Editorial: Volume 32 Issue 3

In my final editorial contribution as a lead editor of AJET, I'd like to take the opportunity to reflect on my four years as a member of AJET's editorial team, on the changes in the educational technology journal publishing context I've observed during this period, and on the opportunities and challenges faced by AJET moving forward.

I'd like to begin, however, by formally acknowledging the contributions of the Co-Lead Editors I have worked alongside, Gregor Kennedy, Sue Bennett, Michael Henderson and Eva Heinrich, the longer list of Associate Editors who have vigilantly steered papers through the reviewing process, the hundreds of Peer Reviewers who have given up their time to provide detailed reviews of submissions, the Copy Editors who have played an important quality assurance role in the production process, the Guest Editors of Special Issues, and the members of the Editorial Board who have provided us with important feedback on initiatives and have also undertaken numerous Peer Reviews themselves.

I came into my role as an AJET editor after a long period during which the journal relied very heavily on the huge amount of time the outgoing Production Editor Roger Atkinson was able to devote to the journal. Although the strong status of the journal we inherited should be equally attributed to Roger and the Lead Editors he worked alongside, Ron Oliver and then Catherine McLoughlin, his personal contribution was immense. Over time this contribution to the peer review, copy editing, web publishing and author correspondence processes gradually grew into something approaching a full-time commitment. A major part of the challenge Sue Bennett, Gregor Kennedy and I faced in taking on the Lead Editorship in 2012 was to establish a new team and a new set of processes that could be sustainably undertaken by a group of volunteer editors alongside their full-time jobs.

We commenced as lead editors following an external review of AJET and with the strong support of ASCILITE president at the time, Caroline Steel and the members of her executive, and in close collaboration with our team of Associate Editors, we were able to gradually tick off a long series of recommended changes to the journal. Key changes we were able to put in place included implementation of a more modern journal publishing system, closer collaboration with the ASCILITE executive, and a greatly expanded editorial team along with new processes supporting distributed workflows. So far the new structure and processes have proved effective in a context where the number of submissions has continued to grow (for example from 380 in 2012 to 512 in 2015).

It is interesting to reflect on the way that the journal publishing industry has evolved during my period as an editor. During this period I believe that the business models under which commercially published journals have operated has become more complex, with the introduction of open access streams where the author pays for their work to be published alongside the traditional closed access stream where the subscriber (typically academic libraries) pays for access. Commercial publishers have also introduced a number of new ways of monitoring and reporting on publication uptake, along with new author and reader services leveraging off the new data sets generated. It has also become much more common for editors of commercially published journals to be paid for their work or for paid managing editors to be employed alongside academic volunteers. Maintaining the quality and competitiveness of a free open access journal such as AJET, where all roles except for Copy Editing are undertaken on a voluntary basis, may become increasingly difficult in this context. The ongoing preparedness of ASCILITE to fund the cost of Copy Editing along with system related costs such as web hosting and DOI subscription has been essential to the modernisation of AJET. However, even with this generous support, there will always be services provided by commercial journals that will be difficult for AJET to compete with under a free open access model which does not provide an income stream.

Aside from the commercial and financial challenges faced by AJET and similar journals, I believe the biggest challenge faced by AJET going forward is the ongoing preparedness of editors and reviewers to volunteer their time to support the publication process. A regular comment from our Associate Editors is that, despite the large number of peer reviewers in our system database, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitably qualified people who are prepared to commit to regularly undertaking peer reviews. It may be that the increased accountability at all levels within our institutions is forcing people to allocate their time in ways that directly benefit their institutions and volunteer contributions that benefit the wider academic community may sometimes be sacrificed. Because it is difficult sometimes to know

how many peer reviews one should undertake per year or what proportion of one's workload one should devote to these volunteer contributions, I thought that it might be valuable to estimate the volume of work that goes into a journal like AJET and therefore the work required by members of our community to keep the journal going. I've attempted to do this using approximate figures and 'back of the envelope calculations' in Table 1.

Table 1
Estimation of time for editorial and review processes

	Approximate number of articles annually	Lead Editor		Associate Editor		Peer Reviewers (2 per article)		Total hours annually
		Hours per article	Total hours	Hours per article	Total hours	Hours per article	Total hours	
Editorial and statistical review for new submissions	500	.5	250					250
Peer review process	100			4	400	6 (3hrs per reviewer)	600	1000
Submissions published	48	2	96					96
Total annually			346		400		600	1346

What this table shows is that the publication of 48 articles requires approximately 1346 hours of volunteer time commitment from editors and peer reviewers. This includes the time for the review and rejection of around 90% of articles as well as the review and editorial assistance for the 10% that are published. According to the above estimation, each successfully published article represents 28 hours of editorial and review volunteer work.

