

An open letter to EAIT authors and reviewers

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The journal's review process, in some cases, currently takes much too long. The main reason for this has been a difficulty in the process of assigning articles to reviewers. The journal reviewing system has a total of 247 names. I know a number of these reviewers personally, but there are many I do not know and so have no knowledge of their research interests or expertise. It is also the case that a number of the reviewers listed have retired, or their interests have changed and they are no longer interested in reviewing for this journal.

When a reviewer is assigned an article to review they have 10 days to decide whether they are able to do the review. If they agree they are asked to complete the review in 30 days. When a reviewer is inadvertently asked to review an article that turns out to be outside their area of expertise and then declines, the whole process slows down. It is even worse when a reviewer does not respond to the initial request, and the process has to be recommenced with another reviewer. The results of all this is that some reviews are taking much too long to complete.

Late in 2009 I e-mailed all our reviewers to ask whether they were prepared to continue in this role and review about four or five articles per year. I also asked that if they were prepared to continue they indicate their research interests and the range of topics they were prepared to review. This information should mean that there is less chance of a reviewer being assigned an article that they are unable to review. Hopefully, this should mean that the long delays, experienced in some cases, in getting the reviewed article back to the author can be removed and the review process generally sped up. I would expect that in future (except in exceptional cases) the review process should take no longer than three or four months.

This second issue of the Journal of Education and Information Technologies for 2010 contains another four articles. The first, by Patrick McGrail from Jacksonville State University and Ewa McGrail from Georgia State University in the USA is titled: *Overwrought copyright: Why copyright law from the Analog Age does not*

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work in the Digital Age's society and classroom. In this article the authors argue that copyright law, conceived of in an earlier age but made stricter in our present Digital Age, actively stifles creativity among today's students both by its bias toward content owners and its legal vagueness.

The next article is by Jacob C. Perrenet from Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands. Its topic is: *Levels of thinking in computer science: Development in bachelor students' conceptualization of algorithm.* In the article Perrenet asks: How do we know if our students are beginning to think like computer scientists? The article then defines four levels of abstraction in computer science students' thinking about the concept of algorithms. It describes how the researchers constructed a list of questions about algorithms as an indication to measure thinking level, and presented this to various groups of Bachelor students in computer science.

The conceptualization of instructional technology by teacher educators in Zimbabwe was contributed by Rodwell Chitiyo from Africa University in Zimbabwe. This article describes a study examining how university lecturers in pre-service secondary school teacher education programs in Zimbabwe conceptualize instructional technology integration. The findings show that the conceptualization of IT and its integration by the majority of the lecturers was largely hardware in nature, with a focus on viewing technological tools as audiovisual tools or aids.

The final article: *Getting the blend right in new learning environments: A complementary approach to online discussions* is by Philippa Gerbic from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. This paper reports on the findings of a case study investigation of undergraduate student learning in online discussions within a campus-based business course in New Zealand. The project explored student perceptions of the differences between face-to-face and online discussions and the role of these differences in their learning. It found that students regarded the two environments as different but complementary for their learning and identified the features of each environment that supported learning.

This issue has articles from the USA, Netherlands, Zimbabwe and New Zealand covering copyright law, computer science conceptualisations, instructional technology integration and blended learning. This provides a good indication of the diversity of topics relevant to Education and Information Technologies.