

# Reflections, Anxieties, Developments & Quality: Editorial, Volume 6, Part 2

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*Perhaps a lunatic was simply a minority of one. At one time it had been a sign of madness to believe that the Earth goes around the sun; today, to believe that the past is unalterable. He might be alone in holding that belief, and if alone, then a lunatic. But the thought of being a lunatic did not greatly trouble him; the horror was that he might also be wrong. (Orwell, 1984)*

## Introduction

Welcome to the Twelfth edition of *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*. This issue we once again bring you a selection of new thinking and insights drawn from emerging scholars from across the disciplinary spectrum. Being a scholarly researcher can be a challenging and, at times, unsettling experience, especially when it comes to exposing your thought to the wider world's scrutiny through your first publications. Doubtlessly we've all heard that inner voice, whispering doubts in the dark of the night, suffered outbreaks of imposter syndrome or faced professional reputation anxiety. It's a common component of the learning journey for early career and post-graduate researchers alike. Certainly, like Orwell's Winston Smith, I've known those moments of trepidation as I release a manuscript (or new issue) into 'the wild', that some hitherto unknown flaw or inaccuracy might be revealed. Naturally, this anxiety is one of the many important reasons why submitting your work to peer-review actually serves to improve and sharpen your scholarship, although it is only natural to be concerned about exactly *what* reviewers and editors may have to say.

At Exchanges we always encourage our reviewers as they cast their critical eye over work, to ensure they recall their role to help authors improve their academic voice. As an early career focussed journal, given our own experiences of trepidation and anxiety over publications, our editors also strive to support authors through this process. Hopefully, those authors appearing in this issue have had as stress-free and empowering a publication experience as we could offer. As Editor-in-Chief I'm always keen to hear suggestions about how we might make this experience even better for future authors, so please do get in touch.

So, on behalf of my Editorial Board and myself, I hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as we have. Moreover, we can all appreciate these authors' candour and courage, in choosing to listen to their better angels, and expose their thoughts within a more public sphere.

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## Anniversary Reflections

In recent weeks, as I've been pulling this issue together with the help of my editorial team, I passed the milestone of my first anniversary helming the journal. It's a moment which gave me the perfect excuse to take stock and reflect on progress. Perhaps the biggest fundamental change we've seen resulted from one of my earliest decisions, to consciously-uncouple from the Warwick brand, and make the title less about scholars local to our base of operations and more inclusive for those around the world. While our statistics show the majority of articles submitted to *Exchanges* have to date always come from Warwick's researchers, I've been delighted as work from globally located scholars have increasingly been submitted for consideration (**fig 1**). Notably, we've seen a distinct uptick in manuscripts emerging from beyond the anglophone western academy realm. This is something which presents new challenges for the editorial team, in terms of ensuring our standards of grammatical and linguistic quality are maintained. Nevertheless, I believe these efforts are worthwhile for improving the published scholarship, along with helping authors' own written experience.

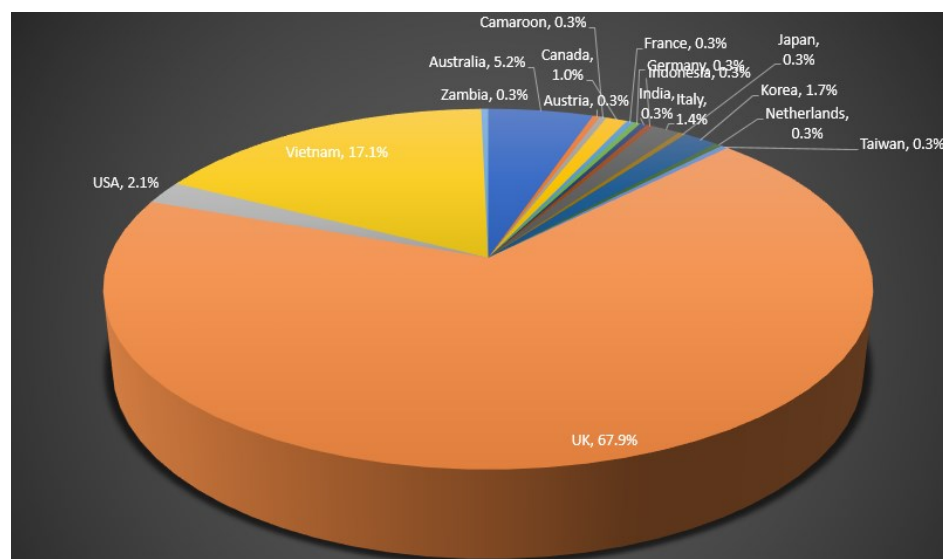


Figure 1: *Exchanges* Author Submission Locations (2011-2018)

