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### LATIN AMERICAN JOURNALS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*Fifty Latin-American academic journals on Library and Information Science were identified as being active between 1997 and 2001. Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico were most active, publishing 60% of these journals. Only five journals had been in publication 26 years or more, while 37 titles were less than 10 years old. Library associations and schools of library science with no graduate courses published more than half (58%) of them, while schools offering graduate courses (Master and Ph. D.) and research centers jointly published 11 journals. These latter journals are usually perceived as the best journals by academia. These Latin American journals are usually published semi-annually, and only a few appear in general bibliographic databases, though, INFOBILA indexes and disseminates most of them. Also identified was a tendency for these journals to become electronic publications with 20 journals offering full text, 4 providing abstracts, and 4 content indexes online.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Library and Information Science (LIS) schools in Latin-America perform three basic functions: teaching (the formation of new generations of professionals that will enter the field), research (the generation of new knowledge that is going to expand the cultural capital accumulated in the field), and extension (the transference of academic research findings to society in the form of policies and services). So, LIS schools are institutional spaces of discussion, research, and problem-solving relative to informational phenomena. In this social space, LIS journals become special instruments to communicate the findings of research and recommendations for implementation of social policies. As a consequence, some LIS schools, librarian associations, or individual professional librarians have created their own journals as a way to guarantee the transfer of information to their affiliates.

Since journals form a significant part of the culture and play the function of linking the scientists to the world of science, academic journals are considered the most important vehicles of communication and actualization of knowledge in a country. For example, Gorbitz (1968) states that journals perform some basic functions in maintaining and raising the level of the science in a country, offering to readers the scientific development and the production of literature of the area in which they participate. Price (1974) suggests that scientific journals, besides being the only carrier that reaches a great number of readers, are also the main vehicles to record the knowledge. By their valid and permanent characteristics, they reflect the technical and scientific actuality, informing about the latest advances of the science. Herschman (1970) emphasized three basic functions *“The journal is a means for recording information –the official public record; it is a means for disseminating information –a communications medium; however, it is also a means for conveying prestige and recognition –in short, a social institution”*. In addition, journals are public and official record of science serving like a registration and archive of the science and also as recognition of the priorities of the researcher. They help to disseminate primary as well as secondary information, and in the role of social institution they confer prestige and reward to authors, to members of the editorial board, and to publishers. In general, as Ramírez Leiva (1997:4) states *“scientific journals have been constituted in one of the means of transmission of research findings as well as in parameters of the advance of the disciplines that they cover ... offering evidence of their development”*. In the context of the developing countries, *“the journals become especially important since they are pioneers in the development of their field, where many areas are relatively new and are not covered by academic journals of industrialized countries. The academic journals also offer the researchers an efficient mean of communication with the researchers and research centers of the industrialized countries”* (Altback, 1987:132). In an interesting article, Soltani (1975) described the problems faced by their publication and distribution in the developing countries, and Calvo (1996) emphasizes that production and diffusion of knowledge can not be separated because their mechanisms and effects are closely interrelated.

As we all know, “communicating findings” means the transferring to society the knowledge generated by academic research and thus making it public and available. This in turn allows a process of communication among a generator of knowledge (the researcher) who by using a medium (the journals) communicates with the receptors (the other researchers, librarians and readers in general). Therefore, journals become the natural medium to communicate the findings of a particular scientific research. Hence, after schools of Library and Information Science in Latin America were created, they began to publish library science journals. However, some of those journals had disappeared by 1997, others had changed their names and new journals had appeared.

The objective of this paper is to analyze these journals in relation to the countries where they were published, their publication age, the institutions responsible for their publication, the frequency of publication, the indexing by bibliographic databases, and the tendency to become electronic publications. The purpose is not to make an evaluation of the “prestige” or “quality” of the journals, but simply to make a survey of those which have been publishing for the last five years. In a previous research by Urbizagástegui (1993), it was pointed out that some journals included articles of activities report type (my library did); professional practices description type (my library does); or libraries planning and project type (my library will do); and norms, guides, or ethical statutes type (the behavior of my library will be this way or this another). Journals which publish primarily this kind of literature will not be analyzed in this paper.

