

Pythagoras is going places ...

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You will be very much aware that this issue of Pythagoras is very late.

I very much apologise!

I will be franc and admit that I underestimated the task! I was overwhelmed and underprepared for the task!

I underestimated the amount of time that needs to be invested to just manage the day-to-day editor's task – acknowledging receipt of submissions, finding suitable reviewers, distributing the papers to reviewers, following up reviewers, chewing on different evaluations, giving feedback to authors. I found that I needed good organisational skills to manage – store files and e-mails and find them again! Truth is that my little system basically crashed and my communication with eager authors and reluctant reviewers faltered.

I underestimated the specialised knowledge needed for the task – I still had to *learn* how to edit a journal. It takes time to establish procedures and policies, e.g. about the so-called journal house style. So I had to learn much on my own, mostly by learning from others. Suddenly I was reading the APA manual and downloaded the Gaurdian Style Book!

It has been suggested that editing Pythagoras is not for an amateur working in his “free time”, but that AMESA should hand over Pythagoras to some publishing house so that it can be done professionally. However, it is clear that it will escalate costs and it will probably then not be possible to continue offering Pythagoras as a “free” benefit to members. Therefore it is not the route to go.

However, it will be necessary for AMESA to invest more in Pythagoras to develop an infrastructure and involve more people.

The AMESA Council has accepted my proposal to appoint three associate editors. They are Michael de Villiers (UKZN), Anthony Essien (Wits) and Dirk Wessels (Stellenbosch). I am sure that this larger team must be more effective. We will start by re-building a database of reviewers and streamlining our procedures and policies ...

Council has voted that we establish a little office for Pythagoras in my building, with a little infrastructure and administrative support. I also have the support of the Dean of Education for the Pythagoras office. This should help in being more efficient!

Council has made the principled decision to go the open access route, where Pythagoras will be freely available to everyone. Pythagoras is already available online to members and buyers through Sabinet. We will now also join African Journals Online. We are starting a new website where Pythagoras will be freely available. To do this, we will be using an open source journal management program that will streamline the process. Nearly everything should happen “automatically”: authors will submit their papers online, the program will acknowledge receipt, then suggest reviewers, send the paper with a covering letter to reviewers, reviewing will likewise be online, etc.

There are also national initiatives to improve the quality of South African journals, e.g. the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) has established a Committee on Scholarly Publishing in SA and they have an annual National Scholarly Editors' Forum. I have therefore become a member of an active community of editors, and I find that very supportive.

All in all, I am very confident that we are building a structure where Pythagoras will go from strength to strength – improving its quality while simultaneously becoming more accessible to more authors and to its readers.