Onward and upward

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Introduction

In this editorial, I pass on to a new team. *South African Computer Journal* has moved a long way since I took over as editor-in-chief (EiC) 10 years ago and I am pleased that we have a new, enthusiastic team who will take it to new heights.

Katherine Malan is the new EiC and Etienne van der Poel takes over from James Dibley as production editor. The panel of associate editors and the editorial board remain unchanged, except for a few changes noted below.

I did the main work of marshalling papers to this issue and Katherine and Etienne have shared the work of doing final layout and checks. All of this is facilitated by the excellent job James did of designing our LaTeX style and recording sufficient details of his workflow to allow a smooth transition.

SACJ Retrospective

When I took over the editorship, *SACJ* was a single-person operation. The journal was accredited for subsidy purposes by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) purely by virtue of being on its list of local journals. It was struggling to attract enough papers and the production pipeline was stalling.

Measures I took to turn the journal around included:

- appointing a panel of computer science (CS) and information systems (IS) associate editors, who took over the work of managing reviews

- revitalising the editorial board, who are available to consult on difficult review outcomes

- introducing special issues to boost the journal's visibility

- instituting a publication fee[1] so that we can afford to be open access and still cover costs

[1]The charge is waived for authors who can't fund it: the amount is approximately 5% of the journal subsidy so universities in South Africa are generally happy to pay.

- appointing a production editor, funded out of the publication charges

- joining Crossref so all papers have a DOI (this will make papers easy to find if we move hosting from University of Cape Town); an additional service from Crossref is iThenticate, which uses the same engine as Turnitin to check for plagiarism

- adding the journal to the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): in recent years, a criterion for being accredited by DHET.

- having the journal listed on Scopus

- changing from an unconventional issue number-only system to volume plus number

- switching to Overleaf for final LaTeX layout, with support from our previous production editor, James Dibley, who generously donated the cost of an extended Overleaf licence

In addition to the above, *SACJ* was invited to join the SciELO SA collection. So it is now accredited by DHET for three reasons: inclusion in Scopus, being listed at DOAJ and being part of SciELO SA. I also planned to apply for listing on the Web of Science (formerly known as ISI). However, the system for doing so changed before I could complete the application, so I have left that as a project for the new EiC.

What I am passing on to the new EiC and production editor is a going concern. We have published at least two issues on our schedule of July and December without fail every year (our minimum – special issues can add to that) and the standard of papers is high. Five *SACJ* papers have achieved 100 or more citations as counted by Google Scholar.

Over the time that I have been EiC, we have had several changes in our panel of editors. Most recently, Caroline Khene has left the IS panel and has been replaced by Maureen Tanner. We have added Deshen Moodley to the CS panel, to handle the growing number of AI submissions.

SACJ is attracting a growing number of authors from developing countries. Many of these appear to be accustomed to the standard of predatory journals and hence do not do well on review; I hope in future such authors will take up the challenge of writing to the standard we expect. Rather than subject such papers to a lengthy delay when it is clear that they will not be accepted, I give authors rapid feedback, either from myself or by one of the associate editors.

SACJ is already the only academic journal covering broad fields of computing in South Africa and is a useful resource for developing academics not only in African but in other developing countries. This is an area where I would like to see growth. However, as of this issue, I cease to be the custodian of *SACJ* and it will be over to the new EiC to decide on the future direction, in consultation with the panel of associate editors.

In closing, I would like to thank all of our editors, including our new and past production editor and special issue guest editors, reviewers, authors and Craig Balfour, who has provided invaluable technical support. I invite readers to review *SACJ*'s frontmatter going back to June 2012 to see how the panel of editors has evolved.

In this issue

In this issue, we have eight research papers:

- Bogopa and Marnewick: "Critical success factors in Software development projects"

- Faloye *et al*: "Understanding Age Differences in Technophobia: A South African Case Study"

- Gebeyehu and Twinomurinzi: "Evaluating the optimization of limited government resources in low-income countries using a sharing economy platform"

- Mawere *et al*: "Secondary school Teachers' perception on smartphone usage among students in the classroom"

- Moyo *et al*: "The state of systems development methodologies use within the systems development organisations in South Africa"

- Padayachee *et al*: "An IT strategic decision-making framework in the midst of disruptive technologies"

- Price *et al*: "An Adaptive agent architecture for modelling sugarcane growers' decision-making" – originally submitted as an extended paper for the FAIR 2019 extended papers issue

- Sanders *et al*: "Making research methodologies in theoretical computing explicit"

We also have a Viewpoint by Sanders: "Ensuring quality PhDs in computing".

Future

In the works is a special issue on Digital Education and Online Learning, with guest editors Reuben Dlamini and Rekai Zenda. This has attracted a significant number of submissions and I will hand this over to the new EiC to complete.

From there on, direction is up to the new team including those who are carrying on.

To me, success in an endeavour like this is to be able to walk away and leave it to others to carry on once my role is over; reliance on my continued presence is not sustainable and I have always seen my role as part of a community effort. In 1998, I took over as president of *SACJ*'s parent society, the South African Institute for Computer Scientists and Information Technologists (SAICSIT), when it was on its last legs and today it has developed beyond all recognition from the empty shell I took over. The one common factor in these two rescue efforts is Scott Hazelhurst who nominated me to both roles. He is one of many people who have helped to build SAICSIT and *SACJ* to their present strength with no desire for personal gain.

I am sure that *SACJ* will not only continue but will grow beyond anything I could achieve.