

Editorial: Welcome back...

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As you may have noticed, there have been some changes in the academic team responsible for *Information Development*. I have been promoted to the role of Editor-in-Chief, and I have appointed a new Editorial Advisory Board (EAB). Hence, I am taking this opportunity to sign my first editorial after J. Stephen Parker, the journal's first and founding editor, who published his farewell editorial in our previous issue (see issue 41.1). I hope that Stephen will continue to be available to provide advice in his new role as founding editor, as I have grown accustomed to being in touch with him frequently, especially over the past five years.

Although this is not my first editorial, nor is it my first for *Information Development*, it is nevertheless a privilege and a great honor to sign this one as the new editor. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to put into words exactly how exciting it was when Stephen approached me with the proposal of being promoted to his position. I am well aware that this also represents a huge responsibility and a significant amount of work to maintain the journal's quality and standing, as well as uphold Stephen's legacy, while ensuring that I remain fit for the task of guiding it forward after its first editor and striving to match his level of excellence. For a scholar's career, being promoted to this role marks a huge accomplishment and turning point, given the levels of responsibility and importance it entails.

Something about journal editorials

A while ago, Stephen decided to stop including editorials in our journal issues, and I intend to maintain this decision, unless something out of the ordinary justifies the need for another editorial at a given moment. It is also my intention to keep many other matters related to the journal operation in a similar way as Stephen handled them (as closely as possible), which is in any case how I learned from him most of what I know about editing a journal and I know I am just

getting started with this, but I was taught by one of the best and the experience of working alongside him for almost five years has been invaluable.

Returning to the decision to exclude editorials, I believe that in many cases, they have become redundant, even unnecessary, as some may dismiss them as lesser forms of scientific communication; they are also among the least-read publications. Perhaps part of the problem is that many -if not most of them- just present the articles published in each issue, which is not entirely irrelevant, because this enables the editor to highlight some particular aspects of the articles or provide a useful commentary from their results, which in turn might even garner some citations, as I have seen with some of my own previous editorials. And it is why I decided to include my observations regarding editorials in this one.

There are other editorials that might be very interesting and useful. I would classify Stephen's last editorial (Parker, 2025) and this one in the same category, which we might call milestone editorials, as they are written when a significant change has occurred in the journal. They serve as a record of a specific moment in the history of a journal, which in many cases is lost if the individuals involved did not publish anything about it anywhere else, either formally or informally. I am concerned that this may significantly hinder future investigations into the contemporary history of specific scientific journals. I experienced this myself in a recent article I published on the relevance of creating new scientific journals (see Machin-Mastromatteo, 2023), where editorials served as one of my primary sources of information. While many journals feature outstanding pieces that reveal part of their history, there remains a considerable number of journals for which we lack information about their origins, the motivations behind their creation, their development, the reasons behind certain changes, and their editors' roles, concerns, interests, and perspectives. I am, of course, not implying that we will achieve scientific breakthroughs by having these editorials, but this kind of anecdotal evidence may be useful for understanding the history and development of scientific journals.

Other editorials that I consider relevant are those included in special issues, especially if a guest editor authors them, as they might offer insights into how a given compilation came about and why we should care; they might also include a brief review and critique of the special issue's topic, while summarizing the diverse perspectives contained in the issue. Editorials of all kinds also provide the scholar authoring them with an opportunity to add a personal touch and any additional information that can be useful for the purpose that I stated in the previous paragraph. This is why I also value forewords and prefaces in books, as they serve a comparable function to editorials, one that I have sought to emulate in my own writing of such texts.

Something about my journey with *Information Development*

You may have seen my name in the journal before, and if not, this section might be even more relevant, as it reveals my history with it and why I was given this appointment, as well as why I take it so seriously, with great pride and responsibility. This is why I wanted to take this opportunity to summarize my journey with *Information Development* in my first editorial as its new editor; such a journey has been closely connected with my research career for some time. In fact, it may be complicated to talk about my own career without frequently mentioning *Information Development*. I turned to my own email archive to source the following information and fortunately it seems that I did not delete anything; something that might be useful for anyone collaborating with journals in any capacity!

