

## Foreword

It passed unremarked in the introduction to the 6th volume of *Olympiads in Informatics* but that volume brought the number of full articles published by the conference to 101. For an event held in partnership with the *International Olympiad in Informatics*, or the *IOI* as it is frequently called, a rather satisfactory co-incidence. So why was it not mentioned until highlighted in this volume's paper on the journal's first few years?

The number might, perhaps, have been left unmentioned because it is just a bit of fun. The type of numerology that might appear semi-seriously in the popular press, less-seriously mentioned in a volume of recreational mathematics; merely a co-incidence and one that, after all, requires the exclusion of some of the journal's contents (such as reviews). Making this deduction however ignores the fact that, for many of those who participate in both the conference and the olympiad, a lot of this is fun. These 101 papers all have serious content – and a huge amount of work goes in to running national and international olympiads – but there is pleasure in running these events, seeing students flourish and seeing colleagues. Even students have been known to have a good time.

It is certainly not because, as a community, we have no interest in numbers. Many of the papers that we have published derive some basic spark, some essential essence, from figures. We have looked at, and continue to look at, how we can go about measuring tasks; how should we grade and assign marks, in what ways is it meaningful to time evaluation, etc . . . Several papers have categorised and by extension counted tasks in those categories, before looking at student performance. If we removed combinatorics from the problems we set we would run very different types of contests.

Our community's interest in numbers goes beyond the technical aspects. We care about the number of students we bring in to our national events and we want to see that different groups are represented. The varied country reports that have been published since 2007 show the varied ways in which our national contests are run. We can use this knowledge to pick from success stories around the world and if, perhaps, a comparison with the numbers from elsewhere is occasionally humbling, it can drive us forward.

The real reason, of course, why the 101–IOI synchronicity was not considered in the 6th volume's editorial was that it was unknown to the editors. It took the observation from someone outside our usual community to mention the number. It has been an aim of the conference, since it was established, to become part of, and bring in, the wider pedagogical community. We have not had many papers authored from those outside the IOI but they are starting to appear. In this volume we report on two PhD thesis published in related areas. The fact that such research is taking place, both within these pages and outside, is delightful. Long may it continue.

As always thanks are due to all those who have assisted with the current volume – authors, reviewers and editors. A lot of work goes, not only to the writing of the papers, but to an extended period of review and correction and, in several cases, translation. Peer reviewing all of the papers takes a significant amount of time and work and special thanks should be given to those otherwise unsung reviewing heroes: Jonas Blonskis, Andrej Brodnik, Hugo Duenas, Michael Forišek, Gerald Futschek, Mathias Hiron, Rob Kolstad, Ville Leppänen, Krassimir Manev, Mārtiņš Opmanis, Rhein Prank, Miguel Revilla, Jūratē Skūpienē, Ahto Truu, Tom Verhoeff.

Last, but by no means least, particular thanks are due to the organisational committee for IOI'2013 in Australia without whose assistance we would be unable to hold the conference. Their assistance, during what is an already busy period, is gratefully received.

Editors