Editorial

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We are proud to introduce the first issue of the Information Retrieval Research Journal (IRRJ). IRRJ is the only peer-reviewed diamond open access journal that focuses exclusively on the information retrieval research community. The journal provides free and unrestricted on-line open access to papers in information retrieval, and runs fully on volunteer work by editors, reviewers, a production editor, a webmaster, and an advisory board. IRRJ does not require subscription fees nor article processing fees: At IRRJ the readers do not pay and the authors do not pay either. Instead, IRRJ plans to be completely self-funded, running on micro-donations, using resources and infrastructure provided by friend organizations and universities. We are grateful to the Radboud University and Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) for providing the initial funding and infrastructure.

We believe that creating the opportunity to read and publish scientific research papers without excessive fees is of utmost importance for building a diverse and inclusive community. Currently, information retrieval papers are published at journals and conferences such as the Proceedings of ACM SIGIR, ACM Transactions on Information Systems (TOIS), Elsevier's Information Processing and Management (IP&M) and the Proceedings of ECIR (by Springer). These papers are either behind paywalls or require the authors to pay for open access, currently about $1000 for a SIGIR paper, $1800 for a TOIS paper, $2890 for an ECIR paper, and no less than $3670 for an IP&M paper. ACM, Elsevier and Springer sign open access agreements with leading universities, whose researchers never see these fees. Researchers who work at organizations that cannot afford these agreements will likely not be able to pay the article processing fees either. They cannot truly engage with the information retrieval community. Our community has become elitist; open access fees and agreements act as gatekeeping mechanisms that exclude researchers from low-income countries in Africa, South America, South East Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and many other parts of the world. IRRJ aims to open our community for researchers in low-income countries, to work towards a more diverse and inclusive information retrieval research community.

IRRJ will provide all benefits that the established publishers provide, and more, including: *1)* An International Standard Serial Number (ISSN 3050-9114 for electronic issues and ISSN 3050-9106 for paper issues); *2)* Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) for all articles via Crossref; *3)* A dedicated editorial board; *4)* Clearly stated peer review policies; *5)* An established CC-BY copyright policy, where authors retain all rights; *6)* An established rolling publishing schedule: Accepted papers are published electronically immediately upon receipt. We plan to publish at least 2 paper issues each year. *7)* Indexing by major academic search engines, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, DBLP, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), etc.; *8)* A Journal Impact Factor by Web of Science, to be established within three years; *9)* An established archiving policy using Portico and the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) Preservation Network to create permanent archives for the purposes of preservation and restoration.

To conclude, we founded the IRRJ to open up the current publishing practices of ACM, Elsevier and Springer. Diamond open access publishing is the way forward for an inclusive and diverse information retrieval research community. Last but not least, there is a recent event that led us to establish IRRJ. For about 25 years, from 1999 to 2024, the Information Retrieval Journal – founded by Kantor and Robertson (1999) and published by Kluwer and later Springer – has served as an important journal for information retrieval. Springer discontinued the Information Retrieval Journal in January 2024 and dismissed its editorial board. To make sure such an event cannot happen to IRRJ, the publisher of IRRJ (Radboud University Press) does not own IRRJ. IRRJ is the independent, self-appointed, unofficial successor to the journal founded by Paul Kantor and Stephen Robertson, and we are honoured that they agreed to form our founding advisory board.

References

Paul Kantor and Stephen Robertson. Editorial. *Information Retrieval*, 1(1):5–5, 1999. doi: 10.1023/A:1009990414324.