The past year has also seen changes in my Editorial Board's membership, as a number of experienced editors stood down, although new members have been recruited to maintain the Board's strength. In keeping with our international stance, many of these new editors are increasingly drawn from outside the UK, and I believe their contributions will help further enrich Exchanges' operations alongside expanding our audience reach. There have also been various incremental improvements to the platform we run Exchanges on (PKP's *Open Journal System*), most of which have improved the efficacy of our operational processes. Perhaps more visible to readers, authors and reviewers, has been the wholesale revision of the guidance provided on our site. Given some of this material had remained unrefined since the founding days of the journal, reworking it was a laborious but essential early task for myself, but one which I hope served to improve the clarity and coherence of the information provided.

There's also been an increase in the direct and distributed marketing we do for Exchanges, along with establishing various social media presences. For many scholars, marketing can be somewhat of a dirty word, but in an academic publication environment replete with journals competing for readers and authors' attentions alike, ensuring people know about our title remains a key activity for the whole Editorial Board. That's alongside the efforts we make to raise the visibility of every single article and author published in Exchanges too. This is one of the reasons why, starting this issue, we're providing a little more background information about individual authors, to help in further raising their professional profiles. Interestingly, quite a few times our marketing endeavours have involved a personal appearance at a conference or contributing to a workshop, here and abroad. This is something I especially enjoy, as it provides a great opportunity to speak directly to our various academic audiences in an informal and formal settings. Going forward into my second year, I can only encourage any readers, institutions or conferences who'd like to hear directly from myself or Editorial Board members about Exchanges' activities, to get in touch. We would love to speak with you.

It's worth highlighting here something I mentioned in the previous editorial which sprung forth from one of these engagements (**Johnson, 2018**). This was a collaboration with Warwick's renowned *Politics and International Studies* department to develop an essential guide to peer-review. Generously funded through the EU's *PLOTINA* project's outputs, this work is specifically targeted at meeting post-graduate and early career researchers' concerns about engaging as peer-reviewers for the first time. After emerging from review and final editorial discussions, it finally saw publication last month as a fully open-access work (**Johnson et al, 2019**). If you're an early career researcher about to, or considering, getting

involved in peer-review for any title, or funding body, for the first time, you may well find this publication is a resource worth consulting.

Naturally, as a scholar-led open access journal we have also been keeping an ever-watchful eye on two big external developments which are likely to impact upon academic publishing. The first, Brexit, I'm not going to talk about, given far more informed and eloquent scholars than myself have written on the topic (**Ayris, 2017**). The other big development is the work of cOAlition S (**2019**) and their *Plan S* initiative. If you've not been following the debate closely, then briefly speaking this is a research funder-led effort to encourage greater take-up of open access publishing. In the UK it arguably represents the most strident attempt to flip a greater proportion of commercial journal titles over to open-access since the flurry of initiatives stemming from *The Finch Report* (**Finch, 2012, Szomszor, 2019**). As with every element of academic publishing, there are a myriad of reactions, concerns, issues and uncertainties stemming from the various stakeholder groups (**Eve, 2019**). Indeed, even within these groups it's not uncommon to spot diametrically opposed positions over the efficacy, desirability or practicality of Plan S' implementation. I'm glad to say, that Exchanges, to the best of my current understanding of the scheme's requirements, is Plan S compliant. So, my own concerns with the initiative remain ones of scholarly interest rather than practical uncertainties. Nevertheless, interesting and possibly turbulent times lie ahead for many aspects of scholarly publishing practices.

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## Articles

Turning now to the main body of this issue, as we are delighted to bring you four main articles and a new critical reflection too. Firstly, **Eirini Veroni** reports on her investigations into the challenges of raising a child with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in Greece. Her paper explores the results of a mixed-method based project, utilising a semi-structured questionnaire-based approach, to better understand the social stigma faced by parents of children with this disorder. Interestingly, the paper also comments on the associated impacts upon support services and broader educational programmes related to ASD, which have arisen as a consequence of Greece's ongoing period of financial austerity ([1](#)).

