

## THE NEEDED INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Scientific journals require to be linked to an institution that finances its operation, from whose budget it is fed for its maintenance. Otherwise, they disappear or are obliged to ask for page charges that, in the case of *Interciencia* -a journal that indirectly charges a fee by requesting contributions contrary to its principles- would be appropriate if it would involve exclusively the academic institutions to which the authors belong, but not to the latter, who are affected.

Such 'institutionalization' turns out to be a double-edged weapon. The word itself, coincidentally, accepts two interpretations: on the one hand it represents the process of converting something into an institution or into a component of an institution; on the other hand, it means to insert something or somebody in the context of an institution, as would be a sick person who is committed into a medical establishment. To think that a scientific journal sickens might seem to be something extravagant, but it happens in the real world. They even disappear, which is like dying.

After more than four decades of maintaining itself without interruption as one of the relatively few indexed scientific journals from Latin America, *Interciencia* has been suffering of a chronic lack of resources to keep up its operation. The institutions to which the authors that publish in it belong, almost all of them universities, on occasion are unable or, in many cases do not consider providing for the maintenance of the journal, despite the fact that they profit from the publications of their academic staff, thanks to which they achieve prestige, certification and financing.

Since its inception, the *Interciencia* journal has been able to stand as an independent initiative, linked only legally and formally, but not financially to the Interciencia Association, a federation of Associations for the Advancement of Science of the Americas that established it in 1976. This Association

never had an income of relevance, carrying out its activities thanks to funds or grants specifically requested and obtained so as to carry them out.

In order to provide the needed support for the various activities of the journal, its successive editors did request funding from science promotion organisms, until they became unavailable. Temporal agreements with an academic institution allowed thereafter to continue forward, until these means also became extinguished. The Interciencia Association does not have the required financial means and currently the journal constitutes an unsustainable operation.

An aggregation of legal obstacles, in addition to the economic aspects involved, have made it difficult and precluded up to now the crystallization of several attempts undertaken to transfer the journal production to an institution different from the Association. The perspectives for the permanence of *Interciencia* have become ever more distant and its disappearance appears to be imminent.

As a result it has been decided to suspend the reception of manuscripts until the future scenario is clarified, so as to produce in this manner the minimal prejudice possible to the members of the community of scientists from the region that all along these years have resorted and utilized *Interciencia* as a mean for the diffusion of their ideas and of the results from their research work. The finding of a path that permits the reestablishment of the viability of the journal, the establishment of a new editorial staff and a future for *Interciencia* is the aspiration of those who have accompanied and made possible its subsistence up to now.

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