This study is concerned with academic or near academic journals which include papers dealing with the direct confrontation of social reality at the national, regional or international levels or with reviews of literature, which is state-of-the-art in nature. Journals included are periodical publications that possess a fixed presentation, include articles and other materials on scientific and technical problems, and appear in an established regularity: monthly, bi-monthly, three times a year, quarterly, two times a year, annual and so on. Coinciding with Pinheiro (1983), “journal’s articles” are those documents published as *“Papers that show unique or multiple authors; lectures, presentations in conferences, interviews and others species of documents that demonstrate authorship and are of interest to the field; papers, which even written by LIS students, were awarded, evaluated and published; and, documents that form part of special sections, such as “Communications” or “Notes” or “States of the Art”, in which the authors, independently of the literature revised, place their own appreciation and knowledge about the subject”*.

This topic is not new in the literature of library and information science. When Kohl & Davis (1985:40) did a study upon the “prestige” reached by the American LIS journals, they stated that *“The academic community is a community based on shared opinions, and the academic enterprise derives much of its strength from such interchange. The editors, assistant editors, boards, and referees involved in the publication of an academic or professional journal are necessarily part of that community and appropriately so. Furthermore, each of their journals represents an ongoing public record of which articles they, in their individual or collective judgment, have considered of significance to the discipline or profession. The conventional wisdom is that not all of these public records are equally well established or regarded and that*

*consequently some journals are considered more prestigious than others*". The authors selected 31 journals recommended by Jesse H. Shera (1976) as being the nucleus of the American LIS discipline, updated the group with the publications appearing until 1982, and then selected those of very specific interest. The final list together with a questionnaire was sent to deans of LIS schools (N = 66) and directors of academic libraries (N = 85). The authors found that in spite of an existing hierarchy in the prestige of the journals, both groups had different perceptions and barely coincided in 27 journals. However, attention was called to the fact that *"in a world where opinions change, judgments differ, and mistakes are made, the prestige of a journal is only an indication, not a guarantee of the quality of their articles"* (Kohl & Davis, 1985:47).

Blake & Tjoumas (1990) also did a revision of the literature showing that the American LIS journals had a double function of providing a forum of discussion and of serving as a vehicle for review among peers. However, the authors concluded that educators in the field were trapped in *"a situation where scholarly activity has become the chief component for achieving promotion and tenure"* as well as opportunities of applying the results of their researches in the elaboration of public policies. In the words of the authors, *"to conduct research and publish findings without striving to influence public policy becomes both an arid and even arrogant exercise"* (Blake & Tjoumas, 1990: 67). With some restrictions, I naturally agree with these comments. But in Latin America, between research and extension services, there are enormous gaps and problems that cannot be analyzed in this paper. Kim (1991) also did a comparative analysis of the American LIS journals ranked through citation and by the subjective opinions of library directors and LIS schools deans. The objective of her paper was not to criticize the form in which journals were evaluated, but to explore if subjective evaluations were consistent with objective evaluations based on citations. She also analyzed if both forms of evaluation were associated to non-academic factors such as age, circulation, or popularity of the journals. In her revision of literature, she found that possibly both forms of evaluation had biases relating to the orientation of the journals, the discipline, age, size and circulation, and coverage by indexing services. The author found that when the structures of the knowledge in a field were analyzed, it was necessary to consider separately those journals oriented to research and those oriented to professional practices.

In Latin America some studies on LIS journals have focused on national characteristics. For example, Miranda (1981) analyzed the problems in the publishing of LIS journals in Brazil. The author pointed out some issues related to the productivity of the authors, their geographical dispersion, and the little structured and institutionalized characteristic of the process of publishing as well as difficulties related to the financing and distribution. He stated that Brazilian LIS journals were not justified by their costs but by their benefits and contributions to the improvement of the publishing industry in the LIS field. Ohira; Sombrio & Prado (2000) also analyzed the problems involved in the production and publication of specialized Brazilian journals on library and information science. They found that 30% of them started publishing after the 70s, 30% after the 80s, and 40% after the 90s. They also found that 60% were still current but facing problems related to frequency of publication and distribution.

