

Editorial

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Ringing the changes

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1 Transitions

We have mostly cleared the backlog in reviewing since I took over editorship in June 2012. The paper longest under review published in this issue was submitted on 27 September 2012. The paper that had the shortest time to publication was submitted on 4 April 2013. We will continue to try to speed up publication. To do so, we need quality papers that need minimal changes after review, and I urge anyone wanting to help speed up the process to volunteer to review. The workload is not high, and the reward of helping your fellow academics to improve their work is worth it in itself – and my experience is that reviewing the work of others improves my own writing. The papers longest in the publication queue now are papers where the authors have been invited to make substantial changes after review, and have as yet not submitted a revision.

In this issue, we farewell Paula Kotze, who has played a valuable role as an editor, and now moves on to other things. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the other section editors who have done a sterling job in assigning papers for review and advising authors on how to interpret their reviews. Without their work, and that of our panel of reviewers, we would not be able to continue to publish good quality papers. And of course, I would like to thank authors for submitting their work to *SACJ*.

This issue also marks the transition to charging authors for publication. The charge of R6000 is set to be reasonable in relation to the subsidy money universities in South Africa earn for a journal paper, and we waive the charge for anyone unable to pay. Thanks to sponsorship from Rhodes University, we have been able to fund a production editor in anticipation of this new cash flow and this issue also marks the first occasion that James Dibley has brought an issue to production in that role.

In a final first, we host extended papers from the HISA conference on health informatics: see the guest editorial heading the special section containing those papers for more detail. Of the nine papers presented at the conference, the conference programme committee recommended 6 be considered for inclusion in *SACJ*. Two papers were eventually submitted, and had to contain at least 30% new material and pass another round of review to ensure they met *SACJ* standards

for publication. We plan to repeat this exercise with future conferences and once the option of extending a conference paper for submission to *SACJ* becomes an expectation, I hope that the outcome will be a higher number of extended conference papers appearing in *SACJ*.

While we aim to host special sections for a specific conference, it is also an option to submit an extended paper on an *ad hoc* basis. As with special sections, the rules are at least 30% new material, the editor should be informed that this is an extended paper and the original paper should be submitted as well along with a statement of how the paper has been extended.

2 In this issue

In this issue, we also have four papers in the regular section. The Murrell and Swart paper, “Synchronisation of fertility with carrying capacity: An investigation using classical and agent-based modeling” also marks a transition, this time a sadder one, as the second author died before it could be published. Papers published this time are a mix of application of theory (Murrell and Swart, as well as Moolla and Viriri’s “Offline signature verification using locally optimized distance-based classification”), empirical research (Adeyeye and Mayowa’s “An empirical study of user acceptance of online social networks marketing”), and computer science education (Thinyane: “Academic perceptions of the ideal computer science student”). Papers are from a diversity of sources, with authors from traditional research universities (Rhodes, KwaZulu-Natal), as well as an emerging university, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The HISA special section also reflects this diversity of origins, with authors from the University of the Witwatersrand, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the Medical Research Council (the latter two also affiliated to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University).

3 The next issue

The number of papers that will appear in the December issue depends as always on the number of quality

submissions received. Please keep submitting papers. I am also investigating including extended papers from another conference in a special section in the December issue.

I plan to be at the annual SAICSIT conference in East London in October 2013, and will be happy to talk to potential authors who have questions about how to make their work publishable.
