

Editorial 32(3): (i) New .au namespace; (ii) Google Scholar searches for IIER articles; (iii) An editor's lament

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auDA welcomes new .au namespace - .au direct

At first glance, this heading may seem quite out of place for IIER, but if I add the keywords "irritating administrivia" and "editorial timewaster" the purpose for the anecdote below may become clearer. This timewaster started with an email from Australia's Internet domain name administrator on 10 August 2022, addressed to rjatkinson@bigpond.com, announcing:

The .au Domain Administration (auDA) [1], recently launched Australia's newest domain namespace - .au direct. The new namespace provides eligible registrants the option to register domain names directly before the .au for the first time [2]

... Please note that if you choose not to register the direct match of your domain name in the new namespace by 20 September, it will become available to other eligible persons from that date.

That needed follow up, especially after a dire warning came from IIER's domain name provider, Webcentral (Figure 1), reminding us that some other entity may register the domain "iier.au" (though others cannot register "iier.org.au")



Figure 1: Graphic promotion "Stop the copycats" (from <https://www.webcentral.au/>, 10 August 2022)

For international readers, we have to add that auDA does not conduct domain name registrations. Applicants have to use "an accredited .au registrar", an entity "authorised by auDA to provide services to people who want to register a new .au domain name, renew their existing .au domain name, or make changes to their .au domain name record." [3] These accredited registrars charge for their services; in the case of iier.org.au, our current charge is \$41.95 for a two year period. However, if we sought to register "iier.au" we would need to pay another \$41.95. A doubling, no less! After some timewasting to ascertain that iier.au would incur a new payment, we elected to 'let the copycats in', so iier.au can be bought by others. I can understand that (for example), the owners of abcplumbing.com.au (an "already taken" domain) may feel obliged to buy abcplumbing.au (on "Priority Hold"), but in the case of iier.org.au we will take the risk. However, we do feel obliged to add another sentence to IIER's "Notes for intending authors" to emphasise, *do not omit "org"* [4].

The 'push' to sell '.au direct' seemed to intensify as the 20 September deadline approached. For example,

Action required to protect your corporate identity...

... While the change to shorter domain names is designed to simplify, cyber criminals are rubbing their collective hands together with the chance of financial gain by perpetrating identity theft to deceive customers, contractors and members associated with the business or organisation... [5]

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Bruce Billson, said businesses needed to take action now to avoid their internet identities potentially being sold to someone else...

... The consequences for a small or family business could be massive if impersonators, web name squatters or cyber criminals take up domain names just like theirs... [6]

This is not IIER's first encounter with this kind of "hurry, hurry" attempt to sell. We experienced an episode in May 2017 when "China Name Registry" sought to sell us registrations of iier.org.cn, iier.cn and various others in the .cn domain. As far as I can ascertain, no adverse consequences have arisen from my polite refusal in 2017, over 5 years ago. Amazingly, "China Name Registry" tried the same sales effort in 2020! [7]. According to a search on 12 September 2022 [8], the domains iier.com, iier.eu, iier.in, iier.it are not available, but various others are available, including iier.org.cn, iier.asia, iier.hk, iier.uk, iier.de, and iier.ru.

The keywords "irritating administrivia" and "editorial timewaster" declared above reflect my feeling that the business ethics underlying auDA and its accredited registrars have allowed an opportunity to increase revenue whilst incurring only a miniscule increase in their costs. This Co-editor agrees whole-heartedly with *Wikipedia's* "Oxymoron" page that gives two mentions to "business ethics", outranking "military intelligence" with only one mention. [9] However, on the positive side, we acknowledge *Journal of Business Ethics* as a highly-respected publication, first issue dated February 1982 [10]. Much longer established than IIER, and cited a number of times in IIER 32(3)!

