
EDITORIAL

Open access and changes in democratisation of access to knowledge policies

In the past few days we have witnessed intense debates about open access due to statements, many of them unfounded. This is why we need to highlight the Spanish translation of Suber's (2015) book edited by UAEM, which has been the headquarters and main supporter of the Redalyc system, featuring over one thousand open access journals in Latin America. In the first chapter, Barnerjee, Babini & López point out that it is democratization of access to knowledge in Latin America which is in the middle of these discussions, and how this is the best option for a democratic and participative development for knowledge growth. This is because it eliminates user costs and breaks down the twisted dynamics created by for-pay journals, that make it impossible for researchers who are funded by their institutions or countries but cannot pay for the journal where it was published to access the knowledge they produced themselves. The knowledge gap, along with inequalities and asymmetries, is often increased by these practices.

It is getting increasingly clear that the inequalities and the fragility of our democracies depend on a set of variables associated to information, knowledge, and education. It is self-evident that societies without education cannot strengthen democracies and studies show the impossibility of decreasing violence and corruption without it; this is why we need to contribute to the democratization of knowledge by supporting regional open access initiatives such as Redalyc and SciELO.

We must also mention that these two information systems have peer-reviewing policies and a requirement for coverage is precisely that aspiring journals submit peer-review statements. Therefore, open access does not equate low quality - in fact these systems have fostered continuous improvement in journals.

Finally, open access does not involve ignoring journal metrics. This attitude, reflected in some statements made recently, bring about nothing but confusion and showcase a profound lack of knowledge of communication measurement and circulation dynamics. The minimal return rate of the financial efforts made by our institutions in order to place our knowledge in open access journals is low and these efforts end up being invisible and lacking in terms of downloads, collaborations and citations. Iberoamerica as a whole has a long way to go in this regard and these opinions that reject measurement only contribute to make us invisible and to bury the knowledge we produce in our region and our efforts to promote open access.

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