

Editorial

Public communication of science and technology in Ibero-America

Comunicación pública de la ciencia y la tecnología en Iberoamérica

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The dossier about science and technology communication included in this new 52nd issue of *Cuadernos.info* responds to the immense pending challenge to open a distinguished space for research in this field, from a communicational perspective in the Ibero-American region. This discussion is required not only because of the recent context of the COVID-19 pandemic that we are living, but also for research on social issues represents an area of crucial importance for the development of any country. For decades, scientists, policy makers, journalists, museum curators, and others concerned about the public communication of science and technology have worked to improve their understanding (Lewenstein, 2003). Our region has not been exempt from several social problems related to science and technology. Some of the main areas of conflict have been health, the environment and the gaps towards sustainable development. The communication of scientific knowledge is proposed as a way to overcome them (Kreimer & Zabala, 2006), given the importance for people of having access to scientific information, understanding it and using it properly in order to make decisions and make judgments in the most objective and informed way possible (Calvo & Calvo, 2011).

The forty papers received were numerous and various in this issue, coming from different parts of the world, and with a leading Ibero-American perspective. Such publications analyze the role of public communication of science in the social changes of the last few years, the interest aroused by research in social communication about science and technology, how scientific information is treated in the media, social networks, and instant messaging.

This monography publishes 6 studies from Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Spain, and Portugal. These studies represent a part of the diverse research experiences on science and technology communication currently being developed in Ibero-America. Also, they present research that discusses the role of the media and citizen participation regarding problems and/or topics related to science that affect social and economic development. Thus, the journalistic exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic and the information disseminated to address the uncertainty of an unknown health phenomenon is presented in three articles: *"No risk in the rural: information on COVID-19 among rural university"* (Brazil); *"Scientific infodemic and verification journalism" Denialism and conspiracy theories of COVID-19 in the Hispanic American context* (Spain) and *"Scaring to destabilize: disinformation on COVID-19 in Argentina and Spain"*. These contributions analyze the phenomenon, the increase of fake news, disinformation, and the need for fact-checking that emerges from false information spreading through digital platforms, instant messaging, or social networks.

The article *"Analysis of daily television reports of the Chilean Ministry of Health at the beginning of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic from the point of view of risk communication"* describes how health authorities dealt with the beginning of the pandemic in their daily discourse broadcast on free-to-air television and the different arguments they informed to the population to make decisions. In the same sense, the role of scientific organizations, research centers and universities when developing science communication strategies is shown with a gender perspective in the essay titled *"Audiovisual communication of science in social networks in Costa Rica"*, which addresses the use of social media and the option for producing audiovisual material for dissemination.

Education is a fundamental axis for the Public Communication of Science and, many times, forgotten by the latter. However, educational projects and spaces are a chance to find solutions to scientific problems that affect every society, especially in Latin America, where access to science is segregated and, therefore, well-positioned social groups would have a greater chance of appropriating scientific culture (Polino, 2019). In this dossier, the educational perspective is found with the essay *"Citizen science through the school: the importance of interpersonal relationships"* (Portugal), which involves people from education, science, and communication to discuss astronomy. (Polino, 2019).

We hope to enrich the academic and social dialogue between the various social sciences that generate specific knowledge in this field and the different participants in the public communication of science, to promote the right of all people having access to knowledge and reliable information. Thus, we trust that

this issue will deepen the reflection and open new spaces and ideas for research about this relevant topic in Ibero-America, a field related to numerous possibilities for improvement and social development.

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