Almost 13 years ago, at the time of writing, on June 13, 2012, I received an invitation to review a manuscript for *Information Development*. That was when my user account was created on the journal's platform. I believe it was Jesús Lau, a former EAB member, who recommended my name to Stephen, as editors are constantly in need of increasing the pool of reviewers! At the time, I was in the second year of my doctoral studies and had only recently begun publishing scholarly work; my academic output consisted of two book chapters, one journal article, and about 13 participations as a speaker at academic conferences. Notably, I began participating in conferences very early in my career as an undergraduate student!

By February 12, 2013, I had already completed several reviews. That day, Stephen invited me to join the EAB. At the time, the most recent changes to it had been made in 2001. The journal was just starting its 29th year of publication and had 17 EAB members, including myself.

On May 24, 2014, one of the EAB members, Archie Dick, stepped down. He was preparing to submit his last contribution to the *African Information Initiatives* column (Dick, 2014), which had been a regular column appearing in the journal. In fact, in the history of the journal, many former EAB members had columns in the past¹, including Ian Johnson's *Education for Librarianship and Information Studies: Fit for Purpose?*, which Archie took over in 2012 and then turned it into *African Information Initiatives*. There were also Alan Hopkinson's *CDS/ISIS Information* and Msafiri's *Stray Thoughts*, the latter, as Stephen put it: "a one-page column meant to reflect the personal view of the pseudonymous contributor on a wide range of information issues"; and it was the longest-standing, with 55 issues published between 2006 and 2018! I also believe that Stephen himself had curated some news and events sections in the past. Nevertheless, *African Information Initiatives* and *Stray Thoughts*² were the last columns by 2014, and Archie was retiring from the EAB and from contributing the columns.

¹ I apologize if I omitted any past columns in my recount.

² The last *Stray Thoughts* was published in 2018, see Msafiri (2018)

Given Archie's retirement, Stephen then invited EAB members to propose new regular columns to replace it, so I took the opportunity to propose a column on Latin America. Several EAB colleagues supported my proposal, notably Ian Johnson and Paul Sturges; the latter had already been my professor when he was a visiting lecturer during my master's studies. Since there were no other proposals, Stephen greenlit mine, and I took on the responsibility. This is how *Developing Latin America* was born, with the question: *is information enough to save the region?* (Machin-Mastromatteo, 2015). The commitment was to submit five articles per year, although with a later change in the journal's frequency, the number was reduced to four.

I must admit that I often exceeded the word limit, and it was exhausting to barely meet the deadlines just before each journal issue entered the proofing stage. Stephen himself reviewed and edited these articles, and what wonderful work he did with them. I believe that he improved my writing style at the time, and by paying close attention to his changes, I managed to learn a great deal. I hope I did not cause him too many difficulties with them and that he forgives me for any problems I caused him. I only missed a submission deadline once, and it was entirely my responsibility, as I was working on a text that I could not complete on time, nor in a way that met the expected quality standards. The column was published from 2015 to 2020, with a total of 28 issues. Some of the articles were written solely by me, while others were co-authored with colleagues from the region. Toward the end of 2020, I received the sour news that *Developing Latin America*, the last surviving column in *Information Development*, would be discontinued. In the last issue, I included a farewell message as a postscript (see González-Quiñones et al., 2020), which includes similar details to those I have included here regarding the end of the column.

However, every cloud has a silver lining, and on July 13, 2020, Stephen contacted me to discuss that Sage was introducing the position of associate editor. The goal was to provide Stephen with additional support, mostly due to an increased workload. Of course, I accepted the invitation and assumed the role immediately. Stephen continued to select which of the received manuscripts would undergo peer review and took the final decisions, while I handled other processes, including inviting reviewers, following up on reviews, and communicating with authors to ensure everything ran smoothly. Over time, we developed a very active communication scheme, one that I sincerely miss nowadays, when Stephen and I exchanged emails weekly, sometimes more than once per week. I became very accustomed to this regular interaction with him. By 2024, I also started suggesting editorial decisions based on peer-review evaluations.

