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Editorial

IM 19: AJET author gender survey

IMs (idle moments) do occur, though not as frequently as hoped for when the first was recorded in AJET 19(3), 2003 [1]. Figure 1 presents descriptive statistics on AJET author gender. The idea for including this in our routine monitoring came from another idle moment, during a WAIER Forum [2] presentation which RA attended, entitled "The life-careers of women and girls: Addressing the gender gap in ICT industries and education". [3] Although there is considerable variability from year to year, Figure 1's data suggests that we do not encounter a significant "gender gap" in the ranks of AJET's authors. A similar count for AJET's current review panel [4] showed 81 (60%) male and 54 (40%) female reviewers. Over time we expect the proportion of female reviewers to increase to about 50%, given that the AJET author list is our principal source of reviewers.

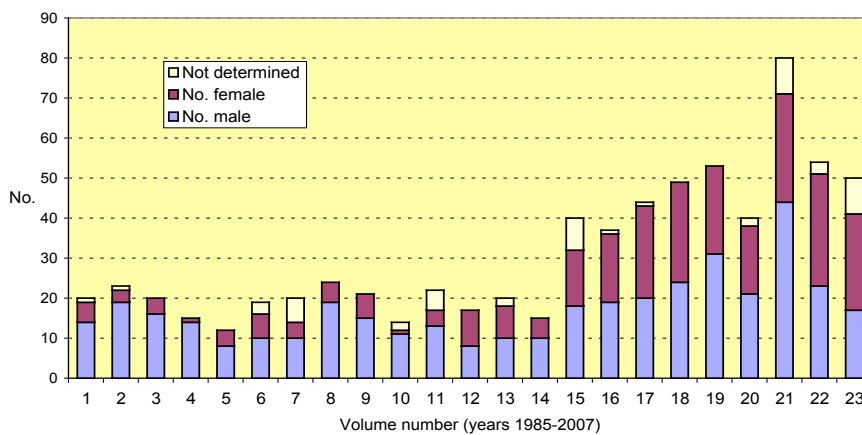


Figure 1: Gender of AJET authors 1985 to August 2007

Notes for Figure 1

1. For names of authors published in all volumes of AJET, see <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/about/ajet-arcs-a.html> (the count for 2007 is incomplete, being for issues 1-3 only). Editorials excluded.
2. Author gender was determined on the basis of first name, or personal acquaintance, or institutional website information. Authors not identified within a reasonable amount of searching were counted as 'Not determined'.
3. The authorship count is on a per article basis, i.e. authors with two articles in a year are counted twice in that year.
4. AJET's frequency increased from 2 issues per year to 3 in 1999 (vol 15), and from 3 to 4 in 2005 (vol 21).

In an article on the publication patterns of academic librarians in the USA, Kathleen Joswick [5] neatly summed up one aspect underlying the study of data such as that presented in Figure 1:

... investigating the publication habits of a sample of the population invites conclusions about the profession as a whole. Women academic librarians are publishing in numbers that are approaching their representation in the profession. ... Article analysis, and in particular analysis of authorship patterns, can be as pivotal as citation analysis in defining the group characteristics of scholars in library and information science.[5]

Whilst our modest study may require more work and years of data before there's any hope for producing significant insights, we could note one observation. The trend towards increasing representation of women in AJET authorships became clear after about 1997. That was soon after John Howard became Australia's Prime Minister, and it was the year when AJET gained a new, ASCILITE and ASET based editorial team [6]. As the Prime Minister has not claimed credit for the author gender trend, your Editors are pleased to do so!

IM 20: The journal publishing industry

From time to time we receive inquiries, invariably very courteous and well-informed, about any intentions we may have for AJET. For example:

...I am writing to ask whether you have any plans to review the current publishing arrangements for Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, and whether you would be interested in discussing these with SAGE.

As an independent, international publishing company, we believe we have much to offer scholarly organisations as a publishing partner, and we would very much like to talk to you in more detail about what we can offer to you as a journals publisher. As testament to our strengths as a publishing partner, you may be interested to know that SAGE has entered into an exciting new relationship. On behalf of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), we will publish the Association's six peer-reviewed journals, with effect from January 2007... [7]

At present our replies are something like this:

...The news about the AERA journals is interesting, thank you. However, we have no intention of seeking a journal publisher. Our direction of growth is firmly towards full open access, with print to be phased out within several years.



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27-28 September 2007 <http://www.usq.edu.au/pedagogies2007/>

We keep in touch with trends in publishing, particularly the actions of our kindred societies and the fortunes of new journals in Australian education... we feel happy that AJET's strategy for differentiation, growth and service to authors and readers is appropriate and productive. [8]

Table 1 provides an example of the detail behind the idea of "keeping in touch with trends in publishing". It is intended as an illustrative sample, not a comprehensive survey.

