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Editor-in-Chief**

Editorial

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Editorial by Editor in Chief

Welcome back to the *Systemist*. In 2012 the UKSS decided to move *Systemist* into the commercial arena. A good relationship had been developed with our American publisher IGI through earlier connections with another of their publications [IJITSA]. We created a new Systems journal entitled '*The International Journal of Systems and Society*'. We decided that to maintain the Society's connections to our long history and a clear link to our members we included *Systemist* within its covers. It is important to note that the UKSS retained ownership of *Systemist* and its associated Gold Medalists. The first edition of the *International Journal of Systems and Society* was published in 2014 and we published two editions per year until 2018. In 2018 a text was published with selected papers from earlier editions of the journal. These papers were developed further into chapters providing insightful accounts of Systems practice. This text is entitled '*Systems Research for Real World Problems*' and is published by igi Global.

In the past decade or so many commercial journals have incorporated a software system to underpin their editorial process. This has acted to create a disconnect between the editor and the publisher. There is a move away from the personal connections between the journal and the publishing editors in favour of a computer based 'system'. This has many advantages such as reducing the amount of administration that the editorial team have to undertake, but it sometimes causes frustration when the submission system is counter intuitive. The editors responsible for the processing of the paper such as checking references are often located thousands of miles from the home base of the journal. These, doubtless, well qualified colleagues may have little or no knowledge of subject matter nor of the history of the journal itself. This disconnect is highlighted further by the fact that the journal's academic editorial team are more or less powerless to intervene at any stage even when an author asks for assistance – the software may rule out an appeal about a technicality such as a rejection of the paper that has not been submitted as the software expects. We are not alone in voicing this frustration, I certainly did as EiC elsewhere, but contracts have been signed and there is no going back. I feel, and this is a personal view, that the situation is exacerbated by the interpretation we have made of the various research assessments that universities are subjected to. Despite what is meant by e.g. the REF guidelines, what happens is that papers are still judged by the star rating of the journal in which they are published. Most of these journals are run by a software submission and processing system. This means that career minded authors must submit to such journals despite the frustration they might experience with the automated processes.

The UKSS management team, decided that the new *Systemist* would pick up where it left off 7 years ago and produce a journal for our community. There are some

differences such as a new submission system to help authors. It will be embedded in the Systemist website and linked to the UKSS website. However, it is important to note that although the submission system is front ended by IT the editorial team are very much 'hands-on' and will communicate directly with authors throughout. The EiC and Managing Editor will be available to discuss difficulties or queries that our authors might experience.

The significant difference between the new *Systemist* and the previous incarnation is that Systemist will be published on-line and hard copy for those that require it. In the latter case this will incur a charge to the author to cover publishing costs. All papers will be at least double blind refereed and published papers will be open access following the publication on the UKSS web page.

In summary Systemist will:

1. Be published annually [There may be an additional copy for conference proceedings]
2. Provide, for members, a digital version of the complete journal sent directly to their email address and a complete hard copy will be made available for the British Library and for purchase. The cost of the hard copy will depend upon the prevailing publication costs. The on-line version will be displayed as the complete edition with journal citation references such as issue number, page numbers and etc. Note that authors will only be able to download their paper - not the whole edition. Each edition will be posted on the Web for those interested to discover
3. Have a human connection throughout the editorial chain
4. Editors will consider any topic using Systems or holistic approaches
5. Ensure proper refereeing is carried out, but the responsibility for the assertions and conclusions are those of the author and do not reflect the policy of the UKSS
6. Recruit editors from those members who have shown their active support for the journal and the Society. We do not seek to have a long list of referees as these are too often window dressing – I have found that often many so-called referees are reluctant to undertake refereeing yet are happy to have their name associated with a particular journal.
7. Will be edited and operated through the EiC and a Managing Editor assisted by a small team of commissioning editors.
8. Will stand alone pursuing quality publications and not become side-tracked by the requirements HE research exercises, SJR or Impact factor ratings.

This edition provides an insight into the breadth of Systems thinking and practice. We have papers from Philosophy, Critical Theory, Soft Systems, VSM and

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Technology. Our hope is to attract colleagues from other disciplines who approach their subject from a holistic perspective. We would like to hear from colleagues in Education, Health, Environment, Mathematics, as well as those in IT/IS, Management and Cybernetics as presently. If you know someone who you think uses 'Systems Thinking', even though they may not call it that, please encourage them to submit in a paper send it an opinion piece for our news letter

I hope that you enjoy this edition, good Systems thinking

Frank Stowell

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