However, another "however" arose after I succumbed to the temptation to explore auDA further, by responding to their invitation, "Become an auDA Member" [1] (no membership fee!). Perhaps becoming an "insider" with respect to auDA would enable insights into the reasons why auDA initiated '.au direct'? I could not find any information about my main question, "Why did auDA not offer a free and enduring gifting of ".au direct" to existing, current registrants (e.g. free 'iier.au' for IIER as holder of 'iier.org.au', and similarly for other organisations in the .org.au domain)? The cost to auDA would be miniscule (just some minor adjustments to computer programs and documentation). No luck on that question, or on potential supplementary questions such as, "What is auDA's annual income per individual domain name registration (such as 'iier.org.au')?"; or "How much of the \$41.95 per two year period we pay to Webcentral for 'iier.org.au' goes to auDA?", but some interesting information emerged from auDA's most recent annual report [11]:

Revenue from operations for the year ended 30 June 2021 was \$18,381,818 (2020: \$13,734,755). The result for the year ended 30 June 2021 is a profit of \$10,901,331 (2020: \$2,395,187). (p. 54)
 ... auDA demonstrates its commitment to transparency and accountability through regular, comprehensive corporate reporting and robust governance. (p. 2)

Not wanting to spend precious time on researching business profits in Australia, I cannot be sure, but "a profit of \$10,901,331" from revenue of \$18,381,818 seems to be a very unusually large, or even phenomenal margin. It seems very "robust", but does it raise a question about the claimed "commitment to transparency and accountability" (p.2)?

Google Scholar searches for IIER articles: A curiosity from Informit

In Editorial 31(1), under the heading "Google search supporting IIER editorial activities", we outlined a procedure that is a long established and a much used, routine part of editorial work [12]. However, a year or two ago, we started to notice the database activities of *Informit*, an Australian-based company that grew from a service originally created for students, academics and librarians at Melbourne's RMIT University [13]. The notes below, derived from a very recent investigation, provide an illustration of Informit's database activities.

During a routine composing of advice, I used the following Google Scholar search (copy and paste into web reader address box):

https://scholar.google.com.au/scholar?as_q=teachers+research+schools+Philippines&as_epq=&as_oq=&as_eq=&as_occt=any&as_sauthors=&as_publication=%22issues+in+educational+research%22&as_ylo=2016&as_yhi=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5

This search found "About 36 results since 2016", including the one screen-pictured in Figure 2 as an example.

Learning from teaching: Teacher sense-making on their research and school-based professional development [PDF] iier.org.au
 SB Gutierrez - [Issues in Educational Research, 2019 - search.informit.org](https://search.informit.org)
 ... **Philippines, teacher research** and **school**-based PD is an emerging model whose impacts are evident when **teachers** ... However, considering the **research** component, **teachers** need ...
 ☆ Save 📄 Cite Cited by 6 Related articles All 8 versions

Figure 2: First excerpt from a Google Scholar search 20 September 2022

Clicking upon the "Learning from teaching ..." link screen-pictured in Figure 2 led to an Informit page, address, a portion of which is screen pictured in Figure 3:

<https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/INFORMIT.721847010893593>

It is notable that 34 of the 36 results found contained the word "search.informit.org" (end third line in Figure 2), including the first 29. The 34 results all linked to an "informit.org" page, and only 2 linked directly to IIER's website. Strangely, the links to [PDF] or

[HTML] (top right corner in Figure 2) functioned correctly (i.e. took the readers to the IIER website). Many similar examples may be found readily. Why is this so?

In the parlance common to one niche in the Internet business world, this shows the main goal of "SEO" (search engine optimisation) being realised, namely "first page on Google". Notwithstanding the claims made by some purveyors of SEO, "first page" on Google seems to be readily achievable. Pay Google! As to how, and how much, that's a question we would like to put to Informit, because IIER editorial staff lack the funds and the time to investigate "pay per click", or whatever constitutes the basis for business deals, if any, between Informit and Google.

The screenshot shows the Informit website interface. At the top left is the Informit logo. To the right are search and shopping cart icons. Below the logo, it says 'No access | Issues in Educational Research | Other Journal Article | 01 October 2019'. The main title of the article is 'Learning from teaching: Teacher sense-making on their research and school-based professional development' by Sally Baricaua Gutierrez. Below the title are icons for sections, document, quote, star, wrench, and share. On the right side, there is a 'PUBLICATION DETAILS' sidebar showing a thumbnail of the article and the date of publication as 'January 2019'.

