Five Years Of JACIT: Does It Still Fit?

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ABSTRACT

The first issue of the New Zealand Journal of Applied Computing and Information Technology (JACIT for short) appeared in 1997. Since then another six issues have appeared, varying in appearance, content and style. It was launched by the National Advisory Committee for Computing Qualifications (NACCQ) in order to encourage polytechnic lecturers to publish their research at a time when 'polytechnic' computing degrees were beginning to proliferate. In this paper, the editor of JACIT reviews the obvious and more subtle ways in which JACIT has changed, and attempts to answer the question in the title (does it still fit?).

Keywords: Journal, research

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last five years there have been many changes in the 'NACCQ sector' (a term coined after one NACCQ member institution became part of a university, another became a university in its own right, and many changed their names to incorporate the fashionable words 'Institute of Technology'). Apart from cosmetic changes, most NACCQ members now offer a computing degree (although the names vary: BAppIS, BBC, BCS, BIS, BIT, ...) and significant volumes of research are being produced (Joyce, 1999).

NACCQ has actively supported these developments in three main ways:

♦ formation of working groups (initially Degree, subsequently Academic Quality and Support)

♦ expansion of the annual conference to include many more fora, papers and posters

♦ publication of a research journal.

2. ORIGINS AND OUTPUTS

In 1996 the NACCQ executive noted the absence of any New Zealand publication focussed on research in applied computing and information technology, and decided to fill the gap with its own 'house journal'. At the time the journal of the New Zealand Computer Society was 'in recess' and its history of intermittent publication indicated that it could not be relied upon as a vehicle for publishing the research of polytechnic lecturers.

At the 1996 conference an editorial board was established, consisting of Noel Bridgeman, Donald Joyce (Editor), David Kinraid, Lydia MacKinnon, Rod Sims, John Tiffin, and Alison Young. Sims and Tiffin were keynote speakers at the conference and added

a university flavour to the board. A working group met subsequently in Wellington to decide the refereeing and publishing process that would be followed. They also decided that

The aim of the journal is to publish articles which report applications, development and research in the area of Computing and Information Technology. Published articles will have content that relates to New Zealand, and/or author(s) with New Zealand affiliations (this would include visitors presenting papers in New Zealand). The journal will publish application articles, research and technical pieces, issues and opinions pieces.

The first two issues appeared in February 1997 (volume 1, number 1) and February 1998 (volume 2, number 1), having been edited by Donald Joyce, prepared for publication by the Associate Editor, David Kinraid, and printed by the Otago Polytechnic Printery. The next five issues (volume 2, number 2 in 1998, volume 3, number 1 in 1999, volume 4, number 2 in 2000, volume 5, number 1 in 2001, volume 5, number 2 in 2001) were edited by Donald Joyce, prepared for publication by Bullzeye (a Hamilton based company who prepare most of NACCQ's publications), and printed by commercial printers in Hamilton.

3. CONTENT ANALYSIS

The content of the seven issues to date can be analysed as shown in Table 1.

Article length has tended to shorten, with the average declining from 8.2 in the first two issues to 6 in the latest two issues. In all, 65 articles related to education (68%) and the proportion has remained high, as it has in the conference. Other popular topics have been business applications (8 articles), programming (7 articles, more if teaching programming is included), and social/historical (6 articles).

The authors have come from 17 NACCQ member institutions (two of which have become universities), 6 other universities, a museum, regional council and a software company. Out of 95 papers, UNITEC authors have contributed to 27, Otago Polytechnic authors to 11 and Taranaki Polytechnic authors to 10. It is not surprising that three institutions which have been particularly active in promoting research should show up as strongly in the journal as they have in the conference (see Joyce (1999) for some earlier data). It is particularly pleasing that many journal articles have authors from more than one institution and only five NACCQ member institutions have yet to contribute.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the first few issues nearly all the articles were based on conference papers, but more and more articles are being sent to the editor directly. This is a good sign, as is the growing number of citations of JACIT articles in other publications. The editors and referees have commented on improving quality, with the editor noting that he spends less time "tidying up the references". All in all, it seems to this writer (who must own up to a strong bias) that JACIT has come to play an important national role in the promotion and propagation of research in applied computing and information technology, and the fit is even better after five years of wear!

REFERENCES

Joyce, D. (1999). Coming of Age: the Changing Pattern of Polytechnic Computing Research. Proceedings of 12th Annual Conference of the National Advisory Committee on Computing Qualifications, July, Dunedin.

	Vol 1, No 1	Vol 2, No 1	Vol 2, No 2	Vol 3, No 1	Vol 4, No 1	Vol 5, No 1	Vol 5, No 2
Pages	123	130	95	77	88	83	84
Articles	16	15	11	12	13	14	14
Longest	14	14	14	10	11	8	10
Average	7.7	8.7	8.6	6.4	6.8	5.9	6
Shortest	4	5	4	4	4	4	4
Institutions	10	12	7	7	9	8	6
% Education	69	67	64	75	62	79	64

Table 1: Analysis of Content of JACIT