Our next author casts their perceptions even further to the east, as **Ahmad Rahma** tackles the fascinating topic of Indonesian educational policy's decentralisation, by scrutinising the literature and discourse concerning it. Since its instigation in the early 2000s, the shift away from a centralised educational policy by the government has been perceived as responsible for transforming secondary education in the country. Notably, Indonesia's

diverse geographical and cultural milieu means that the prior ‘one-size fits all’ approach, represented a poor fit for the disparate needs of schoolchildren and educators alike. However, Rahma suggests while some advantages have been conferred through the new decentralisation policy approach, practically, for many educators, many obstacles and challenges remained. As such this article offers a number of suggestions for overcoming these issues ([30](#)).

A change of pace for our next article, as **Chi Cuong Tran** and colleagues explore issues around automated disease detection within the Vietnamese shrimp farming industry. Here the yellow head virus is a particular problem and finding novel and automated ways to detect it in a timely manner, along with bringing new efficiencies to the food industry. Tran explores in particular an image processing approach, utilising the Raspberry Pi platform. The research seemingly indicates that image detection methods utilising subject colour as key identification technique proffer notable advantages over prior approaches ([48](#)).

Staying in the far east, our last research article this issue is from **Xintong Lu**. This research has been examining issues around undergraduate students’ social relationships, interpersonal communication and the psychological health. Drawing on Bandura’s seminal work, Lu’s research contrasts the occurrence of Jing’s Interpersonal Communication Efficacy (ICE) concept within domestic and international students studying at Chinese universities. Interestingly Lu uncovers a greater prevalence of interdependence and interpersonal communication between the domestic students in her sample. As such, this suggests appreciating interpersonal communicative cultural variances would be beneficial within university educational support and training activities ([64](#)).

### **Critical Reflections**

We close the main body of the journal with an article on a topic close to my professional heart: practical event organisation. In another in our series of always popular critical reflections **Matthew Bradbury** and colleagues introduce a critical lens to the organisation of the annual *Warwick Postgraduate Colloquium in Computer Science*. In particular the piece explores recent organisational and practical revisions to a long established, and much valued by delegates, event in terms of the increased resource, scheduling and labour impacts upon the organisers. The article concludes by exploring lessons learned, and how organisers of similar postgraduate colloquia might benefit from their experiences ([86](#)).

## Exchanges Index

Beyond the articles, you'll find one more piece included in this issue. I confess as a former academic librarian, the lack of any index to Exchanges has been something which has nibbled away at my attention over the past year. Hence, you'll find as a final appendix to this issue and volume 6, an article and author index to all issues of Exchanges published to date. Hopefully, this might prove to be a handy and informative jumping off point for readers old and new alike to delve into the treasure trove of works we've published since 2013 ([102](#)).

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## In-between Spaces: Thematic Call for Papers:

*This is Major Tom to Ground Control, I'm stepping through the door. And I'm floating in a most peculiar way, and the stars look very different, today.*  
(Bowie, Space Oddity)

As scholars we are often focussed directly upon examining and understanding specific objects, cultures, properties or thinking. Yet, there is also incredible value in considering what lies between, outside or around our subject focus. Why focus on the destination, when it is the journey which can shape our perceptions? Why focus on the subject, when it is the space they occupy which shapes their perceptions, preconceptions and presumptions? Why consider the nucleus, when it is the disparate forces which prescribe its existence? Hence, what surrounds us, can often define, shape, or influence; in all manner of unexpected and revelatory ways. From liminal spaces providing places of transition between what was and what will be, through marginalia, paradata and metadata to vacuums (false or otherwise) or negative-space; that which encloses often provides access to unique and often overlooked revelations as much as our normative focuses of attention.

*He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you.* (Nietzsche, Beyond Good & Evil)

This is why for the issue of Exchanges **to be published Spring 2020**, we are inviting authors to submit original, exciting, insightful research-based articles addressing some aspect of *in-between spaces*: however you or your disciplinary traditions conceptualise them. Exchanges especially welcomes articles tackling this topic by multiple authors with contrasting positions or from disparate fields. The Editorial Board and I are available to discuss article concepts or outline ideas further.

The deadline for submissions is **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019**.