It could reasonably be argued that the people within our community who would have the capacity to undertake editorial and peer review work would be those who are authoring published papers and so this volunteer work should be shared between the authors within our community. If we also argue that the career benefit to authors from the publishing process is in direct proportion to the number of articles they publish, then we might conclude that this volunteer work should be undertaken (at least over one's career) in proportion to the number of articles one publishes. Taking this argument a little further leads to the idea that for every sole authored (or equivalent) article you publish, you should undertake about 28 hours of volunteer peer reviewing or editorial work. For example, if you publish one sole authored (or equivalent) article per year, it would be reasonable for you to undertake around one peer review per month. If you publish more than one sole authored article per year then it would be reasonable to expect that you might make a more substantial contribution, either by undertaking larger quantities of peer review work, or by taking on a volunteer editorial role for a few years at some stage in your career.

The take home message from this analysis is that those of us who are committed to academic research and scholarship and those of us who benefit from publication, need to ensure that we continue to do our bit to ensure the ongoing viability of publishing outlets, even when new performance management processes force us to focus more and more of our attention on institutional goals. We need to ensure that our management remain aware of the collective importance of volunteer editorial and peer review work and that they continue to support us in allocating a small proportion of our workload to these contributions.

I'd like to conclude this editorial by highlighting the immense value I have obtained from the experience of working as a lead editor of AJET. Through the role I have developed a much deeper understanding of the research and publication process and a much broader appreciation of the breadth of research and scholarship underway in the educational technology field within Australasia and internationally. One of the most enjoyable and fulfilling parts of the work has been the opportunity I have had to support authors and prospective authors new to educational technology scholarly publication. This support has been provided for example through ASCILITE workshops for new authors, through meet the editor and speed editing sessions, and through crafting feedback for authors on their submissions.

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I look forward to continuing to support AJET's role as a member of the editorial board and peer reviewer and I look forward to observing the new directions AJET is taken in under the leadership of future editorial teams.

Barney Dalgarno
(Departing) Co-Lead Editor, Australasian Journal of Educational Technology

In this issue

The articles in this issue of AJET range across the field of educational technology from issues of technology adoption to pedagogy, learner cognition and critical issues of access. As usual the authors hail from a number of countries, including Australia, China, Iran, Taiwan, and the United States of America and adopt a range of research and analytical designs. A paper of particular note is that of **Perkins** and **Lowenthal** who have conducted a study of open access journals, such as AJET, and through a survey of educational scholars have made some conclusions around the value of such journals. It is pleasing to note that AJET is well represented in the results and that open access journals in general appear to be gaining in credibility.

In this issue we also have an article by **Chen** on learners' communication strategies in Second Life while engaged in language acquisition tasks. AJET has published a number of studies in the area of English as a Foreign Language and Chen builds on our understanding of cognition in a multi-user virtual environment. This issue contains another paper ostensibly focused on EFL but which also offers conclusions that are also applicable to a wider readership. **Lai**, **Lei** and **Liu** focus on the nature of collaboration in wiki-based writing. Among other findings, they have indicated the need for collaborative strategies that feature high equality and mutuality.

Two of the articles focus on teacher education. **Liu** applies structural equation modelling to consider the impact of teacher education and field-based practicums in relation to Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK). In a different focus, **Tho** and **Yeung** report on technology-enhanced science learning through remote laboratories that allow real-time experiments.

Other papers in the issue include that of **Zamani**, **Esfijani** and **Damaneh** who explore barriers for participating in online teaching in Iran, which the authors position as a developing country and conclude that both contextual and cultural factors acted as barriers to the adoption of online teaching practices. **Green**, **Naidoo**, **Olminkhof** and **Dyson** report on the ownership and usage of tablet devices at an Australian university. **Charteris**, **Quinn**, **Parkes**, **Fletcher**, and **Reyes** provide an interesting exploration of assessment for learning (AfL) in higher education, particularly in online learning environments. The authors conclude that e-AfL, among other things, can support students in higher education courses to enhance learner reflexivity and agency.

Welcome

In this issue we also formally welcome Chwee Beng Lee as our new Lead Editor working alongside existing lead editors Michael Henderson and Eva Heinrich. Dr Chwee Beng Lee is from the University of Western Sydney and among other posts, is the current Director of Higher Degree Research. She has a wealth of experience in editing journals and has won teaching awards in Singapore and Australia, and is committed to the dissemination of rigorous research that can guide best practice.

We are also pleased to announce the appointment of three new Associate Editors: Associate Professor Matt Bower, Department of Educational Studies, Macquarie University; Dr Paul Gruba, School of Languages and Linguistics, The University of Melbourne; Dr Jason Lodge, Melbourne Centre for The Study Of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne. All three associate editors have a wealth of experience and expertise that will continue to strengthen the journal alongside existing associate editors: Associate Professor Shirley Agostinho, Dr Thomas Donald Cochrane, Dr Helen Farley, Dr Lina Markauskaite, Dr Stephen Marshall, and Dr Petrea Redmond.

Barney Dalgarno, Michael Henderson & Eva Heinrich
Lead Editors Australasian Journal of Education Technology