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Thirty Years of Information Research

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April 2025 marked the 30th year anniversary of *Information Research*. To celebrate this occasion, the current issue of the journal is a special issue, filled with short contributions commemorating the impact the journal and its founder have had on the research field and its practitioners.

Established by Professor Tom Wilson in 1995, when the World Wide Web was still in its infancy, *Information Research* is one of the longest running journals in the field of Information Science. In 1995, Wilson envisioned a different type of scholarly journal that would have an online presence only, and, as such, provide free and open access to authors and readers alike – a significant step toward what would later be known as the Open Access and Open Science movements. As a result, there were no print copies of the journals on library shelves and no subscriptions to gain access to the journal. This was a complete change from the traditional pay-per-use model, which is still at the centre of academic publication now. By making *Information Research* a freely accessible journal which utilised the emerging Web, Wilson effectively helped increase equality in access to information among researchers.

In 2017, when Wilson's retirement from his position as a Senior Professor at the University of Borås was approaching, he helped the journal find a more permanent home at the university's Swedish School for Library and Information Science. When it took on the responsibility of managing the journal, the School – which now proudly owns the journal – made a commitment to safeguard the journal's legacy as a high-quality diamond Open Access journal for generations to come. In view of this resolve, the journal's management (in dialogue with Wilson, who would remain the journal's Editor-in-Chief a little while longer) has initiated a series of major changes to the journal, notably by moving its infrastructure and general workflow to that of Open Journal Systems in 2022-2023, and subsequently, by moving the hosting of that infrastructure to the Swedish National Library's *Publicera* publication platform.

This move has provided a great advantage for the journal, because the maintenance and hosting of its backend are no longer dependent on departmental funding, and can instead be included in the National Library's preservation strategies – a much more stable and sustainable long-term solution. As part of this preservation strategy, the journal's production team and the National Library's support staff are also currently working hard to move the journal's archives (1995-2022) to the new platform. This complex process will take some time, but we are convinced that everyone involved in the transfer (and not in the least, our authors and readers) will agree that it will have been worth the effort once we bring together all past issues of *Information Research* in one, sustainable, user-friendly repository.

When both Tom Wilson and Elena Maceviciute retired as Editor-in-Chief and Deputy Editor in 2024, we, Crystal Fulton (Emeritus Professor of University College Dublin, and now co-affiliated with the University of Borås) and Wout Dillen (Senior Lecturer at the University of Borås) enthusiastically took over Tom and Elena's respective roles, and have been trying to fill their very large shoes ever since. Together, and with a lot of help from our regional editors, copy-editors,

support staff, and in collaboration with the National library, we've tried to keep modernising the journal, updating our workflows and documentation, and making sure the journal stays relevant in today's academic landscape — while holding onto the powerful ethos the journal has built on for the last thirty years, and that has made it one of the leading research publication venues in the field of information science.

This work has included, among other things: revising our publication schedule to make space for a more regular stream of peer-reviewed full-paper proceedings of important conferences in the field; changing to a continuous publishing schedule, to ensure even earlier access to our state of the art publications; drastically simplifying our guidelines for authors; updating and greatly expanding our journal's policy documentation to make it more transparent and explicit; updating our Open Access policy to attach a freer copyright license to papers going forward; and investigating new and improved methods to credit our peer reviewers. We have also welcomed several new regional editors to our team, who critically work together with our authors and reviewers to ensure high quality publications, and recently we recruited a number of new copy editors to help distribute the workload and speed up the publication pipeline, narrowing the gap between submission and publication. Our readers may also have noticed our open call for more peer reviewers, who form such an essential part of our journal's quality assurance measures. We are happy to have already welcomed many new peer reviewers to the journal, and are always looking for more, so do consider signing up if you have not already!

With that call to action, we would like to take a moment to acknowledge all the hard work our team of regional editors, copy-editors, peer reviewers, and support staff perform on a daily basis, to keep the journal going, at every step of our publication pipeline. Almost all of this work is done as a labour of love on a purely voluntary basis, and we are very much aware that the continued existence of our diamond Open Access journal would simply be impossible without their dedication to academic service. So thank you all for your unfaltering engagement with our journal! Finally, we should also give our management team a well-deserved word of thanks. This includes Birgitta Wallin, who — among many other things — oversaw the journal's move to the Open Journal System infrastructure; Karen Hedvall, who recently became the Swedish School of Library and Information Science's Head of Department and is a great help with the journal's administration through that role; and especially also the journal's support staff: Anton Carlander Borgström (Managing Editor) and Ty Nilsson (Editorial Assistant), who move mountains for the journal behind the scenes. Thank you all!

