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THEMATIC SECTION: ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL INFORMATICS: RENEWING OUR HUMAN RESOURCES FOR THE DIGITAL ECONOMY: GUEST EDITORIAL

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For over forty years, the Southern African Computer Lecturers Association (SACLA) has provided a platform for lecturers in computer science and information systems throughout Southern Africa's higher education institutions to come together to address issues concerning the teaching and learning of ICT related topics. The 44th annual SACLA conference was held in June 2015 and was based on the theme of "renewal" entitled, *Renewing ICT teaching and learning: Building on the past to create new energies*. Seventy ICT lecturers from twelve academic institutions throughout Southern Africa convened, in the heart of Johannesburg, to report innovations in and new perspectives on what and how we teach ICT. The renewal of ICT teaching and learning within higher education is important for building the human resource capacity of the ICT sector, addressing e-skills, and thereby strengthening the role of ICT in the transformation of society and economic activity.

We are pleased to include a special section of invited papers from SACLA 2015 in this thematic issue on informatics and ICT for development. Four of the eight invited papers have been selected for inclusion. In all cases they were revised and updated, and subjected to additional rounds of peer review before final acceptance.

The first article by Chipangura and co-authors examines the factors that could affect the readiness of ICT students at a South African university to access and interact with mobile-centric services. Their work revealed that these students are ready to use mobile phones as tools for information access and interaction, but some inadequacies were observed in the way the university policies support the students' needs. They conclude with recommendations on how policies could better support students' mobile phone information access and interaction.

In the second article, Backhouse and Hughes present an analysis of students' personal information systems. They adapt the ecological model of information seeking and use it to make sense of the diversity of information sources used and students' choices in engaging with them. Their work offers insights into the information contexts and behaviours of students and argues for the importance of a flexible range of information sources to support students in the complex process of managing information for academic success.

In the third article, Van Biljon and Renaud identify ways of making the assessment of postgraduate dissertations more efficient, while retaining rigour and fairness. They examine the emerging use of visualisation as a communication facilitator and report on an investigation into the extant use and potential usefulness of visualisation in a number of dissertations, as well as supervisor expectations with respect to the use of visualisation in research reporting.

In the final article of this section, Nel and co-authors present results from a study of the software development practices used by a group of undergraduate computer science students. An experiment was conducted to determine students' perceptions on the use of process measurement data to improve their software development practices. Analysis revealed that performance-measurement data could provide students with useful information for their development practices.

Together, these articles provide valuable insight into informatics issues that are affecting students today, helping us to adapt to students' needs in our teaching, assessment and course development. This work is valuable to teaching and learning in the fields of computer science and information systems, but also has broader relevance for teaching and learning across disciplines, as ICT and educational informatics can be increasingly integrated into the learning experience.