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**QUIMICA NOVA, INSIGHTS OF AN OUTSIDER: ON A CROSSROAD?**

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In 1997 the SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) program was launched in Brazil by BIREME (Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Science Information, PAHO and WHO) and FAPESP (Sao Paulo State Foundation for Support to Science). The three main objectives of the program were: (i) to publish Brazilian Journals on line following the open access mode, according to which full-text articles could be freely accessed; (ii) to improve the quality of the Brazilian journals in respect to several attributes, like relevance of the articles, rigor in the methodology and carefulness in presentation; and (iii) to create a bibliometric/scientometric database, affording indicators similar to those provided by ISI for scientific and technological studies, not possible to be made using the international databases only. It is a general perception that these aims and tools have contributed significantly for the improvement of Brazilian Journals of Science.

However, it can not be overlooked that some Brazilian journals indexed by SciELO and that had already been previously recognized for their quality, afforded the opposite effect, namely, they helped SciELO to gain reputation as a program that would be able to fulfill its goals. This is the case of *Quimica Nova*, which was indexed in SciELO in November 2000 but that had already been indexed in the prestigious ISI database before. Perhaps the effect could be better described as synergistic since from 2000 on the impact factor of *Quimica Nova* in the ISI-Journal of Citation Report more than doubled, attaining 0.720 in 2006 and ranking fifth in the whole Brazilian SciELO collection. The visibility provided by SciELO may have contributed to that. As to the impact factor using SciELO scientometric database *Quimica Nova* holds position 14 (0.327). This data is important because it reflects the way the Brazilian scientific community sees *Quimica Nova*, as opposite to how it is deemed by the international community (ISI). It is noteworthy that considering the 8 SciELO journals that cover the area of chemistry, *Quimica Nova* stands

first in the list. In addition *Quimica Nova* is the third most visited SciELO journal (3.2% of the ~ 10 million visits per month).

These impressive numbers lead us to seek for the features of this journal that might shed some light on what is behind these accomplishments. In addition to the quality of the articles, assured by a peer-review process steered by a high-quality editorial board, *Quimica Nova* is very innovative and attractive in the subjects it covers, with a strong emphasis on chemistry of pollution, environmental chemistry and chemistry/microbiology interface, among others; all these topics are investigated through modern methodologies of physical-chemistry, analytical chemistry and catalysis, among others. All these characteristics are connected to the original aim of the journal, very much inclined to deal with topics the interest of which go beyond the academic walls and envisage social problems in relation to which chemistry might play a vital role. *Quimica Nova* has also a vocation to disseminate news and progresses in chemistry among students. As an outsider I guess that the journal is coming to a crossroad where equilibrium between these aims and its increasing international visibility is important to be achieved. Although not mutually exclusive this is a hard task and requires decisions to be made, like for instance how to deal with the problem of language: keeping Portuguese or shifting to English? Or even better, to use both, as electronic versions of journals renders this possible. We have recently discussed this opportunity in an essay that might bear upon this important issue to *Quimica Nova*<sup>1</sup>.

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**REFERENCE**

1. Meneghini, R.; Packer, A. L.; Is there science beyond English? *EMBO Reports* **2007**, *8*, 112-116.