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## Notes from the Editor – AER Online and Open Access

Readers of the AER will remember that in an earlier issue, Pat Thomson and I wrote an Editors' Note asking, 'Should the AER go online? If so, how?' Readers of the *AARE Newsletter* will also remember various reports in 2002 alerting members to debates about scholarly publishing online and to the manner in which the Association has been pursuing this question. The matter was aired constantly in Executive meetings throughout 2002 and also canvassed at the Annual General meeting in Brisbane. Indeed, the Editorial Committee tabled an Options Paper at the Brisbane meetings of the membership and the Executive. The options we identified for the future of the Journal were:

- Print only and still put out by AARE;
- Print and digital and still put out by AARE;
- Digital only and still put out by AARE;
- Print and digital and put out by a commercial publisher;
- Responsibility for digital access to the journal passed over to ACER.

We observed that there were benefits and problems associated with each option and that these pertained to the implications for the Journal itself, the Association and for Australian research and researchers more broadly. Ultimately, the Editorial Board made the case that the most positive route is for the Journal to go 'online and open access'. Our reasons included the following: the rapid development of digital scholarly publishing; the increasing move by academics to the use of a 'desk-top library'; and the need to increase the Journal's national and international visibility and distribution. However, we were alert to many issues that this move raises, including matters associated with indexing.

Following this process of extended and wide-ranging discussion and debate, the Executive of the Australian Association for Research in Education and Editorial Board of *The Australian Educational Researcher* are now pleased to announce that *The Australian Educational Researcher* will be distributed online for the next three years. Print as well as online issues will be distributed during 2003 as the transition is made to full electronic distribution. Open access to the journal will be available on the Association's website. The impact of this initiative will be monitored and a review will

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be conducted. Alternatives to this publishing arrangement will be considered if online publication proves unsatisfactory. Members will be kept up-to-date on developments via the *AARE Newsletter*. Meanwhile various issues associated with going online and open access will be addressed by the Editorial Board, the most pressing of which is indexing.

*Jane Kenway*  
*Managing Editor*