

A Past Editor's Note on the Progress of the Journal

Ola Henfridsson

Viktorina Institute and Halmstad University, Sweden
ola.henfridsson@viktorina.se

This note is a short reflection over my six-year experience of serving on the SJIS editorial board. My tenure with the journal has been both rewarding and challenging. It has been rewarding because I have learned a lot about the Scandinavian IS research community through reviewers, my colleagues on the board, as well as those who have submitted their research manuscripts to the journal. It has been challenging in that the editorial work has opted to develop a high-quality journal without comprising its identity. In what follows, I will concentrate on the challenging part of editing the SJIS and how we in the editorial board have attempted to address this.

SJIS is the journal of the Scandinavian Chapter of the AIS, widely known as the IRIS community. This means that the journal has to be available to the types of research that are pursued within this community. While we used to have a relatively clear picture of the nature of this community, there is little doubt that this picture has been increasingly blurred over the last years. In many ways, Scandinavia has started to reach out, taking a more active part on the international scene. This process of reaching out has been facilitated by an increasing openness of top-tier journals to action research, case studies, design research, ethnography, and other qualitative research modes. While this development is worthwhile for further advancing the IS community in general, it also means that the SJIS faces competition from other publication outlets that “emphasize engagement with the field.” Addressing this competition, developing a high-quality journal without compromising its identity has been at the heart of the strategy pursued by the editorial board. At the time I started on the board, this strategy was pioneered under the leadership of Eric Monteiro.

So, what has been done to further develop the journal? There are a number of issues that reflect the ambition of cultivating its tradition for producing an

even more attractive publication outlet. First, we have worked immensely with our editorial process as to secure high-quality feedback to those who submit their research to the journal. Indeed, our ambition has been to recruit a strong review team for each submission. This review team consists of three researchers: an international top researcher (typically from our advisory board), a Scandinavian top researcher, and often an ambitious and promising PhD student. The review team is carefully selected by the responsible AE as to match the submission in terms of topic and methodology. Second, we have implemented a very expedient review process, with an average time of 10-11 weeks. This is faster than most scholarly outlets. Third, we now distinguish between two departments of the journal: research article and debate forum article. Complementing the ordinary research article department, the debate forum article department is intended to stimulate intellectual debate on research issues of immediate interest. In the spirit of the old debate forum (starting in 1994) and its editor, Bo Dahlbom, Karl Kautz has edited two recent debates that have attracted much attention and encouraging feedback. Now, when Karl is taking on the role of coordinating editor, Bjørn Erik Munkvold will continue the process of making the debate forum an important component in developing the journal. Fourth, we have implemented a new special issue procedure as to support and promote the publication of relevant and rigorous special issues in the journal. More information about this procedure can be found at the journal's website (www.e-sjis.org). Lastly, but not least important, we have improved the access to our journal. Our production team in Aalborg, headed by the production manager Peter Axel Nielsen, has taken and implemented a number of initiatives for increasing the visibility of contributions published in the journal. The launch of the new website with a complete archive of all articles, the registration as an open access journal, a print-on-demand deal with Amazon, and an agreement with EBSCO for making SJIS available in large library databases are examples of such initiatives.

The efforts listed above have been made to maintain and further strengthen the journal as an attractive publication outlet. We like to think that the increase in number of submissions the last couple of years reflects the successful implementation of these efforts. Given the 38 submissions received until November this year, the journal's acceptance rate is now between 15 and 20 percent. We believe that this is a level that balances the dual goal of publishing high-quality research and being available to the community that the journal serves. As suggested above, however, the balance between quality and availability is an ever present challenge for a journal such as the SJIS.

On a final note, it has been a great honor to serve on the SJIS editorial board. The journal will soon celebrate its 20 years anniversary, which makes it more experienced than most journals in the information systems discipline.

Looking forward 20 years from now, I trust that the journal will still play an important role in the IS community. This confidence is not least based on the rewarding experience of working with Eric Monteiro, Jesper Simonsen, and Virpi Tuunainen as well as the board members responsible for the coming years' further cultivation of the journal: Karl Kautz (coordinating editor), Rikard Lindgren, Bjørn Erik Munkvold, and Matti Rossi.