Table 1: Illustrative examples of publishers' provisions for societies

Publisher	Page heading	URL and illustrative quotation
Blackwell Publishing	Publish with Blackwell	http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/press/societies.asp Blackwell has many years' experience of partnering with societies, and currently has contracts with over 600 societies. ... approximately 70% of the journals on our list owned or published on behalf of societies...
Elsevier	Society Home	http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/societyhome.societies Partnering with the world's most respected Societies for many years, Elsevier now holds an impressive list of long, fruitful and symbiotic relationships with over 500 societies and associations.
SAGE	Publishing on behalf of Societies and Associations	http://www.sagepub.co.uk/socAssn.nav SAGE publishes more than 460 journals, including journals on behalf of more than 160 associations and institutions.
Taylor & Francis	Editors & Societies: Publish with Us	http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/authors_editorexisting~db=all We now publish journals in association with 340 society and university partners worldwide, from a network of 19 global offices...
HighWire	Information and Services for Publishers	http://highwire.stanford.edu/publishers/ HighWire Press® welcomes inquiries from publishers interested in placing their journal content onto our premier web platform. The HighWire-affiliated publishers produce some of the most highly cited, peer-reviewed journals online...
CSIRO Publishing	Society Publishing	http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/163.htm CSIRO PUBLISHING has published journals in partnership with leading scientific societies for over 50 years.
RMIT Publishing	Publish with us	http://www.rmitpublishing.com.au/publish.html As Australia's leading e-press, we are committed to pursuing the highest scholarly standards in both research and production.



We hasten to add that Table 1 represents "routine inquiries", as they say on the telly. However, the point about "print to be phased out within several years" is likely to force its way back onto the agenda. AJET submissions are up 20% to mid August this year, compared with 2006. As indicated in Editorial 23(2) [9], we are maintaining a reasonable consistency in acceptance rate, at about 30%, and we have improved our turnaround times for the review process. However, the downside is that we now have to address the problem of increased time between acceptance of an article and publication. We have filled AJET 23(4) before 23(3) goes to our printer! Proposals to address the problem will be considered by AJET's Management Committee in the next few months, and debated, hopefully in a congenial way, at ascilite Singapore 2007.



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<http://lams2007sydney.lamsfoundation.org/>

IM 21: More on databases

Recently we received advice from Elsevier BV, publishers of the Scopus range of database products [10]:

Thank you for suggesting ...[AJET] for inclusion in one or more of our databases.

Although the publication has been examined with interest by our Journals' Advisory Committee, and there can be no doubt that your journal represents a valuable contribution in its field, our present coverage policy prevents us from acquiring further publications this year within this subject area. Should circumstances change in the near future, we will be happy to reconsider the matter. [11]

After some investigation, we inquired as follows:

Dear Scopus person,

Your document http://www.info.scopus.com/docs/content_coverage.pdf states on page 18 that:

"The fact that members come from all scientific and geographical areas gives a truly global, all-science representation on the CSAB [Content Selection and Advisory Board]. Names and affiliations of the board members can be requested by contacting advisoryboard@scopus.com"

May I have a copy of the document containing the "Names and affiliations of the board members" please? I am conducting editorial research into the processes behind the inclusion or non-inclusion of the Australasian Journal

of Educational Technology in a range of bibliographic database products (Thomson, EBSCO, Elsevier, ERIC and Google). [12]

Elsevier's response duly arrived, with a copy of "CSAB_members.pdf" attached, and the query, "May I ask what exactly you will be using it for?" [13] Fair question, we replied promptly:

Thank you very much, the copy of "CSAB_members.pdf" is most helpful. As to your question, "May I ask what exactly you will be using it for?", the purposes for this research were outlined in my email dated 9 June [repetitive detail omitted]

In the case of Elsevier, "non-inclusion" applies. That was specified recently in an email to me [more repetitive detail omitted]

Given that communication, I became interested in the extent to which "coverage policy", as outlined in "content_coverage.pdf", is informed by the CSAB. Upon examining "CSAB_members.pdf", I find that there are only 32 persons named, and of those, only one person is linked to Social Sciences, namely "Ms. [name deleted]". It is quite surprising to me that the claim made on page 18 of "content_coverage.pdf", namely:

"Although Scopus covers the largest number of titles of any database, its aim is to cover the relevant and high-quality titles; not just any and all titles. For this reason the Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) was established..."

is not supported by a very much larger and academically more eminent composition for the CSAB. I regret that the process used by Elsevier to distinguish between "the relevant and high-quality titles", and those that are otherwise, is a mystery to me. However, as is usual, I'll report as best I can to AJET's Management Committee, and to AJET readers via the editorial pages, on our progress with Scopus and other databases. [14]

Well, there we are! Report made, as promised. In reflecting over this and other correspondence concerning publishers, databases, and promotion of AJET, we need to consider the question of how much detail we should report to AJET's Management Committee, to the Society, and to authors and readers generally. On balance, for an academic audience, we feel that full reporting of illustrative examples is better than giving little or no information. One of our regrets is that on some of the most critical issues we have no information to give. For example, none of the publishers listed in Table 1 give information about the amounts paid to societies, or numbers of print version subscriptions sold.

 The logo for the ATN Evaluation and Assessment Conference. It features a blue rectangular area on the left with the text "ATN EVALUATION" in white, and a grey rectangular area on the right with the text "AND ASSESSMENT" in blue and "Conference" in grey below it.	<p>Queensland University of Technology 29-30 November 2007 http://www.eac2007.qut.edu.au/</p>
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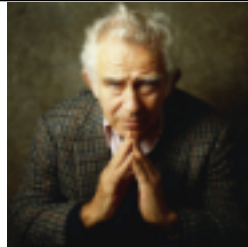
However, one publisher provides interesting commercial information about a new service now beginning to be offered by innovative publishers. We will "keep an eye" on this new kind of market and its rates:

CSIRO PUBLISHING journal authors may choose to publish their papers as Open Access. CSIRO PUBLISHING charges an Open Access Author Fee for this service. [15]

Roger Atkinson and Catherine McLoughlin
AJET Production Editor and AJET Editor

Endnotes

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