Welcome to the latest issue of Australian Educational Computing. The first paper in this issue, is a non-refereed paper by Liz Watts (Mary Help of Christians Primary, Sawtell), Sharon Brennan (John Paul College, Coffs Harbour), and Renata Phelps (Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University) - Trialling iPads to support primary and secondary students with disabilities. The paper provides evidence for the potential of the devices to support learning and socialisation for learners with disabilities.

The majority of this issue is the republished best papers, as judged by the reviewers, from ACEC2012 – this includes the “ACEC2012 Best Paper” by Lisa Jacka and Kate Booth from Southern Cross University. Jacka and Booth explore the use of “Sim-on-a-Stick” – a four region virtual world that can operate within a school’s firewall. Its free, and fully functional without accessing a network. Congratulations to Lisa and Kate on their award. The paper by Frank Bate, Jean MacNich and Steven Males reports on some of the initial findings from a current longitudinal study that examines the implementation of a student-owned 1:1 laptop program in a school for boys in Perth. This research tracks 196 students, their families and associated teachers over a 3-year period (2010-2012). Interestingly, a theme that emerged from the first two years of data collection was a decrease in parent satisfaction with the extent to which the educational objectives of the laptop initiative were being met. Tony Jones and Nick Reynolds from the University of Melbourne report on the planning and production of multimedia artefacts created by students, discuss some of the impediments to teacher use of technology, and consider other issues including assessment and reporting in multiple subject areas. Jacka and Booth explore the use of “Sim-on-a-Stick” – a four region virtual world that can operate within a school’s firewall. Its free, and fully functional without accessing a network. Congratulations to Lisa and Kate on their award.

Therese Keane, Catherine Lang, and Chris Pilgrim from Swinburne University of Technology explore two different schools’ approaches to implementing an iPad program and a Netbook program to a year level of students to determine how these mobile devices were being used in the classroom and whether they enhanced teaching and learning. The paper provides an insight into how each device is used in a variety of subjects and at home. They conclude with some recommendations to inform school principals and leaders about the effectiveness of these devices as an educational tool. Martin Masek, Karen Murcia and Jason Morrison from Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia describe how they worked collaboratively on the design and development of an iPad game targeted at foundation level classrooms and linked to the Australian science curriculum. Nasrin Moradmand, Amtiava Datta, and Grace Oakley from the University of Western Australia provide an overview of relevant literature relating to the design and development of pedagogically appropriate maths applications, present a new framework for using ICTs in the lower primary mathematics classroom (ages 5-7), and they suggest principles for the development of appropriate software and multimedia content.

Congratulations to the ACEC 2012 organising committee for another wonderful ACEC conference in the beautiful city of Perth. It was a wonderful success. Don’t forget ACEC2014 in Adelaide.

I came across this article recently – Seven myths about young children and technology by Lydia Plowman and Joanna McPake, in fact, it was reported by academic.edu as one of the top trending papers in January 2013. The seven myths are: Childhood and technology shouldn’t mix; Young children are ‘digital natives’; Technology hinders social interaction; Technology dominates children’s lives; Play = learning. If it’s interactive, it must be educational; and Children need to get tech savvy for their future lives. I think I could add - Technology will eventually replace teachers. There are many, including a number of teachers who think this is going to happen – my response, and I think I have said it on a couple of occasions, technology matters but good teaching matters more. Do you agree with Plowman and Pike? What “myths” would you add to the list?

Finally, it is time to say farewell. After seven years as editor of Australian Educational Computing it is time for someone else to have a go and take the publication in a new direction. I have enjoyed my time as editor and would like to thank the ACCE Board and ICTEV for their confidence and continued support. I would also like to thank Suzanne Geary, Nick Reynolds, Michelle Cox, and Tony Brandenburg for their assistance and the Editorial Board, authors and contributors, and readers – I have appreciated your support and all those voluntary hours you have put in to writing, reviewing and reading. I would especially like to thank my co-editor Donna Gronn – without Donna there would be no AEC. The new editor will be Jason Zagami from Griffith University and the QSITE team. Congratulations to Jason (j.zagami@griffith.edu.au) and his team.

Geoff Romeo

Stop Press: With the success of the Teaching Teachers of the Future (TTF) project it has been decided to publish a special edition of Australian Educational Computing (Vol 27 No 3) which will contain papers from ACEC2012 related to the TTF Project. The special guest editor will be Professor Toni Downes, Dean of Education at Charles Sturt University and the immediate past president of the Australian Council of Deans of Education. Watch for this special edition out shortly.


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