Editorial

Introduction

We're in the Summer doldrums now (at least in the northern hemisphere) and, with academic institutions almost devoid of students (the research students seem to hang on for ever!), and people generally taking holiday, I usually anticipate that the traffic on the *Information Research* site will drop off. Recently, however, the traffic has been growing and it looks as though the total hits on the top page may exceed 45,000 this year. That would be the biggest jump ever, and 50% more than last year. The increase appears to have been the result of widespread publicity for the 'knowledge management' issue last October and for the subsequent mention of the journal in various well-frequented Weblogs.

This issue

This issue is devoted, in large part, to papers from the Department of Information and Communications at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in the U.K. Some time ago I made a general offer to publish papers representing the range of research being undertaken in specific departments of information management, information systems or information science, and I have been surprised at the rather slow take up of the idea. In my naïve way I imagined that Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments would leap at the idea of having a freely available showcase for their research. It seems not: apart from the Department at Manchester only two others have offered papers - the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, U.K., and Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand. Perhaps this issue will prompt others to take advantage of my offer. All papers are subject to the normal review process and those submitting should be aware that not all papers survive that process.

Given the special character of this issue, I shall leave it to Professor Peter Brophy, the 'Issue Editor', to describe the papers and the research programmes of the Department of Information and Communication at MMU.

Apart from the MMU papers we have another refereed paper, this time representing another initiative — the attempt to engage with the Spanish and Portuguese speaking research communities in the field. On this occasion, the paper is in English, but it comes from Brazil and deals with an aspect of 'thinking aloud', or the use of 'verbal protocols' in research into how indexers read documents for the selection of indexing terms. The use of verbal protocols is not uncommon, but I don't recall seeing another paper on this particular topic. Among the paper's conclusions:

> Verbal protocols were successfully used in this Project once it was made possible for researchers to observe the indexers' reading processes in the process of indexing activities, confirming theoretical hypotheses about reading and the use of strategies and, moreover, revealing new aspects of documentary reading. Verbal protocols can reveal a reader's introspection in a natural way, and have advantages over other kinds of introspective techniques, like diaries, questionnaires or interviews, because it is the only one that provides direct access to the mental process of reading while it is being carried out by the subject. Considering this, it is the only really introspective technique while the others are of retrospective nature.

As usual, there is also a diverse set of book reviews..

The 'best-seller' list

Now that all papers have counters, it isn't really feasible for me to take the time to present all of the 'most hit' papers here. On this occasion, therefore, I'm listing the top two papers in each **volume**.

Volume 1

- [An action research approach to curriculum development](), by P. Riding, S.P. Fowell, and P.C.M. Levy. **3,211 hits**
- [Total quality management, British Standard accreditation, Investors in People and academic libraries](), by V. Mistry and Bob Usherwood **2,175 hits**

Volume 2

- [Scanning the business environment for information: a grounded theory approach](), by Zita Correia and Tom Wilson **2,739 hits**
- [Hypermedia as an experiential learning tool: a theoretical model](), by J.M.B. Nunes and S.P. Fowell **855 hits**

Volume 3

- [Business Use of The World Wide Web: a report on further investigations](), by Hooi-Im Ng, Ying Jie Pan, and T.D. Wilson **8,092 hits**
- [The public reception of the Research Assessment Exercise 1996](), by Julian Warner **2,700 hits**

Volume 4

- [Information in organisations: directions for information management](), by Joyce Kirk **15,080 hits**
- [Student attitudes towards electronic information resources](), by Kathryn Ray and Joan Day **10,592 hits**

Volume 5

- [Recent trends in user studies: action research and qualitative methods](), by T.D. Wilson **9,275 hits**
- [The impact of personality and approaches to learning on information behaviour](), by Jannica Heinström **7,625 hits**

Volume 6

- [Determining organizational information needs: the Critical Success Factors approach](), by Maija-Leena Huotari and T.D. Wilson **9,011 hits**
- [Designing internet research assignments: building a framework for instructor collaboration](), by David Ward and Sarah Reisinger **8,242 hits**

Volume 7

- [Environmental scanning as information seeking and organizational learning](), by Chun Wei Choo **9,115 hits**
- [Bibliometrics of electronic journals in information science](), by Donald T. Hawkins **5,396 hits**

Perhaps, next time, I'll simply give the top ten.

Professor Tom Wilson, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
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