



## Salud Colectiva awarded DOAJ Seal

Salud Colectiva distinguida con el Sello DOAJ

Viviana Martinovich<sup>1</sup>

In March 2017, *Salud Colectiva* was awarded the DOAJ Seal, which is a significant acknowledgement for its efforts in adopting ethical and transparent publishing practices in open access journals. How has this award been established and what is its relevance in the scientific publishing environment today?

The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was created in 2003, at Lund University, Sweden, at the same time as with the first declarations of open access journals, which soon became relevant internationally, such as the Budapest Open Access Initiative,<sup>(1)</sup> the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing,<sup>(2)</sup> the Berlin Max Planck Open Access Society Declaration,<sup>(3)</sup> among many others. During the following years, the development and consolidation of the open access journal movement<sup>(4)</sup> evolved into a major political discussion concerning the need to abandon the abusive publishing model,<sup>(5,6,7,8,9,10)</sup> a need less strong in Latin America than in the US and Europe.<sup>(11)</sup> As stated by the president of the Spanish National Research Council [*Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas de España*], Emilio Lora-Tamayo<sup>(12)</sup>:

For us, the benefits of Open Access are undeniable, especially now that the advancements in ICTs have accelerated the transition to an electronic system that has allowed us to establish scientific repositories that guarantee the quality of publications and maximizes the impact of research results. And this process is unstoppable: the European Commission published a study in 2011 in which they indicated that over 40% of the scientific articles revised by peers and published between 2004 and 2011 were already available in open access via Internet. The problem lies in how to make the interests of the academic world compatible with those of the companies that publish scientific papers, and the positions of both sectors have not yet reached an agreement.

But this step forward in open access policies made way for two new adverse scenarios: on the one hand, the development of the journals known as “predatory journals” or “pseudo-journals,”<sup>(13)</sup> whose objective is to gain profits through collecting, processing and publishing charges related to open access articles, thus failing to comply with the basic publishing ethical guidelines; and,

<sup>1</sup>Managing editor, Instituto de Salud Colectiva, Universidad Nacional de Lanús (UNLa), Argentina. ✉ 

on the other hand, the various strategies devised by a sector of the publishing commercial industry in order to discredit open access initiatives.<sup>(14)</sup>

Given this situation, at the beginning of 2015, in order to give new value to and strengthen open access publishing, DOAJ started a reevaluation process of all the journals in the directory on the basis of the “Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing,”<sup>(15)</sup> which were written in conjunction with other international organizations, such as the Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME).

In order to take part in the reevaluation process, each journal had to complete a form consisting of 54 compulsory items, in which we were asked to provide the definitions adopted regarding, for example, the financing model; the open access policy; the policy on reproduction rights and self-archiving; the peer review process; and the proceedings to avoid unethical practices such as plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and duplicate and segmented publication, among others. The distinctive feature of this process was that for each of these items inclusion of the direct link to the web page where said information appeared in the journal website was required. That is to say, journals were not only required to adopt such policies but also to describe said policies in a clear and precise manner so that they were available for anyone who would want to read them.

In addition to having an informative journal website, several technical aspects would be prioritized in order to be awarded the seal, such as the journal using any management platform enabling the exportation of contents into a machine-readable language, the published articles having a digital object identifier (DOI), and the implementation of an external digital preservation system, among many others.

Both the explicitness of the policies adopted in the *Salud Colectiva* institutional website and the incorporation of new technical standards that enable the journal’s integration into diverse information systems have been matters of constant concern to us for many years. This is why the seal represents an important acknowledgement of the Universidad Nacional de Lanús (UNLa).

As stated by DOAJ, “journals that adhere to an exceptionally high level of publishing standards and best practices are awarded the Seal as recognition of those efforts. The Seal is awarded to a journal that fulfills a set of criteria related to accessibility, openness, discoverability, reuse and author rights.”<sup>(16)</sup> Out of over 9,400 journals across the world registered with DOAJ, only 730 were awarded this seal of editorial quality, that is, 7.8 % of the total amount of journals, and only two of the 130 journals published in Argentina included in the directory received this award: *Papers in Physics* and *Salud Colectiva*.

We are facing a new era in which we, as editors, not only have to edit the text that people read, but we must also start to understand and edit machine-readable language, a language that is not in plain sight but rather is hidden behind the text, and that allows for the integration with other information systems. As Castells<sup>(17)</sup> has stated, the objective of the new digital environment is to:

have machines understand, and therefore use what the Web offers. This new Web would be inhabited by software agents or representatives that can navigate and carry out tasks for us [...] To this end, the semantic Web aims to describe the resources available in the Web accompanied by processable representations (that is to say, understandable) not only by people, but also by programs. [Own translation]

Undoubtedly, all these issues pose great challenges for scientific editors in relation to open access policies. Thus, we are grateful to DOAJ for this acknowledgement, and to Universidad Nacional de Lanús and its rector Ana María Jaramillo for the continuous support to our editorial work within the framework of the UNLa’s Portal of scientific journals “Arturo Peña Lillo.”

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