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Editorial

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Editorial for *Ergonomics*, vol 52, issue 12

The journal *Ergonomics* celebrates the quality of the research published in its pages each year through an annual prize, the Liberty Mutual Award, for the paper that best contributes to the advancement of ergonomics. The winning paper is selected by the Editors in conjunction with the Honours Committee of the Ergonomics Society, with any author having published in the journal eligible to receive the award. Previous recipients include Leclercq *et al* (2007), Rouch *et al* (2005), Wiese and Lee (2004) and Lockhart *et al* (2003). The Liberty Mutual Award for the paper published in 2008, announced at the IEA2009 triennial congress in Beijing, went to the paper '*Evaluation of a comprehensive slip, trip and fall prevention programme for hospital employees*', authored by Jennifer Bell, James Collins, Laurie Wolf, Raoul Grönqvist, Sharon Chiou, Wen-Ruey Chang, Gary Sorock, Ted Courtney, David Lombardi and Bradley Evanoff (Bell *et al*, 2008). This paper was selected for making a major contribution in its field, representing a significant advancement for ergonomics. In particular, the Editors considered the work to be an important and substantive longitudinal study, providing much needed evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce slip, trip and fall incidence. The two runner up papers were Smith *et al* (2008), concerned with team skills in crime scene investigation, and Warming *et al* (2008), an intervention study among nurses examining the effect of technique and physical fitness training on reducing low back pain.

With the continuing growth of online publication, publishers and editors now have the benefit of access to data on usage. The most frequently downloaded papers from *Ergonomics* during 2008 are shown in Table 1, providing an indication of the subject areas of contemporary interest to the readership of the journal. It is pleasing to note from this listing that the Special Issue on the Future of Ergonomics, published at the beginning of 2008, attracted a high level of interest, with the invited contributions to this issue by Cacciabue (2008), Caple (2008), Drury (2008), Spence and Ho (2008) and Stanton and Stammers (2008) all amongst the most frequently accessed papers during the year. Also looking to the future was the paper by Sinclair (2007) *Ergonomics issues in future systems*, based on Murray Sinclair's invited Society Lecture presented at the Ergonomics Society Annual Conference in Nottingham that year. Other themes appearing to be of current interest for readers of this journal include: low back loading, discomfort and pain, both occupational (Devroey *et al*, 2007; Granata and Gottipati, 2008; Hoozemans *et al*, 2008; Jang *et al*, 2007; Okunribido, 2008; Waters *et al*, 2008) and among children (Chow, 2007; Jones *et al*, 2007); other musculoskeletal problems (Bongers *et al*, 2008; Robb and Mansfield, 2007); and ergonomics and children (Chow *et al*, 2007; Jones *et al*, 2007; Koskelo *et al*, 2007; Saarni *et al*, 2007; Smith, 2007; Straker *et al*, 2008).

An increasing consideration for both journals and their authors is the bibliometric standing of a publication, particularly the journal's Impact Factor. Derived from the frequency of citation of papers published in a journal, the Impact Factor for *Ergonomics* has increased from 0.826 in 2006, 1.484 in 2007, to 1.604 in 2008 (Thomson Reuters, 2009). This places *Ergonomics* third in the Journal Citation Reports® Ergonomics category, below *Accident Analysis and Prevention* and the *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* and above *Human Factors*, *Applied Ergonomics* and the *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*.

In terms of the areas in which *Ergonomics* is having an 'impact', Table 2 lists the most frequently cited papers from those published between 2007-09. That all of these date from

2007 is a consequence of a paper's citation count accumulating over time, with earlier papers having a longer period over which other authors might refer to them.

Several of the papers appearing in Table 2 appeared in the Special Issue on Driver Safety (Brackstone and McDonald, 2007; Funke *et al*, 2007; Groeger and Banks, 2007; Lees and Lee, 2007; Underwood, 2007; Young and Stanton, 2007) with this collection of papers clearly having an influence. Most frequently cited papers in the field of cognitive ergonomics, other than those concerned with driving, addressed: the interfaces of different facial composite systems used to help witnesses of serious crime construct a visual likeness of a suspect's face (Frowd *et al*, 2007); an experimental investigation of situational awareness ability and cognitive skills training (O'Brien and O'Hare, 2007); and the consequences of different methods of administering the NASA-TLX measure (Noyes and Bruneau, 2007).

Costa and Sartori (2007) and Heuer and Hegele (2007) addressed work and ageing, a topic receiving growing attention at the moment. Costa and Sartori presented the results from several studies, examining trends with the work ability index associated with different types of occupation. Heuer and Hegele investigated age related variations in visual-motor transformations, as occur with tasks where the execution and observation of motor skills are spatially separated (e.g. endoscopic surgery).

It is evident from the pattern of most frequently downloaded papers that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) continues to be an area of significant activity within the ergonomics research community. The topics of the most frequently cited papers concerned with MSDs were: case studies in light manual production work (Bosch *et al*, 2007), backpack load carriage (Devroey *et al*, 2007), productivity among computer users (Hagberg *et al*, 2007), overhead working (Sood, 2007), and the implications of camera viewing angle on posture assessment (Sutherland, 2007). Similarly, slips, trips and falls is an area in which the journal continues to receive a flow of submissions. In this field, the paper by Holbein-Jenny *et al* (2007) examined the implications for slip resistance testing arising from improved understanding of gait during walking and carrying.

Finally, Smith's contribution on the ergonomics of learning (Smith, 2007), together with the papers by Chung and Wong (2007) (school furniture design) and Sommerich *et al* (2007) (children's use of tablet PCs) have proved of interest to other researchers in the field of ergonomics and children and educational ergonomics. The journal's coverage in this area was extended by the Special Issue *Ergonomics in Schools*, published in 2007, in which Smith's paper appeared.

