Editor's Comment

I bid farewell: Some more reflections on 40 months with the journal, on AJIS Volume 27, and a little on Volume 28

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So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye I leave and heave a sigh and say goodbye (The Sound of Music, 1959)[1]	*Adieu*, goodbye, auf wiederseh'n! Die Zeit mit Dir war schön (I had a nice time with you) (Rammstein, 2022)

This is the third and my farewell editorial as editor-in-chief (EiC) of the AJIS. Three plus years, 40 months have passed since I took over the EiC role after an appointment by the AAIS search panel. These were in many respects exciting, educational, but at times also exhausting months. This was my second assignment as an EiC in what the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) ranks as an A journal, but a very different experience. During my tenure at the Scandinavian Journal of IS many years ago, I was a member of an editorial collective of four editors/co-editors each of whom took the EiC role in the last year of their tenure.

At the AJIS the role encompassed a singular leadership role rangimg from academic and scholarly accompaniment to typesetting, production, and publication where I was supported by 'section editors' (SEs) - a nomenclature imposed by our review management system - whom I appointed on a need basis out of a large pool of national and international scholars who served as senior/associate editors for individual submissions to the research paper or topical sections or for entire special (issue) sections which fell into their area of competence and for which they recruited qualified reviewers.

While my role and the carrying of so much responsibility was very rewarding, it was also challenging and often lonely. During the years I had the support of - at the time of writing in mid May 2024 - 240 SEs from all AIS regions, many from my personal academic network covering a multitude of research competencies, reseach methods, and topics. Some of them served in each of the 3 plus years and many did so several times per year. I am grateful to each and everyone who accepted my invitations and requests, took the role, assigned competent reviewers out of their networks, and supported our IS community. Thus, I was helped by, one could say, a large, though at first mostly anonymous and unrecognized group. I therefore decided to at least publish a list of those who served as SEs at the end of each of my editorials, and the present one will be no exception. However, I also contacted many, many more colleagues, who due to different reasons were not able or willing to help. Hence, I had to deal with a continuous flow of rejection in this regard and I struggled sometimes as also uncountable reminders had to be sent to committed SEs and reviewers to ask them to respond and keep their promised time lines.

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[1] None of the song titles of the song lyrics cited here is listed in the reference list; the titles are set in *italics.*

Thus, together with the AAIS leadership, to distribute the immediate load on more shoulders, we brought some changes on the way, and expanded the editorial team. As such, last year we established the role of a chief technical officer, currently held by John James, from the University of Wollongong, who takes care of the technical aspects of our instance of the OJS/PKP (Open Journal Systems/Public Knowledge Project - check them out, they do important work at https://pkp.sfu.ca/software/ojs/) review management system and most recently, inaugurated the role of production editor and manager, which Jaqui Blake, from the University of the Sunshine Coast, accepted, to look after the production and publishing aspects of accepted submissions. The help of those two role bearers has already now been invaluable.

I am also sure that my successors, Stuart Black and Michael Davern, both from the University of Melbourne - having a pair of co-editors is another innovation and will decrease the pressure on a single responsible - will implement further new structures and novelties, in particular when it comes to further professionalising and to further sharing and involving the community in the task of developing a high quality journal for our region and beyond.

They might perhaps establish a stable editorial board with academics from near and far in senior and/or associate editor roles and/or as members of an advisory board and/or review board, all ideas and 'things' I had on my list when I started in the role, but never got to do due to the daily operations of the journal. In those 40 months I handled about 940 new submissions, and a pipeline of another 60 or so, thus a total of a little over 1000 submissions, a steep increase given that the journal up to that point had handled about 1600 manuscripts in its previous 24 volumes. I will thus support my successors' potential new approaches and, to share some of my experience, therefore accepted to serve on the editorial team in an advisory role for some more time.

During my time I tried to re-establish an understanding of the IS disicpline based on Lee's (2001) and Sarker, Chatterjee, Xiao, and Elbanna's (2019) work on the sociotechnical roots of the discipline and its axis of cohesion. I thus referred many submitted manuscripts to journals covering other social science and business disciplines expecially to marketing and economy/finance journals, as well as to technology, engineering, and computer science outlets, in particular lately where the journal received much technical work to what under a resurrected floating signifier (Chandler, 2010; Lévi-Strauss, 1987) and as a hegemonic ambiguous big concept (Alvesson and Blom, 2020) is called 'artificial intelligence' and even more computer science work under the misleading label of 'machine learning'. Trying to understand more about this specific misnomer as Margaryan (2024) calls it, for me seems to me a noble and classic task for our discipline.

Margaryan (2024) provides some compelling thoughts in this respect and others have in this context contributed to an understanding and the role of data. I enjoyed re-reading Jones's (2019) thoughts on 'what we talk about when we talk about (big) data', as well as Lebovitz, Levina, and Lifshitz-Assal's (2021) deliberations on the question whether 'artificial intelligence' ground truth is really true, and further more Hirschheim's (2021) commment on data mining fool's gold. I can also recommend readings on the making of data commodities (Aaltonen, Alaimo, and Kallinikos, 2021), and managing by data (Alaimo and Kallinikos, 2021), about the backrooms of data science (Parmiggiani, Østerlie, and Almkov, 2022), on the open prison of the big data revolution (Ngwenyama, Rowe, Klein, and Zinner Henriksen, 2023), and the performative production of trace data in knowledge work (Altonen and Stelmaszak, 2023). In the words of Alaimo and Kallinikos (2024) 'data rules' and plays its role

in technofeudalism (Varoufakis, 2023) and in the rise of digital management, from industrial mobilization to platform capitalism (de Vaujany, 2024), the first and the third title will be available in full later this year, so there is more to read. In this context Ruster's work on dignity centred artificial intelligence (Ruster, Oliva-Altamirano, and Daniell, 2022; Ruster, 2023) is important as well. Together with her, Mike Seymour, and Sandra Peter (Seymour, Peter, Kautz, and Ruster, 2023) I had the opportunity to explore the boundaries of our discipline in the field of artificial intelligence which as Haigh (2023) had put is so elgently in his historical reflections is the conjoined twin of, and originated together with, and in, the computer science discipline. We hope to share our panel arguments soon with you in writing.