In the Mexican case, Rodríguez; Escalante & Rosas (1996) mapped the period from 1920 to 1995, to identify “*a total of 38 periodical titles published in Mexico and specialized in Library Science*”. But their list also included non-academic journals of informative and bibliographical type. The authors found that 61% of those publications were published irregularly, 70% were published after 1970, and by 1995 possibly 76% of those publications had already ceased publishing. Meneses Tello (1996) complemented and expanded the previous paper by classifying the journals as *pioneers*, those “*integrated by modest periodical publications set up with brief articles, poetry, news, announcements and, occasionally, small bibliographies*”. A second group of “*contemporary journals*” was published after the creation of the National School of Library Science and Archives (1945), the College of Library Science (1956), the foundation of the General Direction of Libraries at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (1966), the Bibliographical Research Institute (1967), the Scientific and Humanistic Research Center (1971) and the University Research Center in Library Science (1981). These institutions were responsible for creating the necessary subjective and objective conditions for the academic LIS journals published since the 70s. The author called the third group of journals “*grey literature*” since “*their characteristics, distribution and content, present peculiarities of gray literature, and for the most part, their contribution to national library science is minimal or non-significant*”. However, the author concluded his study by affirming that Mexican LIS journals continue to face problems related to *regularity of their publication and the absence of articles for publication*.

Those issues had already been identified by Orosco Tenorio (1981) in an article about his experiences as the editor of a LIS journal which claimed that “*the most serious problem is the lack of articles for publishing*”. The author finished his article by asking, “*What Mexican scientific research are we doing in looking for professional solutions? ... there are not papers for publication because there are not research, this is only coming up*”. López Roblero (1983), analyzing articles published between 1980-1993, found that Mexican librarians published their work in “*53 journals, 16 of them are published by university institutions, 14 for governmental agencies, 11 for professional associations, and 12 are independents*”. From those 53 identified journals, 12 were LIS journals with 6 of them ceasing publication by 1983. The remaining 6 LIS journals continued to be published but with serious problems regarding author contributions, financing, distribution and consumption. Rodríguez Gallardo (1987), analyzing the LIS journals published in third world countries, found that in Latin America there were 61 journals with 40% of them being published by a Librarian’s Association. He also pointed out that “*the production of the third world countries do not reach secondary services due to an inadequate promotion and diffusion; and when they arrive to these secondary services, are not considered for indexing for lack of knowledge of the languages in which they are published or because they consider that the third world publications do not have important contribution to the development of the discipline*”.

Gómez Fuentes (1993), studying diffusion and coverage of Latin American LIS journals indexed by Library Literature (LL), Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), and Information Science Abstracts (ISA ), found 27 journals with partial coverage and a gap of 20 to 24 months for indexing inclusion in these databases. Yañez & Ramírez Escárcega (1983) pointed out some problems related to editorial policy, contributions, and financing faced by LIS journals around

the world. These problems, which were already analyzed in a Round Table of LIS Journal Editors, were held as a post seminar in the 1982 IFLA Meeting. Miranda (1982), in a paper presented at the 48a. IFLA General Conference, gave a list of the 10 most important Latin American LIS journals. However, his list is questionable because some important journals circulating at that time were not included, such as *Estudos Avançados em Biblioteconomia e Ciência da Informação*, published by the Library Association of Federal District (ABDF), *Cadernos de Biblioteconomia*, published by the School of Library Science of Federal University of Bahia, and even the Cuban journal *Actualidades de la Información Científica y Técnica* which had been circulating in the field since 1969. The author finished his paper by stating “*the professionals of this area have the type of periodicals that they deserve, for they produce and are responsible for their consumption*”. Do we really have the journals that we deserve? Can we also say that we have the intellectuals that we deserve, and the librarians that we deserve? Do we really deserve this kind of intellectuals and librarians? The author seems to see only the production of journals, and so falls short in looking at the social conditions in which intellectuals and librarians are produced and reproduced.

