EDITORIAL. SCIRES-IT - SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: 15 YEARS OF DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS AND OPEN SCIENCE, AND PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS

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Abstract

With Volume 15 (2025), the international scientific journal SCIRES-IT - SCIentific RESearch and Information Technology, a diamond open access and eco-sustainable publication since its foundation (2011), celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and achieved further national and international scientific milestones. In this Editorial, we briefly revisit some key stages of the journal's journey and its prestigious international scientific achievements.

Keywords

SCIRES-IT Editorial, Diamond Open Access Journal, Eco-sustainable publications, Open Science, Cultural and Environmental Heritage

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With Volume 15 (2025), the international scientific journal SCIRES-IT - SCIentific RESearch and Information Technology celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and achieved further national and international scientific milestones.

The journal focused on digital technologies for the knowledge and safeguarding of Cultural and Environmental Heritage.

It is classified by ANVUR as a scientific journal for subject areas 08-10-11-13-14 and is included in Class A for Areas 08 and 10/A1.

It is indexed in numerous major databases, including "Scopus" and "WoS", and has high citation metrics (IF, CiteScore, H-index, etc.).

It was recently automatically included in the Diamond Discovery Hub (DDH, 2025), a registry of European Diamond Open Access peer-reviewed academic journals, officially launched at the CRAFT-OA conference in Göttingen, Germany, on October 7, 2025.[1]

Issue 2 of 2025, like the preceding issues, includes papers on cultural, environmental, and landscape heritage and on innovative technologies used—artificial intelligence included—for their analysis, understanding, safeguarding, accessibility, and sustainability.

With this editorial, we describe the milestones achieved by SCIRES-IT with our readers; the authors of the works published in SCIRES-IT; the members of the Editorial Board and, in particular, the Editorial Office, the Editor-in-Chief, the Co-Editors, and the Journal Managers who have succeeded one another over the years; and the Reviewers who, through their work, have been instrumental in maintaining the high standards of the journal. To all of them go our heartfelt thanks, and we hope they will continue along this path with us.

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[1]The Diamond Discovery Hub (DDH) is one of the main services managed by the European Diamond Capacity Hub (EDCH), designed to increase the visibility and discoverability of European Diamond OA journals and provides a reliable source for researchers, libraries, and funders to identify quality publications. EDCH is an infrastructure, officially launched in Madrid in January 2025, and managed by OPERAS (OPen scholarly communication in the European Research area for social sciences and humanities), which acts as its fiscal host. The DDH was developed as part of the CRAFT-OA (Creating a Robust Accessible Federated Technology for Open Access) project, funded by the European Union (2023–2025) to strengthen and professionalize the landscape of Diamond Open Access (OA) academic publishing in Europe.

We also take this opportunity to briefly retrace the history of the journal, its goals, and its editorial policy.

SCIRES-IT was founded in 2011 by Virginia Valzano of the University of Salento as part of the editorial project CASPUR-CIBER Publishing - Eco-sustainable OA Publications, launched in 2009 in agreement with the interuniversity Consortium CASPUR[2] in Rome (then directed by Francesco Proietti), with the Italian universities participating in CIBER[3] (established within CASPUR and comprising 27 Italian universities), and in collaboration with the Libraries of Biology and Mathematics, the Botanical Garden, and the Laboratory of Zoology and Marine Biology at the University of Salento.

Within just a few years, SCIRES-IT achieved a high scientific standard by adhering to best practices and rigorous editorial standards. As stated in its Manifesto and reiterated in other editorials, the journal aligns the principles of the Berlin Declaration on Open Access (Berlin OA, 2003) with the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992), promoting scientific dissemination, biodiversity awareness, environmental conservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources. (SCIRES-IT Manifesto, 2011; Gallo & Accogli, 2022)

It is a semi-annual peer-reviewed journal that, for every publication—consistent with the Eco-sustainable OA Publications editorial project—provides for an environmental restoration and enhancement action in protected areas (such as the planting of local ecotypes of native species), thanks to CEIT of the University of Salento[4] and in collaboration with the Botanical Garden Museum of the same University (coordinated by Rita Accogli).

Over the years, SCIRES-IT has maintained its core objectives and its (pioneering) policy, achieving significant results in the national and international scientific arenas (Boero & Lucarella, 2018; Valzano & Cigola, 2020).

SCIRES-IT does not require authors to pay any APCs (Article Processing Charges) for the editorial, production, and publication costs of articles, to ensure the full accessibility of knowledge, and it receives no financial contributions.

It is therefore fully aligned with the principles of open access, from its very foundation, in a consistent, clear, and precise way—supporting researchers and facilitating scientific research and the dissemination of knowledge.

The journal's management and publication costs, previously borne by CASPUR (until 2013), are now covered by CEIT at the University of Salento.

The Editorial Team has always worked without any financial support, with remarkable generosity, sustained solely by great passion.

The Editorial Office receives numerous submissions, and selects original works for publication. Processing and publication times depend on the high volume of submissions; their relevance to the journal's focus and aims; the authors' compliance with the code of ethics and editorial guidelines; the availability of reviewers; and the timelines for delivering the final version of the works.