On December 29, 2021, I took on an even greater responsibility, as Stephen had to take a temporary leave. During this period, I was appointed *acting editor*, taking full responsibility for the journal for a brief period.

The last significant milestone in this journey occurred on October 29, 2024, when Stephen informed me that he had proposed me as his successor. This decision was made by agreement

with the publisher. It took me some time to process the news, as being Editor-in-Chief carries a great deal of responsibility and a significant workload; however, I could not decline this great opportunity. In late 2024, I received the final confirmation of my forthcoming appointment as Editor-in-Chief of *Information Development*, effective January 1, 2025. I trust that readers will continue to support the journal and place their confidence in my ability to serve it with dedication and integrity.

I know I have some big shoes to fill as Stephen's successor, especially given his intellectual capacity, care and work ethic, which are unique and inspiring among journal editors. Although some might consider my time serving *Information Development* in various roles to be relatively short, it has involved intense work and significant learning under Stephen's guidance and instruction, so much so that these almost 13 years feel as if they could easily count for twice as many!

I hope this recount of my journey with the journal has been of interest. Even for me, it has been a reminder of the value of collaborating with our colleagues, especially around a scientific journal, and of the importance of our dedication to producing and delivering high-quality work, regardless of the role we undertake. It may take much work and many years, but perseverance does pay off. I wish to express my gratitude once again to Stephen for the trust he placed in me and for the great honor of entrusting me with his intellectual child: *Information Development*. I truly hope to honor your legacy in the years to come.

Something (more) about the new Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Juan D. Machin-Mastromatteo is a full-time professor at the *Autonomous University of Chihuahua* (UACH, Mexico). He is a Level 2 member of the *National System of Researchers* and actively participates in several academic collectives, including the *Information Studies Academic Group*, the *Information and Society Seminar* at the *National Autonomous University of Mexico*, and the *Euro-American Inter-University Network for Research on Media Competences for Citizenship* (Red AlfaMed).

Juan earned his PhD in *Information and Communication Science* from *Tallinn University* (Estonia), holds a Master's in *Digital Library Learning* from a joint program between *Oslo University College* (Norway), *Tallinn University* (Estonia), and *Parma University* (Italy), and completed his undergraduate studies in *Librarianship* at the *Central University of Venezuela*.

His research spans a variety of areas, such as information literacy, action research, evaluation of scientific production, bibliometrics, open access, digital libraries, and scientific publishing. With more than two decades of experience, Juan has worked across archives, libraries, higher education, and professional development. His professional path has taken him through diverse roles: cataloguer, database developer, reference librarian, instructor, collection developer,

designer of promotional materials for library services and multimedia resources, coordinator of information literacy programs in universities, analyst of scientific production, consultant, as well as referee and editor for scientific journals.

Juan has authored more than 150 scientific publications, including 95 articles, eight books, 29 book chapters, and 21 journal editorials. He has delivered over 60 courses tailored to researchers and has taken part in more than 140 international events, contributing as a speaker, panelist, organizer, or moderator.

His editorial journey includes managing over 500 manuscripts and curating 20 special and regular issues for journals such as *Information and Learning Sciences* (Emerald), *Digital Library Perspectives* (Emerald), and *Information Development* (Sage). He served as associate editor for *Digital Library Perspectives* from 2019 to 2023 and for *Information Development* from 2020 to 2024. He currently continues his editorial work in an advisory role with *Revista Estudios de la Información* (UACH, 2023–present), and was also a section editor for the *Encyclopedia of Libraries, Librarianship, and Information Science* (Elsevier, 2025).

Juan is a member of the editorial boards of *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* (Elsevier) and *IE Revista de Investigación Educativa* (Educational Researchers Network of Chihuahua). His peer review contributions surpass 360 reviews across more than 25 journals in the fields of information science and education.

From 2015 to 2020, he contributed the *Developing Latin America* column in *Information Development*. In 2019, he launched the *Juantífico Project*, which involves producing videos about scientific information, research, and publishing. Since 2022, he co-hosts the *InfoTecarios* podcast, and since 2023, he publishes the *School of Editors* section in *Revista Estudios de la Información*. In 2025, Juan was appointed as Editor-in-Chief of *Information Development*.

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