Freiband & Cruz (1991) identified 65 journals and bulletins published in Spanish from 19 countries with a mean of 3.4 publications by country. The authors included a bibliography of those journals and bulletins in their paper. This bibliography was extensive, covering not only publications in Spanish by international institutions, but also including those publications that had already ceased. Furthermore, it included a section of 10 “key journals” that the authors considered as “the most significant in the field in Spanish with articles of international relevance”. Unfortunately, they did not mention any Brazilian journals, evidently because they were published in Portuguese. However their data is useful for a comparative analysis of the growth or decrease of LIS journals in the last ten years. Therefore, this paper will concentrate only in the current academic journals, i. e., those journals that at present times are publishing articles in the LIS field, have been circulating in the last five years, and despite irregular publication, have the intention of continuing with publication. Journals appearing from 1997-2001 whose circulation has ceased and which have no intention of continuing the publication are not included. This paper is intended to serve as a guide for selection and acquisition of journals in the field. In addition, researchers in this area will know that LIS journals also exist in Latin America, and they can be used to communicate their research findings.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Latin American journals in library and information science were identified, with their earliest and most recent dates of publication. Diverse databases such as INFOBILA, LATIN INDEX, CLASE, the Brazilian Collective Catalogue of Periodical Publications, and the LICI database, produced by the IBICT, were used to identify these journals. In addition, OCLC, MELVYL, ULRICH, as well as Opacs of the University of São Paulo, the National Library of Argentina, the National Library of Venezuela, National Library of Brazil, and others were browsed. To identify the electronic journals that offer complete texts or abstracts, the World Wide Web via Netscape available at the University of California was consulted. In some cases it was necessary to contact individual professionals linked to the Editorial Board of the journals and/or professors of Latin-

American Library Schools. The more valuable information came from these professionals, friends and colleagues contacted by electronic mail.

### ***FINDINGS***

From 1997 to 2001, 50 academic Latin-American journals currently publishing articles on the diverse sub-fields of LIS were identified. These 50 journals, ordered alphabetically by the country of publication, are presented in the *Appendix 1*. For each journal, the year of publication (from volume 1, number 1), the periodicity, and the electronic and postal addresses of the publisher are offered. *Table 1* shows the quantities according to the country of origin. It can be observed that Brazil (30%), Argentina (16%), and Mexico (14%) are the three countries leading in journal publications.

Table 1: Latin American LIS journals according to country of publication

Country	No. of Journals	%
Argentina	8	16.0
Bolivia	2	4.0
Brazil	15	30.0
Chile	2	4.0
Colombia	2	4.0
Costa Rica	3	6.0
Cuba	3	6.0
Mexico	7	14.0
Paraguay	1	2.0
Peru	3	6.0
Puerto Rico	1	2.0
Uruguay	1	2.0
Venezuela	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

This is explainable since Brazil presently has 8 graduate programs offering the master's degree, with 4 of them also offering doctoral programs. In addition there are many LIS schools at the undergraduate level. Mexico's situation is similar since undergraduate LIS courses were implemented by the late 40's and graduate programs by late 60s. At present there are five schools offering bachelor degrees, one graduate school offering the master's degree, and another offering the master and doctoral degrees. In addition Mexico has two research centers on library and information science issues. Surprisingly Argentina does not have any graduate programs, but does have two research institutes in library science and several undergraduate programs. Yet interest for library and information science issues has increased in the last three years with an

addition of 3 new journals. These graduate programs and research centers both generate the authors responsible for producing papers, and are the publishers of these journals.

Table 2 shows the chronological distribution of Latin American LIS journals. This Table uses the year of the first volume and/or number, without considering if these journals were regular or irregularly published, as a base for their publication year.

