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Editorial:

BACIT@Six

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Dear Reader,

it is my pleasure to introduce the new issue of the New Zealand's NACCQ Bulletin of Applied Computing and Information Technology, the long-awaited BACIT 6(1). The dominant theme of the issue is 'teaching computing' – new ideas, new approaches, shared experiences. The importance of computing, and information and communications technology (ICT) education is even more enhanced by the works authored by postgraduate ICT students included in this issue. Last but not least, the issue offers a business perspective on the topical subject of open source software, and a report on an international event dedicated to another subject in the international spotlight –the presence and role of women in computing.

The issue opens up with a perspective on teaching computing in France by an American academic (Dawn Medlin) - a multicultural experience in global collaboration, which the readers will no doubt enjoy and might even find useful for future career moves.

Refereed articles A1 and A3 (by Shirley Gibbs & Theresa McLennan, and Min-Ji Hue, respectively) deal with classroom experiences and transition: from programming as taught in high school, to programming taught to 1st year undergraduates (Gibbs & McLennan), and from object-oriented programming to component-oriented programming (Hu). Both papers build upon prior work to contribute significantly to their respective areas, and contain useful recommendations. The third contribution related to teaching and learning is somewhat different; the conference report included in the issue (conference report C1 by Diane Strode and Sue Chard) discusses how educators learn themselves (in this case, female ICT and computing academics), at a specially convened gathering of women involved in computing careers.

The report from a panel on curriculum alignment with industry needs (refereed paper A4, by Garry Roberton) illustrates the New Zealand perspective on problems and potential solutions, to the challenge: keeping ICT tertiary education relevant and current. The situation in New Zealand is not unique; rather it mirrors the globalism of the issue- as s shown in the book review of the recently published compendium of research on the same topic. Educators around the world are concerned with finding better and more efficient ways to extend the reach of their ICT programmes (book review B1 by Susan Bennett, of a book edited by the Australian academics G. R Lowry & R. L. Turner).

Fouad Shiblaq (refereed paper A5) offers a summary of the literature on ICT development addressing the specific requirements of rural areas. With a focus on New Zealand the article aims to build a foundation for further research. Mauricio Plaza Torres (research-in-progress paper D1) explores some initial concepts about using virtual reality for treating a serious mental condition. The authors are both postgraduate students who are still working on their respective projects.

Albert van Aardt (refereed paper A2) discusses not just open source software but the opportunity it offers to create relevant business models and thus incorporate open source work into the economic mainstream; and impressive number of models are identified and brought to the attention of the discerning reader.

The current BACIT issue follows what has become the established BACIT content mix - including opinions, academic research reports, work-in-progress, book and conference reviews. Perhaps it is appropriate to mention that the current issue makes BACIT six years old…looking back, I think that we all can be proud of achieving an impressive record: since its inception in 2003 BACIT was published 13 times in six separate volumes, with more than one hundred contributions!

BACIT is also proud to belong to the family of open access journals, published under the special open access licence providing more exposure to authors and opportunities for sharing and collaboration amongst academics and practitioners alike. Starting with Volume 4 all quality assured BACIT contributions are indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Adobe-readable (pdf)) versions of all papers were also added - in the current issue for the first time.

I hope that the readers will enjoy the issue and will find it useful. It is also time to mention that the next BACIT issue, due later in 2009, will run under a new editorial structure, with Michael Verhaart taking over as Editor-in-Chief. A team of enthusiastic editors and members of the editorial board has been already assembled. We are all looking forward to the challenge of publishing BACIT in 2009 and continue to grow, expand and diversify the Bulletin. New initiatives to increase our exposure to the global community are in the pipeline, too.

As usual we welcome comments, contributions, and expressions of interest to review papers. Happy browsing BACIT 6(1)!