

Editorial

Our journal arrives at its 11th issue and for the second time in the last three years we have an issue with a small number of pages. We do not see this as a problem, but rather as a consequence of our basic philosophy: we would rather have a short issue than shortchange quality.

Our deep concern for quality is the main reason why a journal published by a small college located in a small Brazilian city became a world class journal.

I know many readers will scoff at the last sentence, but there are many reasons for me to make such a bold statement and I will line them up now.

The first of all is that our process is fully compliant with the best practices accepted by all major journals. All our papers are subject to double blind review by expert reviewers, selected among PhDs working for major universities, both in Brazil and abroad.

We know that this is not a sufficient condition for belonging to the set of world class journals. Nevertheless, we feel that it should be at least a necessary condition and unfortunately, it seems that it is not, because, as we will discuss below, bibliometrics rule.

This review is very rigorous – we had a 75% rejection rate for this issue, a number that is one of the main reasons that substantiates our claim to quality. Even those papers that were accepted had to perform some changes to improve readability and also to convey better information on the research described in their papers.

Most of the accepted papers passed through a multistep review process. Some had to undergo multiple interactions between the authors and the reviewers, besides being subject to scrutiny by the editorial staff (for language and readability problems) after they were accepted by the reviewers.

In spite of this hard process, our review process is quite fast. The average time for each interaction was exactly 60,2 days (median of 55 days and standard deviation of 22 days). This means that our journal review process is as fast as a conference, yet publishing only papers of journal quality.

The last paragraphs may seem as if I am resorting to numerology (something that I will decry later in this editorial). That is not true: I am just showing the numbers to show that we are fast and rigorous, making a practical and deep contribution to every paper, without making them wait for six months, as other journals sometimes do.

A paper submitted to our journal can expect to be available to the public as soon as it is fully accepted by our reviewers and our editorial staff (we have a “accepted but not yet published” section) and the full process usually takes about five to six months, depending on the author’s speed to implement the requested changes and the ease to find a reviewer for a specific author.

All these facts derive from our mission: to become a communication channel between readers, authors and reviewers and help improve world science, making true Dom

Bosco’s ideas of being with the times and the places and by its emphasis on the idea that study and work are the foundations of a better society.

Given all those facts, we state that we believe that the fact that we are not still in some of the major scientific databases derive from flaws in their process and not from any misconduct from our part (yes, we know we can improve ourselves and we are daily striving to do so, but our shortcomings were never the subject of scrutiny from the agencies responsible for those databases).

The evaluation process is based solely on bibliometrics and extremely conservative. For instance, in order to become part of the Scielo network, one needs to publish at least 40 papers a year. This is an arbitrary number and is the single reason we cannot even apply for this prestigious and high quality scientific base.

Some prospective authors give up on submitting to us because those scientific powerhouses refuse to put us on their databases. Hence, the situation becomes a chicken-or-the-egg paradox, where those powerhouses state that we cannot be indexed because we do not have the numbers and we do not have the numbers because we are not indexed.

This may inspire some laughs, but it should make you shed lots of tears, for this is not a situation that is exclusive to our journal. Given the high inertia of our scientific model, new and open access journals have to struggle to survive and this stifles the development of many high quality communication channels that would greatly benefit the scientific community.

It is important to understand that we are not against using numbers. As computer scientists, we understand the importance of statistics and of modeling methods. Nevertheless, statistic figures never stand on their own – they need to be interpreted based on assumptions and hypothesis. That is our point: we are letting the numbers prevail without the interference of human intelligence and that is not the best of the worlds, especially for new journals who are striving to make a positive contribution to the world.

We boldly state that we are not backing down. We are committed to achieving our goal of becoming a vehicle for authors to publish their high quality research in an open access journal that does not charge anything either from authors or from readers. We firmly believe that the system will come around and we will do our small part in changing it and making the world science a little better.