Table 2: Distribution of Latin American Journals on LIS, 1961-2001

Year of publishing	No. of journals	%	ΣNo. of journals	Σ%
1961-1965	1	2.0	1	2.0
1966-1970	0	0.0	1	2.0
1971-1975	2	4.0	3	6.0
1976-1980	3	6.0	6	12.0
1981-1985	2	4.0	8	16.0
1986-1990	5	10.0	13	26.0
1991-1995	11	22.0	24	48.0
1996-2000	24	48.0	48	96.0
2001-	2	4.0	50	100.0
TOTAL	50	100.0		

Journal publications are constantly increasing with 74% of these journals being published in the last two decades. This growth clearly indicates that Latin American LIS professionals are present in the national and international arena of intellectual production and support this tendency. Half of these journals are six years or less old; thus, they are relatively new in the area. There also are 4 journals which are more or less considered stable, although the majority of them with frequent irregularities. The unique one, with a consistent 30 years in existence, is *Ciencia da Informacão*. This journal has had some penetration into the international LIS market. It should also be mentioned that the Cuban journal *Ciencia de la Información*, although appearing to begin in 1991, is in reality the continuation of *Actualidades de la Información Científica y Técnica*. It has been circulating regularly for 33 years, and is one of the oldest Latin American LIS journals. However, the oldest one is *Bibliotecas* (Cuba). First published in 1963, this journal only in 1996 become an academic publication. Similarly, the Brazilian journal *Perspectivas em Ciencia da Informaçãõ*, with 29 years of publication, is the continuation of *Revista da Escola de Biblioteconomia da Universidade Federal of Minas Gerais*. Included in the younger group of journals are the *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología* (23 years) of Colombia, *Bibliotecas* (20 years), *Revista AIBDA* (20 years), and the *Boletín de la Asociación de Bibliotecarios de Costa Rica*, which in 1986, was transformed into the *Revista de Bibliotecología y Ciencias de la Información*, and has now been in existence for 20 years.

Struggling to stablish in the area is another younger group of journals. They have passed the 7 years estimated for journals to reach maturity in their field of specialization (Lloyd & Fletcher, 1989). If these journals were listed by age, including the different phases they have gone



thorough and updated to the last number or issue published, we would obtain the following panorama:

- Bibliotecas, Cuba, 38 years old
- Ciencia de la information, Cuba, 33 years old
- Ciencia da Informação, Brazil, 29 years old
- Perspectivas em Ciencia da Informação, Brazil, 29 years old
- Revista de Biblioteconomia de Brasilia, Brazil, 28 years old
- Revista Brasileira de Biblioteconomia e Documentação, Brazil, 28 years old
- Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología, Colombia, 23 years old
- Bibliotecas, Costa Rica, 21 years old
- Revista AIBDA, Costa Rica, 21 years old
- Revista de Bibliotecología y Ciencias de la Información, Costa Rica, 21 years old
- Biblos, Brazil, 16 years old
- Libros de México, México, 16 years old
- Investigación Bibliotecológica, México, 16 years old
- Biblioteca Universitaria, México, 16 years old

Figure 1 shows the distribution of LIS journals according to date of publication. It is noticeable that the number of journals has increased since 1990 almost doubling in number every five years. In 1990 there were 13 journals, growing to 24 by 1995 and to 48 by 2000.

