

THE PERIODICITY OF PERIODICALS

It is said that an event is periodical when the elements that make it up, or the phases it involves, are repeated regularly. Whatever the interval between the elements or phases, it is its regular repetition what permits to consider that there is a given frequency. In the case of publications, from annual to daily journals, their regular and timely appearance is precisely what makes them periodical.

In the academic world of advanced societies it makes no sense to editorialize nor even to talk or discuss about the periodicity of a publication: it either appears at the right time or, in practice, it does not exist. In our world south of Rio Grande, politically unstable and of multiple colors, however, we talk and discuss about this topic.

It turns out to be sad and paradoxical that those responsible for a periodic publication should rejoice and thank the authorities of the corresponding sector for the reception of funds through grants that resemble earthquakes or the convulsive crisis in Grand Mal epilepsy: they happen only when they appear. They repeat themselves, but nobody knows when they will do so.

Directors, editors, managers, administrators, reviewers, collaborators.... all recognize the importance of institutional and/or governmental promotion programs that allow them to continue publishing. They express at unison the satisfaction produced by the reception of funds that are vital to them. But at the same time we ask how, as has happened in our case, while resources have been abundant thanks to a Law for Science, Technology and Innovation that allows the government to collect large sums of money, those responsible for the promotion of programs have permitted a lapse of four years (read forty eight months or forty eight issues of monthly appearance) to go by without there being the possibility of having access to any funding program. In other cases, whether the lapse would not be so long or whether it would represent twenty four, twelve, eight or four issues, the faced circumstances are similar.

The effort, not to say the sacrifice, involved in procuring the entire amount of resources required for the production and distribution of a publication are sometimes little known. Diagramming, printing and distribution, which are the largest items included in official subsidies, are only a portion, easily recognizable, of what there is to do. However, prior to diagramming the material to be published a whole set of editorial activities take place. They cannot be carried out if there is not an adequate physical plant, trained personnel and sufficient services, equally needed for digital as well as for printed versions, and whose costs are not at all negligible.

In most cases science and technology journals are published by public or private institutions from whose regular budgets publication costs are covered. In the rare cases of totally independent journals, as is the case of *Interciencia*, the situation is highly complex: those having a large circulation can receive significant income from publicity and subscriptions, which is not our case. Due to our principles and the editorial ethics, *Interciencia* refuses, whenever it is possible to do so, to accept any contribution from the authors. We thus depend on sporadic subsidies from governmental entities from member countries of the Interciencia Association and, most of all, on the contributions from research grants of the authors of published papers and from the institutions where these authors are affiliated.

Fortunately, a good number of the latter, although regrettably not all of them, have understood that if they want quality journals to exist and, at the same time, they require of their members to publish in them, they also have the unavoidable responsibility to contribute to the survival of scientific publications: only in this manner we will succeed to appear periodically.

In the current issue, *Interciencia* once again gives credit and recognizes FONACIT, Venezuela, for the funding of the diagramming, printing and distribution of the journal during the year 2013.

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Editor