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Salud Colectiva: taking a stand in favor of open access

Salud Colectiva: una apuesta al acceso abierto

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In April 2005, when we went to the printing press to retrieve the first issue of the journal, we felt that printed object to be the materialization of our editorial proposal, the end point, the goal achieved. We simply had to find readers willing to engage with the published material, new authors willing to publish in that material object and reviewers willing to collaborate with our incipient project. According to our understanding at that time, the actors, interests, and rules of the game were limited to that one scenario.

However, after publishing a few more issues we began to sense that this physical object was just one element within a much more complex scheme, in which a large number of actors, with diverse scientific, economic, social and political interests were taking part.

We were entering into a field with a history marked by great asymmetries of power and capital, as Jean Claude Guédon remarks.[1] These asymmetries were accentuated after World War II, when the pace of research accelerated and, given the difficulties of scientific societies to publish all the research produced, the commercial sector entered the scene and began to play a much bigger role in scientific communication. Additionally, in the 1960s, Eugene Garfield created the Science Citation Index and later the Social Sciences Citation Index as a way of counting the number of times an article was cited and thereby generate "impact" indicators. This produced what Guédon calls a "geography" of science, through which science worldwide was divided into "central science" published in journals of the industrial sector that had good performance within the system created by Garfield, and the rest of the science produced in the world that was published in journals not included in these databases:

> *What happened was that Garfield's system was able to follow the citations of a limited number of journals because the possibilities of computers in the 1960s did not allow for coverage of all of the scientific production worldwide, and Garfield made great efforts to explain that with more or less one thousand journals it was really possible to follow the essential part of science the world over. This was the pragmatic solution to his technical problem, but it had consequences.*[1]

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At that time, a "technical problem" like the inability to process large volumes of information, added to the interests of a very small group of companies in monopolizing the market so as to create an inelastic demand,[a] distorted the map of global science, and this distortion was further amplified by the strong technological investment of the industrial sector.

But over a decade ago, the open access movement set out to revert this situation and expand the borders of this map, creating the conditions for journals published outside the editorial industry to reach the same technological standards as the journals published by this highly technologized sector. In this way, those publishing online have access to a number of freeware applications and editorial tools that allow the contents published by non-industrialized journals to circulate in the same way as those of the industrial sector.

Among these tools is found Open Journal Systems (OJS),[2] a program for the management, publication and distribution of scientific journals that was developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) and that offers the great advantage of being free to use. Given that its code is open source under a GNU General Public License, the program has an international community base that works collaboratively to generate new solutions and updates. The most recent versions of this program allow editors to establish the settings of article digital object identifiers (DOI) so that that they are automatically assigned to every article published in the journal, to easily export issue metadata to be deposited in different platforms, and to integrate the Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCiD),[4] an noncommercial international code that allows systems to identify each author unequivocally.

Other important developments in relation to OJS is the application for Article-Level Metrics (ALM),[5] created by the Public Library of Science (PLOS), which breaks with the traditional idea of measuring the performance of an article based on the "impact factor" of the journal as a whole. Within the OJS platform, this application allows metrics to be developed by article through usage indicators (number of times an article was downloaded or viewed from the institutional website), citation indicators (number of times the article was cited in Scopus, Web of Science, Crossref, and so on), and the alternative metrics generated through social networks. Added to all of these resources is the XML publication format proposed by SciELO Brazil,[6] with a language compatible with other platforms and databases.

A great advantage to these developments is that they are not isolated from but rather communicate with and potentiate one another. The problem is that the appropriation of these technological resources requires not only the development of integrated technical-editorial knowledge that has not been systematized nor disseminated, but also that of formalized editorial processes adapted to the contents of these new standards.

While we recognize the relevance that the print version has had in the process of growth and consolidation of the journal, we cannot ignore that since that first issue in 2005 the printed object has changed radically in meaning. Between April 2015 and March 2016, *Salud Colectiva* articles were accessed some 130,000 times in SciELO Public Health and our institutional portal alone. This is one of the reasons for which, starting with this issue, the print version will no longer be distributed; this change also represents an economic advantage to the Universidad Nacional de Lanús (UNLa), the journal's publisher. From now on *Salud Colectiva* will be an online, open access scientific journal, with bilingual publishing in Spanish and English, and will be distributed online through our new webpage as well as through the more than 15 databases in which the journal is currently indexed.

In this new context where the virtual is materialized, we must concentrate our efforts on the development – within the online version – of the new functionalities described rather simply above, some of which are already being implemented. In the first months of this year the *Portal de revistas científicas de la UNLa "Arturo Peña Lillo"* [Arturo Peña Lillo Portal

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of Scientific Journals of the UNLa],[7] a portal based in the OJS that hosts the production of journals published by the UNLa, was officially inaugurated. The four journals that compose the portal have all incorporated the DOI as part of their publication process. This project was possible thanks to the joint efforts of the editors of the UNLa's scientific journals, the Office of Information Technology, the Information Systems Degree Program, the Rodolfo Puiggrós Library, the Institute of Collective Health, the Art and Humanities Department, the Department of Planning and Public Policies and the Department of Productive and Technological Development.

Additionally, after the first issue of 2016, *Salud Colectiva* was able to implement the XML publication format through SciELO Public Health and consolidate its presence in social networks as an alternative means of content distribution. Similarly, within the line of work we call "contextualized editorial practice," we began to carry out a series of interviews with editors of referential journals in the area of public health. In this issue, we publish the first of those interviews, in which Carlos Augusto Monteiro, editor of *Revista de Saúde Pública*, analyzes the relevance of Latin American journals in divulging research important to national agendas and the connections between journal performance and the quality of graduate programs and research. In this sense, we understand that performance depends on the pertinence and solidity of the research that published, as well as the capacity to produce careful editions that valorize our language and our ways of doing science, published in formats compatible with international standards and that incorporate technological resources to potentiate distribution and insertion in evaluation and academic production systems.

Lastly, we must thank the Universidad National de Lanús and the university's rector, Ana Jaramillo, for the unconditional support provided; the associate editors and the Spanish and English editing teams for their constant collaboration and participation; the reviewers that year after year renew their commitment to the quality of the material published; the students and professors of the Undergraduate Program in Sworn Translation Studies (English- Spanish) of the UNLa for the shared labor of article translation; the guest editors of the monographic issues that collaborate actively in calls for papers and in the dissemination of the journal contents; the authors that choose us as the outlet for publishing their work; and the readers that continue to accompany us.

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ENDNOTES

[a] Closed access models, by retaining all reproduction rights regarding research results, guarantee that no substitute product (that is, a version of the same article that can be accessed another way) can exist on the market. This allows for indiscriminate increases in prices without affecting demand.

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