Figure 3: Second excerpt from a Google Scholar search 20 September 2022

Another strange feature which perhaps we should investigate is that the "Informit problem" seems to occur only with Google Scholar searches that specify publication "issues in educational research". It does not occur with Google searches specifying domain ".iier.org.au", but we use such searches only occasionally, because a Google search does not cater for the time frame that very often we want to specify, namely "since 2016", or "since 2017", etc. The reasons for using such a specification are explained in Editorial 30(2) [14], which included a terse phrase about limiting IIER acceptances by

... imposing a more severe rationing based on the criterion "topic and context already well-represented in IIER" [14]

This is one criterion concerning IIER acceptance, among other, more usual academic criteria, and it is usually qualified by reference to "recent issues of IIER", where recent may be "since 2016", or "since 2017", etc. However, the "Informit problem" is more concerning than a simple impediment to IIER Editorial staff use of Google Scholar searches, for reasons revealed by further investigating Figure 3, especially the dates

appearing in it, the "locked padlock" graphic (second line, upper left), the "shopping cart" graphic (first line, upper right), and the graphics in the last line.

The dates "01 October 2019", "January 2019", and "04 November" (elsewhere in the page, not included in Figure 3) are incorrect. The correct and only relevant date is 10 October 2019. The "locked padlock" graphic which usually signifies closed access, subscription or other form of payment required, is incorrect and seriously misleading. IIER is open access, as specified by the *Creative Commons* licence "BY ND" [15]. Payments are not required and thus the "shopping cart" graphic is not applicable to IIER.

The first of the graphics in the last line of Figure 3 (text labels not preserved for this screen picture) represents "download PDF", but it leads to an "Add to cart", "Buy now AUD 19.95" prompt. Would anyone "Buy now", when it is clear, or should be clear, that IIER's intention has been very firmly stated?

Publication in IIER is free, that is, IIER does not require any payment of page or publication charges by authors. IIER is an open access journal, that is all content is freely available over the Internet to any reader. [15]

The second of the graphics in the last line of Figure 3 represents "Export citation", which is similar to IIER's "Please cite as", except for one especially important difference. Informit gives an incorrect address, which if used leads into the "Add to cart", "Buy now AUD 19.95" prompt:

<https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.721847010893593>

The correct, enduring and only appropriate address is that assigned by the publisher, namely <http://www.iier.org.au/iier29/gutierrez.pdf>, and this failure to conform is very likely in breach of *Creative Commons* licence "BY ND" [16]. The embedded DOI "10.3316/informit.721847010893593" is invalid. IIER does not provide DOIs, for reasons outlined in Editorial 27(2) [17].

Should we be concerned? The Informit "Metrics" for the example outlined above state "Downloaded 0 times", so does it matter? Further investigation is needed into the question of whether 'best practice' in academic publishing is being attained. This is idle speculation, but as IIER is only one of "175 results for Databases: A+Education" (which is only one of about 12 Informit databases), could our findings arise from an inadequately supervised AI (artificial intelligence) program that is scanning IIER's website and not getting it right? A curiosity!

An editor's lament

Readers with journal editorial experience are invited to empathise, along with me, over a 'lament' posted by Ian Dobson, Editor *Australian Universities' Review*, on 1 March 2016 [18]. That is over six years ago, so there arises a question, has 'life as an editor' improved since then?

A case of double publishing?

Editing is a stimulating and mostly rewarding activity for those of us lucky enough to have been able to include it in their university life. However, certain aspects of an editor's role can be a time-wasting pain in the fundament. Most editors find they have enough to occupy their time, correcting style and references errors that authors should have done, chasing slow reviewers and generally helping to improve the articles submitted (if and as required). Speaking from experience, one's energy starts to wane after this. ["this" is followed by a detailed, thoughtful reflection on a difficult editorial task]

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