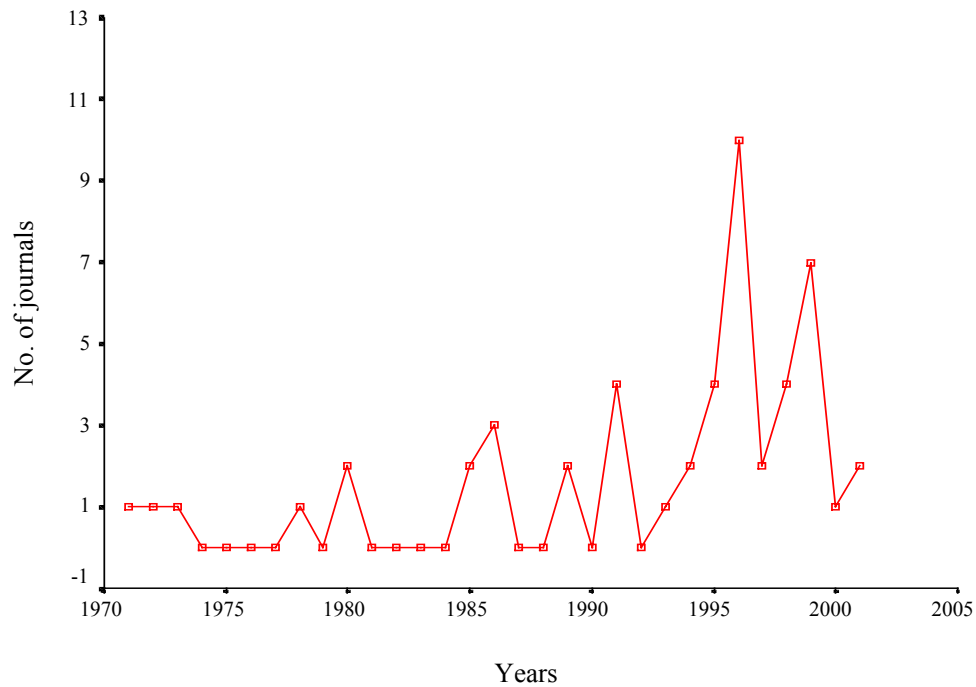


Fig. 1: LIS journals according to date of publication

Figure 2 shows the growth tendency of Latin American LIS journals. Clearly this tendency is not linear but a parabolic one. The equation that better predicts this growth, estimated using the least square method, is:

