

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Who should own the ISP and it's Journal?

Dear Readers,

Last February, I received 2 emails that expressed disapprobation regarding my letter joined to the last issue of your Journal. This letter was printed in separate sheets of paper included inside the Journal. The only reason for this is that I received the proposed amendments after the Journal was brought to the printer.

The first email contained the following:

"I appreciate discussion and comments on the proposed amendments of our bylaws. The forum for this discussion should, however, be our listserver as you suggested yourself and not the journal. The journal is the official organ of our society, thus not intended for distributing personal opinions in order to persuade others."

First, it never was my intention to tell any reader what to think or what to do regarding the amendments proposed to our bylaws. If you read my text carefully, you will certainly notice that I only expressed my opinion regarding these changes and asked other members to take these changes seriously and also express their opinions before we vote. I suggested to use the listserver as no other issue of the Journal was to be published before the vote.

I want to apologize to anybody who felt that I wanted to persuade him or her.

BECAUSE the Journal is the official organ of the ISP, it should receive and publish all the letters from the members of the ISP expressing their opinions. Of course, anonymous or diffamation letters should never be taken into consideration for publication. This is the responsibility of the editor to make sure that the content or the letters would not do harm to the ISP or any of it's member. But it is not the editor's right to decide who is right and who is wrong. There is only one thing that is worse than a society where everybody always agree on everything and it is a society where members can not express themselves particularly when their opinion is different from the others. The evolution always comes from exchanges between various peoples with divergent opinions. This is why we decided in 1998 to open the section "Letters to the editor" in your Journal and invited you at various occasions to use it.

The other email read as follows:

"It is not the right of the editor to publish personal opinions on society's topics in the journal.

*It is the duty of the editor according to the bylaws:
to obtain articles.
to select and copy edit them.*

*to do the layout, printing and distribution of the journal.
to chair the journal committee/editorial board.*

It is not the right of the editor to publish personal communications via the ISP-List in the journal.

Personal communications that are done via our listserver are usually not intended to be read by everybody who reads the journal. Some of our members are concerned to express their opinion via the listserver, because it might happen that this communication appears in the journal without being asking if this is okay with the author of the respective emails."

We must here make the difference between the "rights" and the "duties" of the editor. I believe that accepting to be the editor should not remove any "right" to a person. The editor should have, like any other member of the Society, the "right" to express his (her) opinion. Of course the editor has a privileged position regarding the access to the Journal if we compare it to the other members but I honestly believe that I never did abuse this privilege. At many occasions I invited readers to use their Journal to express their opinions on it, it's content and even the ISP itself.

The idea of publishing in the Journal some of the messages that were sent through the listserver was decided in 1998 based on the fact that many members did not have access to the server and that some of the exchanges found on the server were considered to be of interest for all the members of the ISP. I can assure each of you that NO message from the server was ever and will never be published in the Journal without the written permission of it's author. This is, to my opinion, the minimal respect that we should have to other persons and it would probably be illegal to do so.

Regarding my "duties" I consider having done everything to fulfill these as well as possible. It is up to you, members of the ISP, to judge if I am right. Being a democrat, I will always accept the decisions of a majority, even when I disagree with it but on the other hand, I will always be uncomfortable to live with the decisions of one person, even if I might agree with it.

Regarding the question I asked at the beginning, the Journal of the ISP belongs to you members of the ISP, not to the editor or any other individual. You are the persons who should decide what you want your Journal to be. This is why you were asked your opinion on the Journal on a few occasion. I respect the opinions expressed in the emails I received but wonder if they express the opinion of the majority of the members of the ISP? You should use your journal to express yourself. This is not only your right but also your duty if you want to keep the control on your society.

With my distinguished salutations,

Gilles Grondin