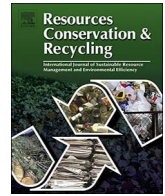




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Resources, Conservation & Recycling

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/resconrec

Perspective

The teenage years

Ernst Worrell

Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 2, 3584 CS, Utrecht, The Netherlands



Thirty years... In a person's life 30 is the first birthday that is feared, the passing from adolescence to "old". For many scientists, 30 is the start of the academic career after many years of education, a PhD diploma and a few years of post-doc on the other side of the world. And for a scientific journal, 30 years is an achievement, indeed worthy of celebration. In these 30 years *Resources Conservation & Recycling* has grown to one of the key journals in an area that is only becoming more important with the passing of the years. As we are running into planetary boundaries in many areas (e.g. atmospheric pollution, availability of clean water, bio-diversity, and increasingly resource availability), the way we use the valuable resources of this world is key. It is the key to socio-economic development, it is key to the survival of our species and of the future of spaceship Earth.

The public discourse on materials, the environment and our society has really started with the report of the *Club of Rome* in the 1970's, which for the first time warned for the limits to growth and the limits to the availability of resources to safeguard the development of future generations. While this message seems to have been lost since the start of the neo-liberal period in the Western world in the mid 1980's, the ongoing discussion on sustainable development has led to the *Brundlandt report* in the mid 1990's. This report has not only been essential in the discussion on climate change, but has been instrumental in setting the stage for integrated thinking about the environmental, social and economic challenges. Today, sustainable development is enshrined in the *Sustainable Development Goals* of the United Nations. Yet, in this period we seem to have wandered further astray from development paths in line with a sustainable path and the absorption capacity of the world on which we and all life depend. During this same period the journal has been born, raised and grown to a key forum for the scientific debate on the role of resources in this complex arena.

I have been lucky to have been part of the development of the journal through its teenage period, as the Editor-in-Chief of 1998 until 2013. After the marriage of *Conservation & Recycling* and *Resources and Conservation* the journal had already built a solid reputation under the leadership of my predecessors Harvey Alter, Michael Henstock, Walter Shaub, and Donald Wise. As any young parent, I wanted to guide the journal through its teenager-years to prepare the child for the outside world, and moving from the "safe" lab to "real world" impact. By 1999, the journal was attracting a lot of papers on laboratory experiments. As the discussion on resources was changing in the world to a need to better understand the overall impacts of our hunger for resources, the

journal needed to adapt to reflect this changing mindset, and to become a key source to inform the scientific, public and policy debate.

In the beginning this was a tough challenge, as with any teenager. The teenager resisted change, did not want to leave the lab, while at the same time it was starting to wonder about the world, and trying to find its own place in this world. During this period many things have changed in the debate, as well in publishing. We went from submitting manuscripts on paper (can you still remember?) to electronic submission, editing and publishing, while the number of papers published annually increased continuously. Over this period, many people helped to guide the journal to find its place in the world, especially the authors, and the members of the editorial board, as well as the publishers. While there are too many people to thank, I want to especially acknowledge the help of Paul Weaver, who helped me throughout those years to develop the new line of the journal, resulting in a continuously changing Aims & Scope of the journal to reflect the developments in the world, and help focus on integrating the multi-disciplinary aspects of resource use. Resources play a key role in addressing the challenges faced today by our society, while at the same time raising fundamental questions about our social and economic system. As we have become a human bulldozer affecting the planet on a scale and a pace not witnessed before in the past 5 Billion years, we need to address issues such as the growth paradigm in our finite world. Interdisciplinary research as published in the journal is essential in addressing the science of these challenges.

Looking at the journal today, I can say that I am proud at our child. Under the continued leadership of Eric Masanet, followed by Ming Xu, the journal is now blossoming as one of the key journals in our area of research. Over the years we have published a number of papers that have set the stage for the current discussion on resource use and sustainability. Papers that are cited long after their publication. Papers that shape the scientific and public debate. The blossoming is reflected in the increasing number of papers from a growing number of countries, young editors, as well as the diversity of the editorial board. As any period in a person's life, also this period has its challenges. While the journal is a key place to discuss the use of resources in our society, the discussion is widening. Other journals have started and are trying to find a place alongside *Resources Conservation & Recycling*, while the role of open access publishing is a challenge for publishers and authors alike. Due to the explosion in scientific publishing it has also become almost impossible to keep track of all the publications in our area of

E-mail address: e.worrell@uu.nl.<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2017.11.019>

Received 23 November 2017; Accepted 23 November 2017

Available online 06 December 2017

0921-3449/© 2017 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

research, while also putting pressure on the peer review system. In this period, reliability and quality are the key characteristics that ensure that the journal keeps its place in this rapidly changing world, as the place to go, read and publish. It is to the current editors to ensure the

key role of the journal. I am happy to have been part of this voyage, to stay onboard, and to continue contributing to finding its way in the future.

Happy Birthday!