$$\hat{y} = 8.626 + 1.478x + 0.0833x^2$$

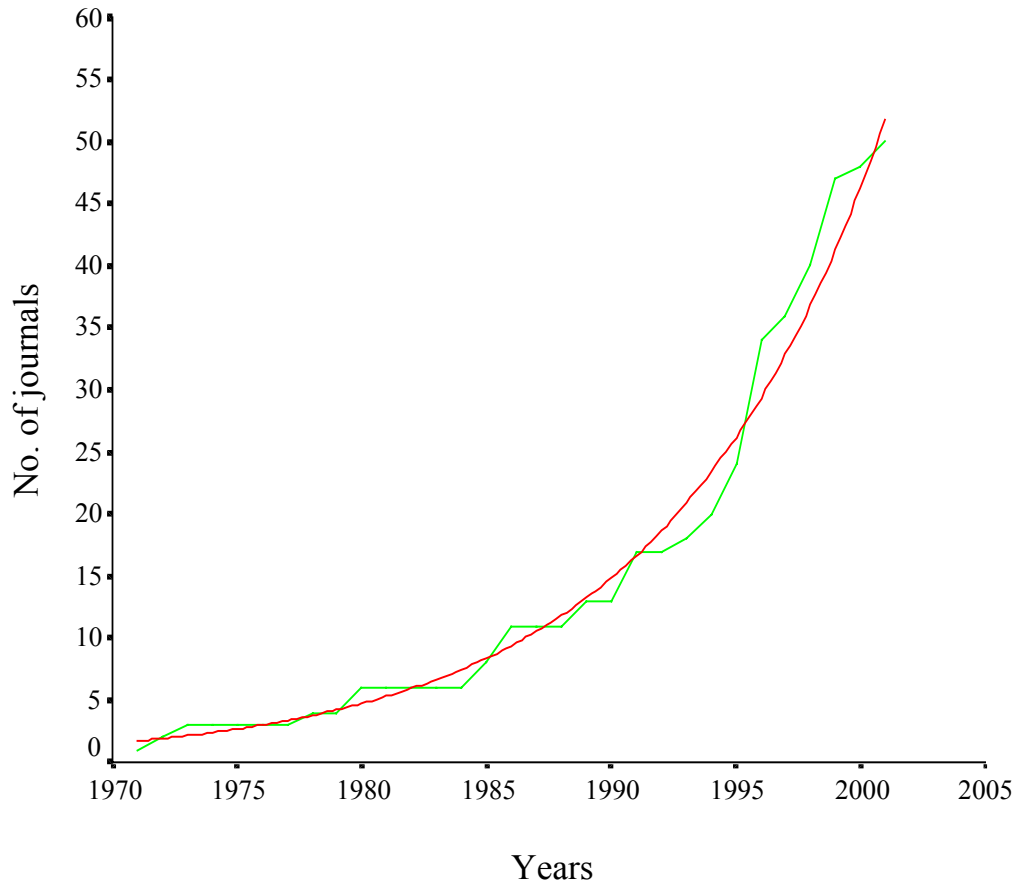


Fig. 2: Parabolic curve representing the growth of Latin American LIS journals

Table 3 shows the institutions or organizations responsible for the publication of the journals as follows: 38% of the journals are published by library schools with undergraduate or graduate programs, and 20% are published by library science professional associations. These two groups publish 58% of the journals. There seems to be a natural relationship between these two categories, so much so, that in the countries in which no library school is capable of publishing a journal, the publication responsibility seems to be taken by the local librarians' associations. Of course, there are some exceptions, such as the cases of Brazil, Costa Rica, Argentina, and Mexico, where they both cooperate and produce their own publications. However, LIS schools

with graduate programs and research institutions jointly maintain 11 (22%) of the journals. Theses or dissertations produced to obtain the master or doctoral degrees are articles included in those publications.

Table 3 : Organizations responsible by edition of journals according to country of publication

Country	LIS Schools with		Professional Associations	Research Centers	Institutes Libraries	Individual Professionals	Total of Journals
	undergraduate programs	graduate programs					
Argentina	1	-	2	1	2	2	8
Bolivia	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Brazil	4	7	2	-	2	-	15
Chile	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Colombia	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Costa Rica	1	-	2	-	-	-	3
Cuba	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
Mexico	1	-	1	2	2	1	7
Paraguay	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Peru	1	-	1	-	-	1	3
Puerto Rico	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Uruguay	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Venezuela	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>50</b>

Final research reports financed or supported by national research institutions also appear as articles published by their journals. Therefore, the journals which might be perceived as more “*prestigious*” are those generated by institutions and professionals compromised with the reproduction of the cultural capital accumulated in the field, i.e., the doxa. Those journals, ordered alphabetically by countries, without intention to suggest hierarchies of quality or prestige, are as follows:

- Ciencia da Informação (Brazil)
- Transinformação (Brazil)
- Perspectivas em Ciencia da Informação (Brazil)
- Revista de Biblioteconomia de Brasilia (Brazil)
- Informação & Sociedade: Estudos (Brazil)
- Encontros Bibli (Brazil)
- Revista ABC (Brazil)
- Informare (Brazil)
- Investigación Bibliotecológica (Mexico)
- Bibliotecas y Archivos (Mexico)
- Ciencia de la Información (Cuba)
- Información, Cultura y Sociedad (Argentina)

Other journals produced by LIS schools with no formal graduate programs will fluctuate around these journals. These journals will be of “smaller tone”, yet will maintain the quality and success of their articles. The professors of these schools and their associates will publish there in as well as students and alumni. In general, these journals will be oriented to communicate practical solutions to problems presented in the field, to communicate the appropriate technology for the solution of local problems, and to delineate the politics of regional information and documentation. Additionally, the journals will also publish “bibliographic research” which is a kind of state-of-the-art review of literature. Similar practices seem to be shown in journals produced by specific libraries and by independent professionals. These journals will have more problems attracting publishable articles, and will often become bulletins, which Meneses Tello (1996) labeled as “gray literature”. This implies that to maintain a good academic journal, it is necessary to concentrate on the economic capital as well as the cultural, social and political capital. The institutions that do not get equilibrium among these four sources tend to publish irregular journals, non-monolithical articles, and are not able to compete in the library science market. Eventually they tend to disappear. One needs to remember that “*the journals that the SCI considers as "elite", are indissolubly linked to institutions with a very strong editorial housing*” (Spinak, 1996). This means, institutions which accumulate economic, cultural, social and political capitals, are most likely to succeed.

