

# What's New?

In the last issue we began an experiment in publishing structured, “bottom-line” abstracts of selected *JASIST* articles to improve dissemination of research findings that might be of general interest. The fact that an article does not appear here certainly does not mean that it is of no interest to practitioners. First, there was a start date when *JASIST* began notifying authors whose articles had been accepted of the opportunity to submit abstracts to the *Bulletin*, and no attempt was made to solicit retrospectively. Some articles may, therefore, have been accepted before we initiated this project. Second, submission is optional, and third, the Editor can only choose a few due to space restrictions. We would appreciate your comments and input to [Bulletin@asis.org](mailto:Bulletin@asis.org).

## FROM *JASIST*, V. 53 (13)

**Gu, Yinian (2002). An exploratory study of Malaysian publication productivity in computer science and Information technology, pp. 974-986.**

**Study and Results:** A total of 547 unique Malaysian authors, affiliated to 52 organizations in Malaysia, contributed 197 (42.7%) journal articles, 263 (57.1%) conference papers and 1 (0.2%) monograph chapters between 1990 and 1999 as indicated by data collected from three Web-based databases. The results indicate that the scholars published in a few core proceedings but contributed to a wide variety of journals. Thirty-nine fields of research undertaken by the scholars are also revealed.

**What's New?** The paper presents Malaysia's contribution to world publication productivity in the fields of computer science and information technology for the period 1990-1999, and identifies the main interests of academic activity of Malaysian professional scholars. The findings and conclusion would definitely be informative for interested colleagues and researchers and can subsequently be used by funding agencies to ascertain the ratio of published output to fund allocations for the years under study to determine the benefits obtained. More-

over, the study of a country's scientific output does help to provide a general view of its scientific community's activity and contributions to world scientific literature.

**Limitations:** Due to constrained facilities, human and financial resource as well as obstacles of language, the investigation was restricted to the three international Web-based databases with selective coverage of academic publications. Therefore, some kinds of data, e.g., technical reports, dissertations and monographs, may have been missed.

**Thelwall, M. (2002). Conceptualizing documentation on the Web: An evaluation of different heuristic-based models for counting links between university web sites, pp. 995-1005.**

**Study and Results:** The individual pages of books or journals are rarely studied as entities in their own right, yet on the Web the page is the standard unit of content for the majority of research, as well as for online tools such as search engines. But should Web pages be aggregated, perhaps binding together all pages in the same site into a single document, in the same way that pages are bound into a book or journal? This is an issue particularly for those counting objects on the Web, such as how many

links point to a given website. A common technique that can artificially inflate link counts is to place an identical navigation bar or on each page of a site: if there are a thousand pages with this device then one decision has created a thousand links. So is there a more useful Web document definition than the Web page? In the study, three alternative levels of document are defined for university websites based upon the directory, the domain and the whole institutional site. These are then compared on a set of 108 UK university websites under the assumption that a more effective document heuristic will tend to produce link counts that correlate more highly with institutional research productivity. The domain and directory models produced more statistically significant results, showing that the alternative definitions are both practical and useful.

**What's New?:** The document models introduced have the potential to add a new perspective to the Web for those that seek to measure it, assess its use or design information retrieval and storage tools for it.

**Limitations:** No simple document model can on its own eliminate all anomalies in Web publishing behavior. The data set for the study only covers the UK academic Web.