

Editorial

When *Education for Information* was launched 25 years ago in spring 1983 it hoped to complement in three distinct ways other journals with a related area of focus. Firstly, it intended to deal with the broader realm of information studies rather than narrowly focusing upon librarianship. This hardly sounds like a revolutionary policy in 2007, but back in the early 1980s “information” was much less obviously an area of study in contrast to the traditional interest in libraries, librarians and librarianship. Indeed, the actual phrase “education for information”, now quite commonly encountered, may well have been formulated for the first time as this new journal’s title. The editors and publishers 25 years ago already could foresee the expansion of the information field, with its focus on the identification, collection, organization, retrieval and dissemination of information content, not only within institutional libraries of various kinds but in diverse alternative environments.

The new journal, secondly, set its sights ambitiously upon an international arena rather than remaining narrowly focused upon one country or region. Again, in today’s global village this seems less novel than it did at that time. The first Editorial Board of *Education for Information* included 25 members from 16 countries - Australia, Canada, Colombia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the UK, the US, and West Germany (as it then was called). The 16 articles published in Volume 1 were a little less international, including several from the UK and US, but nevertheless had authors from seven countries. This international emphasis most certainly has been maintained over the subsequent volumes of *Education for Information*. The first 17 volumes of the journal, for example, included articles from authors located in 33 different countries [1]. Through its Editorial Board members, its authors and, of course, its readership, *Education for Information* has endeavored to serve the needs of information professionals throughout the world.

The third intention of the journal was to embrace not only educational programs in the information sector as offered primarily at the tertiary, university level, but also to provide a forum for the discussion of broader training issues, whether of information workers or information users, and as provided through a wide range of courses, workshops and seminars organized by a variety of organizations. This objective in practice has proved to be the hardest of the three goals to achieve. *Education for Information* in its first 25 years has not been as successful at attracting authors from the training sector as it has from the educational sector. Perhaps in the next 25 years it will experience more success here.

To mark this special 25th Anniversary edition of *Education for Information* we have decided to look back to that opening volume published in 1983 and to re-visit

four of the 16 articles that were published in it. It is intriguing to look again at them through the telescopic lens of a quarter century and to ponder how much has changed and how much has remained constant in educational issues relating to information studies.

The first article by Dennis Grogan, then the Head of the Department of Bibliographical Studies at the College of Librarianship Wales (now the Department of Information Studies at the University of Wales Aberystwyth) was entitled “Education for librarianship: some persistent issues”. It looked back over the previous 100 years of education for librarianship and identified a number of long-standing debates such as education by professional bodies rather than universities, theory versus practice, and what constitutes the core curriculum. In the second article by Maurice Line, then Director of the British Library Lending Division, “Requirements for library and information work and the role of library education”, a series of qualities and skills were identified as being essential for librarians, and suggestions made as to how library education could be improved, especially by greater integration with practice. The third article, “Quality in education for information: recent research into student learning”, discussed criticisms relating to LIS education and argued that the emphasis should be placed upon good quality, initial full-time tertiary education. Its author, Nigel Ford, is still in the Department of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield where he is currently Professor of Information Science. The final article that we have selected from the first volume of *Education for Information* is by Blaise Cronin, currently Dean and Rudy Professor of Information Science at Indiana University’s School of Library and Information Science, but in 1983 at Aslib Research and Consultancy in London, England. In “Educational pluralism for a diversifying profession” he discussed future developments in LIS education and the ways in which “library schools” would have to adapt their programs to meet them. We were indeed fortunate to have such illustrious educators and practitioners contribute to a new journal and it is a privilege to unveil once again their ideas.

The task of synthesizing the lessons for today from these four articles has been kindly shouldered by a longstanding friend of *Education for Information*, Mike Koenig, Professor and former Dean of the Palmer School of Library and Information Science in Long Island, New York. Mike first contributed an article to the journal in September 1985, and he is currently a member of the Editorial Board.

It is fitting that for this Anniversary issue the final article is contributed by Fred Guy, one of the two founding editors of *Education for Information* and currently at the EDINA National Data Centre at Edinburgh University’s Data Library. His article, “Technological advances and information education 1982–2007: some perspectives”, provides an overview of technological developments in library operations and their impact on education for future information professionals as reflected in the pages of *Education for Information*.

In a guest editorial published in 2000 Kevin McGarry, former Head of the School of Information Studies at the (then) Polytechnic of North London wrote:

“It was a courageous decision to found a journal in the early 1980s and it was nothing less than a leap of faith to name a journal *Education for Information*. The times were not auspicious: people were becoming less certain as to what ‘Education’ was; and it was often said of ‘Information’ that it told one more about the user of the term than it did about its intended objective correlative. Library and Information Science (LIS) schools had burgeoned in the 1960s and 1970s, but at the end of the latter decade there was strong feeling that, in the words of the old song, the party was over [2].”

With a little luck and quite a lot of hard work, the party for *Education for Information* has now lasted for 25 years, and with the support of our publishers, editorial board members, authors and, of course, our readers, we hope that it still has many more years to run.

Andrew Large & Dick Hartley
Editors

References

- [1] Andrew Large, LIS education and training issues in the late twentieth century: A view from the pages of *Education for Information*, *Education for Information* **18**(1) (2000), 1–5.
- [2] Kevin McGarry, Professional education: Some reflections, *Education for Information* **18**(2/3) (2000), 105–113.