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Editor's Viewpoint

Is electronical publishing a scientific publishing?

This doubt, which is being solved through the past few years, is still frequent in the editorial groups. According to the Vancouver group (www.icmje.org) (Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to Biomedical Journals: writing and editing for Biomedical Publication - Updated October 2007): Electronic publishing, that includes the internet, is a publishing!

Historically the electronic journals had its beginning in August 1991 when Paul Ginsparg – Physicist from Los Alamos National Laboratory of Cornell University – California – USA founded the Los Alamos e-print archives (<http://arxiv.org>). The journal's mission was to distribute automatically, electronically, manuscripts to attend the areas of physics, mathematics, computer science, quantitative biology and statistics. It was a system for electronic manuscript automatic distribution. The electronic submission could be definitive or with future corrections by the author. In the last case it was called “preview version”. It was a mixed publication system, with 1 – electronic files – none submitted to reviewers and 2 – electronic journals – with previous submission to reviewers.

This new proposal, and others that followed it, created a “worldwide misunderstanding in the editorial mean”. In February 1996, editors, librarians, researchers and lawyers from the International Council of Scientific Unions (ISCU) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), gathered with the proposal of arguing about the evaluation of scientific manuscripts submitted to electronic printing. Mainly because every day, dozens of new printings were emerging without editorial board or pair revision. The conclusions of the meeting were: 1 – to establish definitive electronic files, 2 – to establish index worldwide patterns, 3 – inserting papers receiving dates (today it is inserted receiving, approval, previous printing and definitive printing dates), 4 – evaluate the submitted manuscript by pairs. Those proposals would be a quality insurance for the printings.

In 1995 there were 100 e-journals available; today it is estimated about 70 to 80 thousand e-journals, where 25 thousand with editorial body and pair reviewing. In that time, it was founded the first Brazilian e-journal. The *journal of venomous animals and toxins* (JVAT) – ISSN 0104-7390 – appearing in the editorial mean in March, 1995. It was the first Brazilian scientific e-journal dedicated to toxinology. It was a semestrial printing,

written in English and distributed in 3,5” floppy disks to 1600 researchers members of the Brazilian and International Society on Toxinology. Until today is the official printing of the *Venomous animals and poison study center of UNESP (CEVAP)*.

In 1997, the first Brazilian electronic library emerged, the Scientific Electronic Library Online – SciELO – a system that covered a selected collection of scientific periodics. The SciELO is the result of a research project from FAPESP - The State of São Paulo Research Foundation, in partnership with BIREME – Latin-American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information. After 2002, the project was also supported by CNPq, The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development. The SciELO has for main objective, the development of a common methodology for preparation, storing, distribution and evaluation of scientific production in electronic means. With the advance of the project activity, new periodics titles were being incorporated to the collection.

In 1998 *The Journal of Venomous Animals and Toxins* was the first electronic publishing selected and included in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO). The complete collection of the periodic is available since November, 1998.

Studying the facts retrospectively, it was concluded that the survival of the JVAT, as well as its editorial success, owned to the progressively paradigm changes. So, that in 2000 the distribution changed from floppy disks to CD-ROM, having therefore lower costs.

In 2003, there were two significant changes. 1 – The distribution of the periodic was made only by the internet (www.jvat.org.br), 2 – Tropical diseases were inserted in the periodics. The periodic was then named *The Journal of Venomous Animals and Toxins including Tropical Diseases* (JVATiTd). The aim of the journal was changed to publishing articles about toxinology and tropical diseases.

On the other hand, the periodicity was modified to attend the demanding of the National and International reviewers committees. From 1995 to 2003 the distribution was semestrial, after that, every four months in 2004 and every three months after 2005. Those decisions and changes were significant for the index expansion to important world wide data bases. In the last CAPES evaluation (2004-2006) we were rated Qualis A national periodic in Medicine II, Veterinary Medicine, multidisciplinary, Odontology, Pharmacy and Zootechnology/Fishing resources. Internationally we were rated

Qualis A in Medicine III and Qualis B in Biological Sciences I.

In 2006 we achieved the ISI – Institute for Scientific Information - (Science Citation Index Expanded – Thomson Scientific). Nevertheless after 2007 we were selected to participate to the TropIKA.net portal (www.tropika.net) – a initiative of Tropical disease research and training special program (TDR) of world health organization (WHO), in partnership with BIREME (virtual health library) from Brazil. In this year the SciELO portal made public the impact factor of the journals from its collection. Today there are 528 periodics (10.246 fascicles) – and the JVAiTID had the satisfaction of being number 26 journal of its collection with an impact factor of 0.25 from 2006 to 2007.

And how about the *Los Alamos e-print archives*? What was its evolution for the past 16 years? If you consult the web site (<http://arxiv.org>) you will see that in 1991 there were less than 100 articles submitted, however that number grew widely achieving 5000 articles per month by the end of 2007! Is there a need to doubt if electronical publishing can be called publishing? I believe that question is already answered.

Well, and the future? What is reserved to the e-printings? Did they come to replace the old printings? Or

they will have specifically matter to a kind of article? Which are the differentials between electronical and conventional printing?

Those answers will certainly emerge with the exercise of publishing electronically, creating new opportunities to the authors. It is needed to expand the culture that the new files in new formats, as in videos, animations, interviews are possible to be included in this kind of publishing! It is known by everybody that the electronical printing gives speed and visibility for the content published.

The Brazilian Association of Veterinary Pathology has now created the Brazilian Journal of Veterinary Pathology – a new electronic periodical, the first in the field of veterinary pathology in Brazil. We wish to the Editorial Board all the success in this hard enterprise.

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