## General Submissions: Open Call for Papers

Additionally, *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal* **welcomes submissions 365 days a year** on any subject, outside of the requirements of our themed calls. We therefore invite manuscript contributions from researchers or learned practitioners from any discipline, anywhere in the world, which fulfil our **standard article format** requirements. We are happy to receive traditional research or review articles, but we also especially welcome submissions of **interviews with key scholars** or **critical reflections** on important scholarly events, conferences or crucial new texts. More information on all of these article formats are available on the Exchanges website. Likewise, all members of the Editorial Board are also available to further explore article ideas.

As Exchanges has a mission to support the development and dissemination of research by early career and post-graduate researchers, we are particularly pleased to receive manuscripts from emerging scholars. Please note, as our readership has strong interests in work which encompasses or straddles disciplinary boundaries, prospective authors are strongly encouraged to consider how their manuscripts address a broader, interdisciplinary audience.

Exchanges is a diamond open access (**Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013**), scholar-led journal, which means there are no author fees or reader subscription charges. Authors also retain copyright over their work but grant Exchanges first right of publication as a submission requirement. Contact any member of the Editorial Board or see our online guidelines for more information about submitting to Exchanges.

<https://exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/about/submissions>

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## Forthcoming Issues

Normally, I'd highlight the next regular issue of Exchanges here (expected autumn 2019), but I'd thought instead I'd share the rather exciting news of two forthcoming special issues. Both stem from international conferences, and will showcase a range of articles from early career researchers from around the globe. The first issue draws on the *Bites Here and There* conference (**Warwick, 2018**), held in November 2018. This interdisciplinary and international conference explored the 'evolution and the different uses of the tropes and figures of cannibalism across both time and disciplines'. Submissions associated with this conference are already starting to undergo review at time of writing, with many more manuscript submissions expected soon. This special issue is currently scheduled for publication during January 2020



The second special issue will showcase papers from speakers at the *Utopia, Dystopia and Climate Change* conference (**Utopian Studies Society, 2019**), to be held July 2019 at Monash University's Prato Campus, Italy. I'm delighted to report I've been invited to attend the conference in my capacity as Editor, so hope to spend some engaging days chatting with the speakers about their work and publication plans. This issue is currently scheduled for publication in September/October 2020, with a submission deadline for late 2019.

There have also been very tentative conversations about publishing a bilingual issue of *Exchanges*, in collaboration with an American university. You can be sure I'll revisit these various developments in future editorials, and more regularly in the *Exchanges* blog. Nevertheless, in the meanwhile we look forward to publishing our next regular issue of *Exchanges* (Volume 7.1) this autumn.

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## **Acknowledgements**

As always, my thanks to our authors and reviewers for the vital and continued contribution of their intellectual labour in the creation of this latest issue. Without you, the ability to produce a quality-assured, peer-reviewed, scholar-led publication would quite simply not be possible. Thanks also to our reader community, who play a key role in developing the debates and insights raised in each issue. I hope you find this issue as stimulating, thought-provoking and perhaps challenging as previous volumes.

My thanks also to the Editorial Board, especially our newest member, Dr Sven Van Kerckhoven (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), for their input and comments, along with their dedication, focus and commitment they each bring to producing this interdisciplinary research organ. You may be pleased to note some of our Editorial Board have relocated to other prestigious institutions, and we warmly applaud their continued collaboration with *Exchanges*.

Finally, thanks also to the University of Warwick's Library, for their continued advice, guidance and technological support for *Exchanges*. I'd also like to acknowledge Fiona O'Brien of the *Reinvention* journal for a number of stimulating conversations about scholar-led publishing over the past year.



## Continuing the Conversation

In the meantime, don't forget to stop by the [editorial blog](#), follow our [Twitter account](#) or join our new [Linked.In group](#) for the latest news, developments and insights about Exchanges. Please do come and join in the conversation, as we always love to hear the thoughts of our authors and readership communities. Alternatively, start a dialogue with myself via the email at the start of this article.

Editorial Blog: <https://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/exchangesias/>

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Gareth has been Exchanges' managing editor-in-chief since early 2018, with a varied prior career within academic libraries, drug research and project management. He originally read for a degrees in biomedical technology (Sheffield Hallam) and a masters in information management (Sheffield), before completing a doctorate in communications, culture and media at Nottingham Trent University. His research interests focus on the power-relationships and evolution of scholarly academic publication practices, viewed through critical social and political economic frameworks. Gareth is an outspoken proponent for greater academic agency through scholar-led publishing, along with being an expert in interpersonal and online communication, and distributed team-working practices.



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