There is a lot to celebrate for *Information Research*. For this special issue, we used a mix of targeted invitations and an open call for submissions to gather a series of short papers where authors share the impact Wilson and *Information Research* made on their own work and/or the field in general. As the format's name implies, these contributions are generally much shorter than contributions our regular readers are used to ingesting, and written in a more personal and informal style — which we thought appropriate for the occasion. Because of their more casual status, these invited papers were not externally peer-reviewed — although they were reviewed using an internal editorial review before they were accepted and published.

The issue begins with two introductory pieces. First, in Hedvall et al.'s opening contribution, titled '*Information Research* comes to Borås', the authors (all present and former members of the Swedish School of Library and Information Science) provide some useful context about the journal's move to the University of Borås, and reflect on what this move has meant for the Department. This contribution is followed by an interview between 'Editors-in-Chief', where current Editor-in-Chief Crystal Fulton interviews her illustrious predecessor, Tom Wilson. In the interview, Fulton invites Wilson to reflect on the early years of the journal's existence, its evolution over the last thirty years, and to look toward both the journal's and the discipline's futures.

After these two introductions to the journal's past, present, and future, we move on to three short papers that focus specifically on *Information Research* as an Open Access research publication – a theme that also featured heavily in Hedvall et al. and Fulton & Wilson. In the first, Yoon & Chung treat *Information Research* as an example to highlight the potential of diamond Open Access publishing, while in the second Hawamdeh et al. examine *Information Research* and two other early digital publishing initiatives (*First Monday*, and the *Journal of Digital Information*) as catalysts for the democratization of access to information and reshaping the information field. In the third, Rodriguez-Munoz et al. use their reflection on Wilson's trailblazing strategy to turn *Information Research* into a diamond Open Access research publication *avant la lettre* to examine their associations with both the journal, and its founder.

By pivoting from *Information Research*'s impact to its creator's, Rodriguez-Munoz et al. open the door to the next five contributions, which all zoom in on various aspects of Wilson's life and work: the first three focus more on his invaluable contributions to the field, while the last two focus more on his personal influence on the authors' research and careers (although all five almost inevitably mention aspects of both).

In the first, Maceviciute (who, as we mentioned, was the journal's trusty Deputy Editor for many years) provides an extensive review of Wilson's published writings on the topic of information management. In the second, Cole (a former PhD student of Wilson's) reflects on the impact his former supervisor's seminal publication on information needs had on his own professional career, as well as on the general field of information science. In the third, Montazeri summarizes some of the findings from his recently defended PhD thesis, where he conducted interviews with doctoral students in an attempt to expand on Wilson's influential information behaviour model with Social Cognitive Theory. In the fourth, Agarwal illustrates how Wilson's models may have helped shape the research journeys of early career researchers by reflecting on his own personal experiences, as well as on an interview he conducted with Wilson for Project Oneness World. And finally, in the fifth contribution in the series, Cossham (one of our journal's regional editors) recounts how she came to be involved in the journal – first as a copy editor, then as a regional editor – and how much she appreciated Wilson's generosity and professionalism in the process.

Finally, this account of one of our regional editors allows us to pivot back to the topic of our journal, as we gear up for no fewer than three bibliometric treatments of our long publication history. In the first, Svarre & Larsen build a bridge from the focus on Wilson back to that of *Information Research* by exposing the way in which Wilson's work is cited across the journal's publications. Afterwards, Chen & Wang use bibliometric methods to uncover publication trends, research hotspots, and thematic evolutions across 2,180 of the journal's articles that are indexed in Web of Science. And last but not least, Nelhans et al. analyse the presence of *Information Research* across several traditional and newer, open citation databases. Nelhans et al. clearly demonstrate how the journal and its authors have made their mark in the academic landscape, while also acknowledging some important caveats to any bibliometric analysis of *Information Research*, by exposing some content coverage issues, as well as gaps and inconsistencies in the metadata. Together with Nelhans et al., we are hopeful that in the long run, our move to the Swedish National Library's publication platform will help remedy some of these issues. With this last contribution, co-authored by colleagues at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science, our special issue has come full circle.

As usual, our issue ends with a book review section, this time consisting of two reviews. One by Swedish School of Library and Information Science colleague Björn Ekstrom, on Huvila et al.'s recent edited volume *Perspectives on Paradata*; and a second one by Wilson himself, on Pulk & Koris' new book on *Generative AI in higher Education*.

We hope you will enjoy reading this celebratory issue as much as we have enjoyed compiling it. In addition to publishing this special issue, we will also be hosting a 30th anniversary webinar on June 10, 2025 to look back on the past three decades, as well as to consider the future. The webinar is free and open to all, but requires registration (by June 4th at the latest). For more information, please consult [our registration page for the event](#). We look forward to meeting you there.

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