The contents and coverage of a journal are of course influenced by the nature of papers submitted for consideration. Although there is a high proportion of papers in Tables 1 and 2 concerned with physical ergonomics, the editorial policy of *Ergonomics* is to attract and publish high quality, high interest research from across the discipline, including cognitive and organisational ergonomics. We particularly welcome submissions and Special Issue proposals in these areas.

As this is the final issue of the year, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fellow Editors Christine Haslegrave, Sue Hignett, Neil Mansfield, Leon Straker and Neville Stanton for the considerable time and effort they devote to assessing the large number of papers the journal receives each year, then working with authors to improve those accepted for publication. I would also like to thank the large band of reviewers who support the process of

peer review. A list of those that have acted in this capacity for *Ergonomics* between October 2008 to October 2009 appears at the end of this issue, acknowledging their efforts.

Roger Haslam
November 2009

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Table 1. The 25 most frequently downloaded papers from *Ergonomics* 2007-08, downloaded during 2008, listed in descending frequency of access.

Authors	Title
Stanton and Stammers (2008)	Bartlett and the future of ergonomics
Spence and Ho (2008)	Multisensory interface design for drivers: past, present and future
Costa and Sartori (2007)	Ageing, working hours and work ability
Smith (2007)	The ergonomics of learning: educational design and learning performance
Okunribido <i>et al</i> (2008)	The role of whole body vibration, posture and manual materials handling as risk factors for low back pain in occupational drivers
Chow <i>et al</i> (2007)	Changes in spinal curvature and proprioception of schoolboys carrying different weights of backpack
Genaidy <i>et al</i> (2007)	The work compatibility improvement framework: an integrated perspective of the human-at-work system
Drury (2008)	The future of ergonomics/the future of work: 45 years after Bartlett (1962)
Sinclair (2007)	Ergonomics issues in future systems
Underwood (2007)	Visual attention and the transition from novice to advanced driver
Caple (2008)	Emerging challenges to the ergonomics domain
Jang <i>et al</i> (2007)	Biomechanical evaluation of nursing tasks in a hospital setting
Hoozemans <i>et al</i> (2008)	Effect of lifting height and load mass on low back loading
Waters <i>et al</i> (2008)	The impact of operating heavy equipment vehicles on lower back disorders
Devroey <i>et al</i> (2007)	Evaluation of the effect of backpack load and position during standing and walking using biomechanical, physiological and subjective measures
Robb and Mansfield (2007)	Self-reported musculoskeletal problems amongst professional truck drivers
Smith <i>et al</i> (2007)	Internal locus of control and choice in health service shift workers
Bongers <i>et al</i> (2008)	Does musculoskeletal discomfort at work predict future musculoskeletal pain?
Straker <i>et al</i> (2008)	A comparison of posture and muscle activity during tablet computer, desktop computer and paper use by young children
Young and Stanton (2007)	What's skill got to do with it? Vehicle automation and driver mental workload
Koskelo <i>et al</i> (2007)	Sitting and standing postures are corrected by adjustable furniture with lowered muscle tension in high-school students
Granata and Gottipati (2008)	Fatigue influences the dynamic stability of the torso
Saarni <i>et al</i> (2007)	Are the desks and chairs at school appropriate?

Cacciabue (2008)	Role and challenges of ergonomics in modern societal contexts
Jones <i>et al</i> (2007)	Recurrent non-specific low-back pain in adolescents: the role of exercise

Table 2. Most frequently cited papers from *Ergonomics* 2007-09, as of October 2009.

Authors	Title
Sutherland <i>et al</i> (2007)	The effect of camera viewing angle on posture assessment repeatability and cumulative spinal loading
Underwood (2007)	Visual attention and the transition from novice to advanced driver
Sood (2007)	Fatigue during prolonged intermittent overhead work: Reliability of measures and effects of working height
Frowd <i>et al</i> (2007)	Parallel approaches to composite production: interfaces that behave contrary to expectation
Hagberg <i>et al</i> (2007)	Incidence of self-reported reduced productivity owing to musculoskeletal symptoms: association with workplace and individual factors among computer users
Costa and Sartori (2007)	Ageing, working hours and work ability
Smith (2007)	The ergonomics of learning: educational design and learning performance
Brackstone and McDonald (2007)	Driver headway: How close is too close on a motorway?
Lees and Lee (2007)	The influence of distraction and driving context on driver response to imperfect collision warning systems
Funke <i>et al</i> (2007)	Vehicle automation: A remedy for driver stress?
Heuer and Hegele (2007)	Learning new visuo-motor gains at early and late working age
O'Brien and O'Hare (2007)	Situational awareness ability and cognitive skills training in a complex real-world task
Sommerich <i>et al</i> (2007)	A survey of high school students with ubiquitous access to tablet PCs
Holbein-Jenny <i>et al</i> (2007)	Kinematics of heelstrike during walking and carrying: implications for slip resistance testing
Noyes and Bruneau (2007)	A self-analysis of the NASA-TLX workload measure
Groeger and Banks (2007)	Anticipating the content and circumstances of skill transfer: Unrealistic expectations of driver training and graduated licensing?
Young and Stanton (2007)	What's skill got to do with it? Vehicle automation and driver mental workload
Devroey <i>et al</i> (2007)	Evaluation of the effect of backpack load and position during standing and walking using biomechanical, physiological and subjective measures
Chung and Wong (2007)	Anthropometric evaluation for primary school furniture design
Bosch <i>et al</i> (2007)	Development of fatigue and discomfort in the upper trapezius muscle during light manual work