Editorial

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We are pleased to present the third issue of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* published in 2014, as last May we published a Special Issue on E-learning in the Disciplines of Economics and Business Studies. Whenever the opportunity arises to do so, from now on we will publish one monothematic Special Issue a year in addition to the regular January and July issues.

As usual, this issue has two sections; one contains research articles related to the journal's thematic areas, and the other is a Special Section focusing on a highly relevant and interesting topic. Coordinated by guest editors who are experts in that topic, the Special Section contains a selection of the best articles received following the Call for Papers made a year in advance of the issue's publication.

Special Section: Open Educational Resources Initiatives in Oceania

Welcome to this inaugural *dehub*-sponsored Special Section of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal*, in which we present five articles to update you about Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives in the broader Oceania region of the southern hemisphere. Over the past decade, there has been a steady increase in the number of OER available and in the number of institutions providing OER online, and concepts of open content, open data and open access have come to the fore. Several factors are both stimulating and enabling this development of more open and accessible education: technology, knowledge as a common good, greater government transparency, high unemployment, the need for lifelong learning, rising demand for flexibility in learning provision, the massification of education and rising higher education costs. Openness in education, with its underlying principles of sharing and egalitarianism, could conceivably broaden access to information and knowledge and, hence, has captured the attention of mainstream education. More recently, MOOCs, especially, have enjoyed considerable press. So, we thought to highlight instead the underlying, more established Open Education Movement and its erstwhile sentiments of collegiality, sharing and access to education for all, which provided the original impetus and groundwork for disruptive innovations such as MOOCs.

This issue includes an introductory article by our guest editors, Dr Rosalind James and Dr Carina Bossu, who briefly outline the context of the changing higher education sector and then provide an overview of the development of the OER movement and suggest future promises and challenges for OER and Open Educational Practice in higher education. OER create multiple opportunities to innovate in learning and teaching, and the five papers in this Special Section showcase pedagogical innovations, developments in learning design and theory, new approaches to open practice and policy reforms. They describe various new forms and definitions of openness, reflecting on some of their potential consequences, and look at different, new, multi-directional learning approaches that are being adopted in the context of such open environments in the Asia/Pacific region. They also examine the

challenges of incorporating emergent technologies and how this is influencing the design of learning and learning environments. There are indications of adoption of an open approach; however, OER research is a relatively young field, which is still being articulated and defined, and there remains much to discover about learners, teachers and learning in open online education.

Our authors share experiences from Australia and the Pacific. It is unfortunate that we could not garner more engagement from Asia, but we believe that, for those interested, the bibliographies in these papers will provide an introduction to some of the less familiar publications from the southern hemisphere that report on the considerable OER initiatives (such as the OERAsia organisation) occurring across the Asian countries in our region of the globe. We hope that this Special Section will stimulate your own thinking about the future of tertiary education in general, and the affordances of OER for transforming practice and widening access to information and knowledge in particular.

Miscellaneous Research Articles Section

In the miscellaneous Research Articles Section, we have published five very diverse articles. The first is by Dr Claudio Rama from the University of Enterprise (UDE), Uruguay, who has conducted an interesting study on the online education situation in Latin American universities. Dr Rama is a lecturer and has an expert knowledge of the reality of technology-intensive education in Latin America, and his contribution will undoubtedly become a work of reference for researchers in this geographic area. We have also published two articles resulting from research conducted on the application of technology to classrooms in two universities. One presents a proposal for practical activities in e-learning environments and was produced by Dr Colombo and Dr Gómez, both of whom are lecturers at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC), Spain; the other shows the results obtained from an analysis of digital tablet use in programmes adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is the article by Prof. Sevillano and the lecturer Dr Vázquez from the National University of Distance Education (UNED), Spain. In this section, you will also find the article by Prof. M. R. Buxarrais and the lecturers F. Esteban and T. Mellen, which is the result of an analysis performed on a case study about lecturers' conceptions of ethics education in the EHEA. The final article in this section analyses the bibliometric profile of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal*.

Bibliometric Profile of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society*

The bibliometric study of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* was conducted by M. T. Ramiro, T. Ramiro and R. Alba, who are members of the EC3 research group at the University of Granada (UGR), Spain. The EC3 research group's lines of research include the evaluation of science in Spain, the evaluation of scholarly journals, and bibliometric studies and methodologies. It is also the research group responsible for the development of the IN-RECS index for Spanish Social Sciences journals.

The bibliometric study of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* provides us with data that are not only very interesting, but also extremely useful for the journal's future. To begin with, we would like to highlight the fact that the study clearly demonstrates the journal's positive evolution as regards indexing and impact factor. There are a number of elements that, in our opinion, are worthy of note. First, the study shows that *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* is an international journal. This is so not only because it publishes in English, as that alone

would not be sufficient for the journal's internationalisation, but also because it publishes articles by researchers the world over, with research outcomes from universities on every continent. An example of this is the Special Section published in this issue, on OER initiatives in Broader Oceania. The internationalisation of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* is the result of a clear openness strategy for the journal. Since 2013, the co-edition of the journal with the University of New England (UNE), Australia, has built upon earlier achievements to make *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* truly international. Internationalisation coupled with the higher standards of quality achieved over the past 10 years have enabled the journal to hold its place in the most prestigious Social Sciences database – SCOPUS – for the last four years.

Second, the study shows that *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* has managed to maintain a well-defined and delimited thematic focus: e-learning and universities in the Network Society.

Furthermore, we believe that it is important to point out the tendency to publish more and more articles resulting from empirical research in *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal*. This places the journal in a position of being suitable for the dissemination of research on e-learning and universities.

Third, the study shows that the increase in both the number of articles published each year and the number of empirically based articles may not produce satisfactory results in traditional impact factor indices. We are mindful of this, but our goal is to prioritise the journal's thematic research focus and to serve the research community by publishing more articles each year. Although we will have to keep a close eye on the evolution of the journal's impact factor, we know that the dissemination of quality research is a clear objective of the journal, over and above that factor as measured by certain indices. Thus, our endeavours are focused on attracting, selecting and publishing the best studies within the thematic areas of *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal*.

RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal is awarded the Scientific Journal Quality Seal by the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)

Finally, we would like to share some excellent news with *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* readers. In FECYT's fourth call for the assessment of the editorial and scientific quality of Spanish scientific journals, *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* successfully met all the requirements.

This meant that, after a rigorous process of assessment undertaken by FECYT, *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* was awarded the FECYT Scientific Journal Quality Seal. We would like to congratulate and thank all the authors and collaborators who have placed their in trust in *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal* from the very outset; by doing so, they have made its evolution and continuing improvement possible.

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