



Branching out: new JCOM América Latina for dynamic science communication community

Emma Weitkamp and Luisa Massarani

Abstract

April marks a milestone in the history of JCOM, with the launch of new features for the International, English language journal alongside the launch of a sister journal, JCOM América Latina which will cater for the dynamic and fast growing Spanish and Portuguese speaking science communication community. Luisa Massarani, a long standing JCOM Editorial Board member, has led the development of JCOM América Latina and will act as the Editor for the new journal. JCOM and JCOM América Latina will work closely together, providing free, open access publishing for science communication research across the globe.

Keywords

Scholarly communication; Science and media

DOI

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We first started envisioning JCOM América Latina when, RedPOP, the Latin American and Caribbean network for science communication, published a book analysing the extent and breadth of research on science communication in the region. Despite lacking a specific journal in the region dedicated to science communication, more than 600 papers were identified spread throughout 80 journals from different fields. This study highlighted the significant research efforts undertaken in science communication in the region in the last decade. The study also highlighted the need for a journal for studies in science communication specifically addressed to the region. In launching JCOM América Latina, we seek to meet this need. JCOM América Latina Editor, Luisa Massarani will be joined by Carina Cortazza, Ildeu de Castro Moreira, Martha Marandino, Sigrid Falla, Susana Herrera and Ana Claudia Nepote who will help steer the direction of the new journal, ensuring it meets regional needs.

From JCOM's perspective, though, JCOM América Latina is also conceived as a pilot to explore whether a model of regional journals can further support the science communication researchers and practitioners and increase the visibility of research in science communication in different parts of the world. We also hope, that by offering a local publishing platform, key papers of international interest can be identified and published in JCOM. In this way, JCOM América Latina will help to increase the visibility of JCOM in the region, and we hope will also increase the diversity of papers published in JCOM.

The Brazil National Institute in Public Communication of Science and Technology, which joins about 20 organisations from around different countries, including

SISSA Medialab, has been involved in developing JCOM América Latina. The Institute engages closely with the academic science communication community in the region and other parts of the world, and is working with the publishers, SISSA Medialab, to ensure that JCOM América Latina meets the needs of this community.

At the same time as launching the new journal, JCOM is also being refreshed to offer new features for readers and authors. From January 2018, all articles are now indexed with a DOI, which should increase the visibility of JCOM's articles to search engines, such as Google Scholar. In addition, the JCOM website is changing to include HTML formatting for articles. This not only improves search engine optimisation, but also allows readers greater choice in reading formats — and will particularly enhance the experience of readers using tablets and mobile phones. A new EPUB download option is also being introduced for those using e-readers.

We are also developing a new article format, Practice Insights. These papers will focus on evaluation, learning and reflection on practical case studies. Practice Insights should articulate key learning from science communication practical projects in articles of 3–5000 words. Articles should introduce the context of the practical project (including relevant academic literature that underpins design), the practical case itself and the evaluation methodology, as well as highlighting key findings.

Finally, readers should look out for two forthcoming special issues: one on Digital Technologies in Citizen Science and the other on the Intersection of Science and Politics. There is still time to contribute to the special issue on science and politics, which closes 1st June (<https://jcom.sissa.it/special-issue-communication-intersection-science-and-politics>).

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