

# Editorial: Promoting African scholarship

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## Introduction

*SACJ* has made good progress since I took over as editor in mid-2012, with a steady flow of issues published to our advertised schedule of two per year in each of July and December, with the occasional special issue. My current 5-year term ends in mid-2022 and the SAICSIT Council will initiate a search process in good time to identify a new editor-in-chief, either out of the current team or a new person. If a new person is appointed, they will be invited to serve as an editor for at least a year before taking over.

My plan is to make being editor-in-chief an attractive job.

In this editorial I look at how *SACJ* views its role in the promotion of African scholarship, the process of accepting extended papers from the SAICSIT 2018 conference, some changes in our editorial team and future developments.

## Our Role in Promoting African Scholarship

Promotion of African scholarship has two dimensions: encouraging the development of networks of curated journals and encouraging the conversion of conference submissions to good journal papers.

I reported on SciELO South Africa (<http://www.scielo.org.za/>) in detail last year. I have also recently started looking into membership of another platform, African Journals Online (AJOL, hosted at <http://www.ajol.info>). SciELO focuses on a specific country or region while AJOL aims to cover all of Africa. While SciELO only publishes open access journals (including republishing some, like *SACJ*), AJOL hosts both open access and pay-to-read journals. What both have in common is that they are selective. Both have extensive criteria for additions to their collection and AJOL has removed journals that have not adhered to their standards.

*SACJ* will consider joining AJOL and is already in the SciELO South Africa collection; we on the whole prefer to be associated with curated collections rather than to be added to aggregators that do not do stringent quality checks. Given that there is a vast cottage industry in junk journals, we are happy to support any move that promotes quality scholarship, particularly in Africa.

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Machanick, P. (2019). Editorial: Promoting African scholarship [Editorial]. *South African Computer Journal* 31(2), vii–ix. <https://doi.org/10.18489/sacj.v31i2.784>

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*SACJ* is a publication of the South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists. ISSN 1015-7999 (print) ISSN 2313-7835 (online).

Watch for future editorials for updates.

This issue has the last of the HISA-2017 extended papers; the experiment of inviting journal-ready papers at the outset was an interesting data point but illustrates the mismatch between journal and conference acceptance processes; a journal can put a paper through multiple revisions without concern for a deadline (other than a desire not to delay to excess); a conference has a hard deadline. We will consider other experiments of this type and thank Nicky Mostert for her work in getting the papers through the review process.

## SAICSIT 2018

I summarize SAICSIT 2018 extended papers separately, since they form the bulk of the issue, though they form part of our project to promote quality scholarship.

SAICSIT 2018 extended papers this year were complicated by the fact that programme chair Johan van Niekerk moved to Norway before the conference was held. We thank Bertram Haskins for stepping in to help and assisting Johan with the guest editor role. Six papers were accepted but, because the process took longer than expected with the added delays of one of the editors having moved, instead of a special issue we are publishing the papers in this regular issue as a special section. The number of papers submitted for consideration was a sixth of the total accepted for the conference so even though all were accepted for *SACJ*, conversion to journal papers was highly selective.

The general view we take with extended papers is that, while we relax originality requirements in that up to 70% of the paper can be the same as the original, the new material must be substantial and the paper must meet journal standards for review.

## Transitions

We farewell Suna Bensch who has served as a Computer Science editor and welcome Martin Olivier back. We thank Suna for her contribution. Martin left us because of personal circumstances and we are pleased to have him back. One of our IS editors, Caroline Khene, will be moving mid-April 2020 to De Montfort University in Leicester, UK. We are fortunate that she is able to continue in her role after her move.

## In this issue

In this issue, we have 9 research papers, of which 6 are SAICSIT extended papers, as well as a letter to the editor. The SAICSIT extended papers are listed separately in the guest editorial; the remaining research papers are:

- Kativu and Pottas: “Leveraging intrinsic resources for the protection of health information

assets”<sup>1</sup>

- Le Roux *et al.*: “Improving functional density of time-critical applications using hardware-based dynamic reconfiguration and bitstream specialisation”
- Mapunya and Velempini: “The design and implementation of a robust scheme to combat the effect of malicious nodes in cognitive radio ad hoc networks”

## Future

In addition to the AJOL option reported above, we are considering the option of encouraging the use of Overleaf as it makes collaborative editing of LaTeX easier. Whether we adopt Overleaf in our overall production is a bigger question and that may take some time to review.

The other big change is upgrading our publishing system from Open Journal Systems 2.4.5.0 to OJS 3.x; this is a relatively big step and changes the overall look of the *SACJ* site; the plan is to roll out this change ahead of this issue so, if all goes well, you will see the new look before this editorial is published.

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<sup>1</sup>This paper was submitted as an extended paper for the HISA 2017 conference.