' has barely changed since April 2005 (of course the composition of the 'pending' list changes continually). Whilst our goal is a three month 'turnaround time' for AJET's review process, Table 6's 'pending' column reflects the circumstance that we are 'not quite' or 'only just' approaching that target. Increased use of 'editorial rejections' is only a partial answer to the problem.

Table 6: Article review outcomes AJET 2003-2005

Year of receipt	No. rec'd	No. rejected editorially (b)	No. reject ext review (b)	No. with-drawn (c)	No. pending	No. accept (d)	No. publ-ished	% accep-ted (e)
2003	61	34	14	0	0	13	24	21.3%
2004	97	51	13	2	0	31	21	32.0%
2005(a)	85	32	4	2	34	13	30	-

a. Data in columns 2-8 is at 3 Dec 2005. We expect to resolve the 34 year 2005 receivals that are pending at 3 Dec by mid-March 2006 (our goal is a three month maximum for the review process). The acceptance rate for a year cannot be finalised until after resolving all receivals in the pending category for that year.
b. Some of the rejected articles may appear again as receivals in a subsequent year. The reasons for counting these instances as rejections are to enable a clearer cut off for each year's outcomes, and to align data collection with the editorial advice, used in a significant proportion of cases, 'Reject. Invite resubmission of a revised or expanded work for a new review process'.
c. Withdrawn means withdrawn at the request of the authors.
d. The number of articles accepted from a particular year's receivals does not correspond to the number published in each year, owing to time taken for review and revisions, and fluctuations in the speed of these processes. For example, AJET published 24 articles in 2003, the majority being 2002 receivals.
e. % accepted is calculated from column 2 (No. rec'd) and column 7 (No. accepted).

During 2006 one of our most important tasks concerning the continuing growth of AJET will be an expansion of the editorial team. We will need an expanded team to consolidate the increase to four issues per year that has been initiated with this issue, 21(4). In particular, 'editorial rejections' is an area that warrants more resources. Whilst a small editorial team can decide relatively quickly on 'editorial reject' or 'send to reviewers', each case requires one of us to devote 1-3 hours to the preparation of formative advice to the authors. Again, we record our grateful appreciation of the work done by AJET's reviewers, who spend similar amounts of time per review [26].
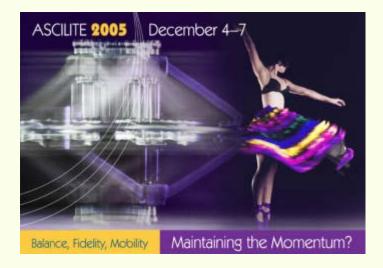
Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin
AJET Production Editor and AJET Editor

Endnotes

1. AJET Editorial 20(1). http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet20/editorial20-1.html
2. For some details on the planning behind the new journals, see Godat, M. & Carter, H. (2005). University-based e-journal publishing: Getting up and running. Workshop summary. ASCILITE 2005 Conference, Brisbane, 4-7 Dec. [viewed 4 Oct 2005] http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/brisbane05/workshop_godat_carter.doc
3. HERD. *Higher Education Research and Development.* http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/07294360.asp
4. e-JIST. *e-Journal of Instructional Science and Technology.* http://www.usq.edu.au/electpub/e-jist/
5. JLD. *Journal of Learning Design.* http://www.jld.qut.edu.au/
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    http://www.isinet.com/isihome/media/presentrep/essayspdf/openaccesscitations2.pdf
19. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education.* http://www.citejournal.org/
20. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly.* http://www.educause.edu/apps/eq/
21. *EDUCAUSE Review.* http://www.educause.edu/apps/er/
22. *First Monday.* http://firstmonday.org/
23. *Innovate.* http://www.innovateonline.info/ (readers may be familiar with this journal's predecessor, *The Technology Source,* http://www.technologysource.org/ or http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://ts.mivu.org)
24. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication.* http://jcmc.indiana.edu/
25. Atkinson, R. & McLoughlin, C. (2005). Editorial 21(2). AJET's review process: An outcomes summary. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology,* 21(2), iii-vi. http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet21/editorial21-2.html
26. AJET (2005). Panel of Reviewers 2004-05. http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/about/rev-panel-current.html

**Conferences
advertised
in AJET 21(4)**

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http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2006/

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