

How associations started - QSITE

CEGQ is the acronym for the Computer Education Group of Queensland; a professional association “formed to foster interest in computer education among teachers and the general community, [and to provide] a forum for debate and discussion for those who have a commitment to computers and computing in schools” (Guttormsen, 1986b, p. i).

CEGQ was formed in 1981 with its inaugural meeting (with 107 attending) being held on May 12, 1981 at the Mt Gravatt CAE. The chairman of the steering committee was Gary Gibson (later to be the Foundation President) and it began formally in July 1981.

There had been an active informal group operating prior to this who had begun publication of QUICK (Queensland Users Interested in Computing for Kids) which became the CEGQ journal.

The first editor was Mick Shaw, then a lecturer at Mt Gravatt CAE and the technical editor was Geoff Gredden (Research Branch, Department of Education). The first state computer education professional association in Australia was the Computer Education Group of Victoria (CEGV) formed in 1979. CEGV held its inaugural conference at Latrobe University in 1979 attracting 300 delegates (four from Queensland). The first annual national Computer Education Conference was hosted by the CEGV in May 1983 at Latrobe University. Subsequent national conferences were held at Macquarie University (1984, hosted by NSW CEG) and University of Queensland (1985, hosted by CEGQ).

From state associations, the next “evolutionary step” was the formation of a national professional body (T. Adams, 1986). The Australian Council for Computers in Education

(ACCE) was officially formed at a meeting of CEG state presidents in November 1985 to provide a joint forum for the emergent state bodies. It was decided that the national body would

- a) prepare a constitution,
- b) establish a secretariat,
- c) adopt the name, Australian Council for Computers in Education (ACCE); and,
- d) publish a national journal under an editorial board.

The first journal of the ACCE, entitled Australian Educational Computing appeared in July 1986.

The ACCE is in turn affiliated with the International Society for Information Technology in Education (ISTE). The ACCE took over the convening of annual national conferences and continued the tradition of state groups acting as hosts of the event.

CEGQ established special interest groups (SIGs) which operated through the mid- to late-1980s. The groups (run semi-autonomously by voluntary convenors) were concerned with:

- (a) curriculum implementation, particularly of the then new senior secondary computer subjects (namely, the Practical Computer Methods (PCM) SIG and the Information Processing and Technology (IPT) SIG;
- (b) particular computer hardware (for example, the BBC SIG);
- (c) particular computer software applications (for example, the SQL SIG); and,
- (d) support for teachers in particular locations (for example, Gold Coast SIG and Ipswich SIG).

Special Interest Groups met emergent demands and changed their focus as time went on. The

Simulations SIG, for instance, disbanded in early 1988 “as it was felt that the original intentions of the group had been met and this, combined with falling attendances, meant that it would have been fruitless to continue (“Special interest group,” 1988, p. 2).

A distinguishing feature of CEGQ was its chapter structure which acknowledged (and attempted to redress) the geographic and demographic composition of Queensland. Chapters were initially established in Toowoomba, Mt. Isa and Townsville during 1988-89. Chapters emerged and waned in the same vein of challenge and response identified through the Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

One of the most important roles adopted by CEGQ is the advocacy of computer education. One example of this is seen in the letter sent by the association to the Minister for Education (dated September 4, 1987) which expressed concern at proposed cuts to education funding. The letter argued that:

Perhaps the issues are children and the future. ... children who are relying on an education which will carry them into the twenty-first century with confidence to cope with change, and an employment future which will require the ability

to cope with information technology. The state of Queensland will thank those in society who are visionary enough to realise the potential of computers in education and provide children of this state with the ability to compete on the international job market. The public sees educational computing as necessary, not just a frill, or a fringe benefit.

(“Letter to the Minister,” 1987, pp. 8-9)

CEGQ became QSITE (Queensland for the Society of Information Technology in Education) in 1992.

A number of informants to this study acknowledged the support of CEGQ/QSITE in giving them professional and technical support. They noted the effect of the conferences, professional development activities and public forums (online communities) provided by the organisation. Particular note was made of its annual award (since 1989) of a Computer Educator of the Year which acknowledges expertise and innovation in computer use in the classroom. Its advocacy of computing in schools and representation in syllabus decision-making was also acknowledged.



Forty Years of proudly supporting Queensland teachers in effectively using Digital Technologies in Education.

CEGQ (the Computer Education Group of Queensland) 1981 – 1991

QSITE (the Queensland Society for Information Technology in Education) 1992 - present