Over the years, in addition to the two regular issues per year, SCIRES-IT has published multidisciplinary special issues on cutting-edge topics and projects that remain highly relevant and the subject of major international debate, including:

• The Supplement to vol. 6 (2016), "CoCoNet: towards coast to coast networks of marine protected areas (from the shore to the high and deep sea), coupled with sea-based wind energy potential," on the European COCONET project (coordinated by Ferdinando Boero), which addressed—ahead of its time and with foresight—closely interrelated issues: the protection of the marine environment and the production of clean energy, with the participation of hundreds of authors from 22 countries and 39 institutions (Boero, Foglini, Fraschetti, et al. 2016; Boero, Valzano, & Bartolomei, 2016);

• The special issue of vol. 10 (2020) "Open Science: New models of scientific communication and research evaluation", on topics still at the center of major national and international debates

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[2]CASPUR: Consorzio interuniversitario per le Applicazioni di Supercalcolo Per Università e Ricerca - Consortium for Supercomputing for University and Research (1992-2013).

[3]CIBER : Comitato Interuniversitario Base dati & Editoria in Rete -Interuniversity Committee for Database & E-publishing (1999-2013). See: http://www.ceit-otranto.it/index.php/editoriaelettronica/14-caspur.

[4]CEIT: Centro Euromediterraneo di Innovazione Tecnologica per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali e la Biomedicina - Euro-Mediterranean Center of Technological Innovation for the Cultural and Environmental Heritage and Biomedicine (founded and directed by Virginia Valzano). See: http://www.ceit-otranto.it/

(Valzano, Cigola, & Gargiulo, 2020);

• The special issues of vol. 14 (2024) and vol. 15 (2025), featuring interdisciplinary contributions by scientists, university professors, and engineers, on biodiversity-related themes approached from technological, humanistic, and scientific perspectives, highlighting their interconnections for its safeguarding (Valzano, 2024; Maggiore & Valzano, 2025; Lucarella & Valzano, 2025).

The journal's vision has therefore deepened further: today, it reflects on freely accessible knowledge within critical contexts, such as the loss of biodiversity and the humanitarian and cultural disasters arising from current conflicts.

In the Editorial of the special issue of vol. 15 (2025) it was noted that "*open dissemination and the immediate sharing of knowledge, research activities, results, and data are fundamental to the progress of science and innovation and, in this specific case, to a greater understanding and awareness of issues related to biodiversity, which is increasingly threatened by human activities, climate change and, in recent years, by ongoing wars and conflicts between countries, such as those between Russia and Ukraine, and between Israel and Palestine, which destroy biological and human diversity, and material and immaterial cultural heritage. They cause devastating environmental damage, such as deforestation and pollution; they profoundly affect populations with deep trauma, loss of life—including unarmed civilians and innocent children—famine, forced migration, and the loss of their cultures and traditions.*" (Maggiore & Valzano, 2025).

In this regard, the interactive platform "*A cartography of genocide*" created by the multidisciplinary research group Forensic Architecture (FA) at Goldsmiths, University of London, was also cited. It documents, with unprecedented detail, the key events that happened in the Gaza Strip since October 2023 (FA, 2025).

The extent of the damage suffered by the population of Gaza and its rich, ancient, and diverse cultural heritage—at risk of being completely eroded or lost due to the attacks by the Israeli army, carried out without any distinction between military targets and civilian infrastructure—is immense, as emphasized by the IFLA Regional Division Committee for the Middle East and North Africa. The losses are significant, widespread, and perhaps unprecedented. Civilian residences, hospitals, and numerous cultural heritage sites—including archaeological sites, historic buildings, and religious monuments, as well as libraries, museums, and archives—have been heavily targeted, if not demolished.

The damage to the ecosystems and biodiversity of that territory is presumably equally devastating.

This raises concerns about non-compliance with international humanitarian law and violations of international conventions that protect cultural heritage during conflicts.

IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and ICOM (International Council of Museums) have reiterated the obligation of all Parties to respect international law and conventions, including the 1954 Hague Convention, and have urged an immediate ceasefire to prevent further loss of human life and safeguard educational institutions and cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage has always held a strategic role in conflicts. Its destruction often aims at the annihilation of the enemy's identity and memory, while its manipulation serves to justify territorial annexations by evoking presumed historical roots and identities. This phenomenon is not new, as demonstrated by the Balkan conflicts in the 1990s, where archaeology was instrumentalized to fuel nationalist narratives regarding the autochthony of ethnic groups, and the current dramatic conflict between Israel and Palestine, where archaeology and the Holy Scriptures act as powerful political and identity tools.

Today, this threat extends beyond material, naturalistic, and traditional intangible cultural heritage, including digital, multimedia, and georeferenced archives, whose targeted deletion represents a modern and insidious form of 'memory cleansing'.

In this context, the mission of SCIRES-IT—firmly rooted since its foundation in the defense of open and accessible knowledge—is now more than ever oriented towards innovation and the use of digital technologies for the knowledge and safeguarding of cultural, environmental, and natural heritage, as well as the protection of digital memory.

This scientific commitment is also deeply inspired by the fundamental principles of the Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005, ratified in

Italy in 2020) on the value of cultural heritage for society.

The Faro Convention, born precisely in response to the atrocities in the Balkans, offers an urgent alternative perspective, promoting heritage as a tool for dialogue, encounter, and peace, transcending cultural and religious affiliations.

As archaeologist Giuliano Volpe also emphasizes in a recent article published in "Archeologia Viva" (Volpe, 2025), precisely so we do not continue to make mistakes, it is even more urgent to apply the principles of the Faro Convention, which considers cultural heritage a tool for dialogue and inclusion.

We conclude this Editorial by recalling that free access to knowledge, open science, biodiversity, human and cultural diversity, peace, and collaboration between peoples are humanity's greatest heritage, to be defended and safeguarded for us all and for future generations.

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