Beyond formulating my understanding of the IS discipline and research based on Lee's (2001) and Sarker, Chatterjee, Xiao, and Elbanna's (2019) work I have at this place also supported Majchrzak, Markus, and Wareham (2016) and Sørensen (2016) who advocate IS research that transcends individual organisations and organisational boundaries and emphasise concepts such as emergence, networks, and ecosystems. Backed up by Avison and colleagues (Avison and Wood-Harper, 1990; Avison and Fitzgerald (2006; Avison, 2018) I also dwelled into the foundational concepts of information and system and the contested concept of 'IS use' (Burton-Jones, Stein, and Mishra, 2020) and contrasted it with the concept of appropriation (Riemer and Johnston, 2012, 2017).

This led to another development as during my period the SEs and I implemented some stricter views on traditional adoption studies of new technologies in particular regions and sections of society or industry sectors in light of our pursuit for more innovative studies which attempt to break with conventional IS research. We therefore directed most submissions of this kind to other outlets – I explained this development in more detail in both previous editorials (Kautz, 2021, 2023).

We also established some sterner positions on mere descriptive, summative and gap-spotting literature reviews, and, adding to the scope related reasons cited above, desktop rejected many of these submission (on the topic of desktop rejections, see also again Dwivedi, Hughes, Cheung, Conboy, Duan, Dubey, ... , and Viglia, 2022). Instead we promoted alternative, reflexive engagements with the existing literature that are productively grounded in a focussed coverage of literature (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2023; Caroll et al., 2023) along the lines of a hermeneutic approach (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014), Alvesson and Sandberg's (2020) problematizing literature review approach, and Rivard's (2024) description of the process of conceptual leaping in the conduct of literature reviews, all as foundation for interesting, box-breaking (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013, 2014) and, in the words of Rivard (2024) above, conceptual leaping research.

In this context I encourage(d) research based on Alvesson and Sandberg's (2011) problematization research approach and now also recommend engaging with Mueller and Hovorka's calls to get involved with the inquiry into digital futures (Mueller and Hovorka, 2023, 2024). These authors put forward speculation and imagination as fundamental to scientific research (Hovorka and Mueller, 2024) and inspired, among others, some of my collaborator and myself to a study on the role of serendipity in digital futures (Hylving, Koutsikouri, and Kautz, 2024).

With these reflections on the past and possible futures of the journal I like to spent the last part of this editorial comment to briefly introduce volume 27 and in an unusal manner for a 'yearly' editorial also the first two issues of volume 28.

Last year we received 278 submissions, we published 24 manuscripts, 17 regular research articles, 1 in our proudly featured section on indigenous use of information and communication technologies, and 6 selected, and developed, papers from the Australasian Conference on Information Systems in 2021 and in 2022. We again received submissions and published manuscripts from all three AIS regions covering sociotechnical grounds such as information systems development and project management, IS/IT ethics, e-government, e-health, technostress, online game addiction, digitally mediated collaboration, IT consumerisation, social media, hatespeech, cyperloafing, data-driven organisations, big data, IS and sustainability, with a technology acceptance and adoption study, in this instance, of blockchain included.

Volume 28 is shaping up to become another volume well worth reading. In the so far 8 published manuscripts we are covering IS/IT use, continue to dwell into social media as well as sociotechnical perspectives on sustainability in the context of mining, return to digital transformation, and start seeing publications on the before problematized topics of 'artificial intelligence' and 'machine learning', and we have a healthy pipeline of more to come. Thus if you have not yet done so, return to volume 27, and start engaging with volume 28 as well.

We have also again been running some basic analytics regarding the resolution of the DOIs (clicks on DOIs referring to articles in the journal) of the now 858 articles that are registered as published in the review management system of the journal since its inception. The interest in the journal has steadily increased, in 2023 we count, as in 2022, around 90000 resolutions, on average 7500 resolutions per months. In 2023 we had about 135000 visits to our website, with 25000 direct downloads, and the top 15 articles have been been downloaded in a range from 1000 to 3650 downloads.

My objective has from the very beginning of my tenure been to increase the visibility, popularity, and quality of the journal. But given my known ambivalent attitude towards competitive university and journal rankings and my shared concerns regarding their accompanying symptoms such as humble bragging (Lenardic, Seales, and Levander, 2022) and a recognizable harsh review culture in our discipline (Kautz, 2024), I ultimately leave it to others to assess the current standing of the journal and whether I have progressed to achieve this goal.

Now, that's it for me, others will continue the (good) work, and 'I say *thank you for the music, for giving it to me*' (Abba, 1977) and end with some more poetry and song lyrics:

It's *closing time*

And I lift my glass to the Awful Truth
Which you can't reveal to the Ears of Youth

Ah, we're drinking and we're dancing
And it's partner found, it's partner lost
And it's hell to pay when the fiddler stops
It's *closing time*
(L. Cohen, 1992)

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AJIS Section Editors in 2023

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