Editorial

This is my final Editorial as Editor-in-Chief of Information Research. I hand over to Professor Crystal Fulton at the end of this month. It seems appropriate, then, to reflect on the history of the journal and to consider its future. I created the journal in 1995, when the World Wide Web was just beginning to make an impact. For a time the journal was housed on a server in the then Department of Information Studies (now the Information School) at the University of Sheffield. However, when I retired in 2000, it became evident that the future of the journal would be uncertain and so I moved it on to a commercial service, which had quite modest annual fees, which I paid myself. This continued until Lund University kindly offered to host the journal, and that arrangement continued until I gave the journal to the University of Borås in 2017.

I thought when I started the journal that the new technologies would bring about major changes in the scholarly publishing arena: it was now possible for a single academic, like myself, to create a new journal independently of the commercial publishers who dominated the field, much to the economic costs of academic institutions. Sadly, that potential future has not been realised and the commercial publishers are as much in control as ever, and there are even fewer, as a result of mergers and acquisitions.

There are obvious reasons for this: on one hand academics have increased teaching loads and pressure to research and publish, and the institutions are (at least in the UK) "marketised" and in competition, with a reduction in the possibilities of cooperation. On the other hand, governments are more interested in preserving their publishing industries than in genuine freedom of information. They would rather see publishing companies making massive profits from their so-called "open access" policies than support the development of genuinely open access in universities. How "open" can publishing be if authors and/or their institutions are required to pay?

Other "Platinum" journals like Information Research were created at about the same time; some survive but I think that most have either died or have been taken over by commercial publishers. Over the years I have received offers from commercial publishers to buy the journal and retain me as Editor, but I have always believed that it was more important to retain the independence of the journal than to profit from it – even when the offer was as high as £110,000!

Happily the journal is now in the hands of an academic institution which has no intention of disposing of it, and I am sure that Crystal Fulton and the rest of the editorial and production teams will continue to ensure that Information Research survives into the future. That future, of course, is once again uncertain, with developments in AI that are already affecting information searching and the management of information. The team will need to decide, probably on a paper-by-paper basis which papers fall within the scope of the journal and which are too far removed. To a degree their decisions will be driven by how research in the field develops, since it is likely that some areas of research will disappear completely and new areas will arise.

Over the years I have been fortunate to have the support of the volunteer Regional Editors and Copy-editors. Without their involvement it would quickly have become impossible to manage the submission load. Professor Elena Maceviciute has also provided real support as Deputy Editor, while also carrying the load of a Regional Editor (two regions for a time!) and the even heavier load of Book Reviews Editor. My thanks to all of these persons, past and present, for their enthusiastic support of genuine open access publishing.

This issue

As usual, this issue presents a diverse set of papers, indeed of such diversity that would have been impossible in the early years of the journal's life. Papers such as *Metadata functional requirements for genomic data practice and curation*, or Yu and Yan on combating fake news, or Dineen et al's paper on music selection by voice assistants, or that on *reading by listening* by Anna Lundh, simple didn't exist when the journal was founded. True, these developments have taken place over many years, but they do point to the degree of change that is likely to take place over the next twenty years.

As usual, we have a number of book reviews: most of them written by Elena Maceviciute, with one final review by myself. In surveys we have conducted in the past the book reviews have always been valued by readers, and used for book selection purposes by librarians. I'm sure that both will find things of interest in this issue.

This issue also includes the papers of the forthcoming ISIC Conference.

Finally

Once again my thanks to all those who have helped to make Information Research a significant journal in the areas of information science and information management, and my best wishes for the future.

Professor Tom Wilson
Editor in Chief