*Table 4* shows the intended publication frequency of these journals. There seems to be a conservative inclination, and perhaps a realistic one, of adopting a semi-annual periodicity (40%) in opposition to the more frequent ones of barely 6% for three times a year publication. However, 28% of them tended to be published as quarterly journals; while only 18% of them declared themselves as annual journals. This seems to indicate a more realistic position relating to the intellectual production that will be communicated through these journals. A three-times a year or quarterly journal will have a difficult time maintaining regularity in publication if they do not have a sufficient stock of intellectual production. Generally they become irregular and so fall short of the declared frequency of publication. Only two well-established publications of this frequency were found, the three-times a year Cuban journal ***Ciencia de la Información*** and the quarterly Brazilian journal ***Ciência da Informação***. Additionally, 8% of the journals did not indicate frequency of publication, but this seems to be an isolated characteristic and is more an attribute of electronic publications. By not indicating the frequency of publication, an affirmation is made that by knowing the field’s limitations, it is better to be cautious and more conservative when establishing the journal’s frequency of publication. Therefore, it seems better not to declare it and eventually publish it “when there is sufficient material”.

Table 4: Frequency of Publication of Latin American Journals of LIS

Frequency of Publication	No. of Journals	%
Trimestral	3	6.0
Quarterly	14	28.0
Semi-annual	20	40.0
Annual	9	18.0
No indication	4	8.0
TOTAL	50	100.0

Table 5 shows the databases indexing Latin American LIS journals according to the country of origin. Despite 42% of these journals appearing in OCLC, only 16% of them are indexed by Information Science Abstracts (ISA), 10% by Library Literature (LL), 16% by Library and Information Science Abstract (LISA), and barely 20% are listed in Ulrich (2002). As many as 54% of them are indexed in the INFOBILA database, which gives greater preference to these journals, and LATIN INDEX has indexed 48% of them. It seems that both databases (INFOBILA and LATIN INDEX) fail to index almost 50% of those publications. The most remarkable cases of negligence in indexing of Latin American journals can be seen in Mexican, Brazilian and Argentinean journals. From 7 active and current LIS journals published in Mexico, only 4 appear in OCLC, one is indexed by ISA and none by LL. In the case of Brazilian LIS journals, 7 are in OCLC but only 3 are indexed by ISA and LL. None of the journals published in Argentina are indexed in either ISA, LL or ISA. By no means does the indexing or lack of indexing indicate the quality of these journals or their published articles. Ignorance and lack of familiarity with the Latin American culture attributes in part to the lack of inclusion by managers of those foreign databases. If those are not the reasons, then the explanation could be found in the conscious or unconscious ethnocentrism permeating in the journals selected for indexing.

Table 5 : Data bases that index LIS journals according to country of origin

Country	OCLC	ISA	LL	LISA	Latin Index	INFOBILA	ULRICH	TOTAL
Argentina	1	0	0	0	5	2	1	8
Bolivia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Brazil	7	3	3	3	9	8	4	15
Chile	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Colombia	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Costa Rica	2	1	0	1	2	3	1	3
Cuba	1	1	0	1	2	2	1	3
Mexico	4	1	0	1	3	7	2	7
Paraguay	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Peru	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
Puerto Rico	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Uruguay	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Venezuela	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Total	21	8	5	8	24	27	10	50

Table 6 shows the journals offered electronically, arranged by country of publication. Brazil is currently leading in gradually transforming its paper publications to electronic journals (which are offered free).

Table 6: Electronic LIS journals according to country of publication

Country	No. of Journals	Full text	Only Abstracts	Only content index
Argentina	8	4	2	1
Brazil	15	7	2	1
Chile	2	1	-	1
Colombia	2	-	-	1
Costa Rica	3	-	-	-
Cuba	3	2	1	-
Mexico	7	3	-	-
Peru	3	1	-	-
Venezuela	2	2	-	-
Total	50	20	4	4

Although 67% of its publications already can be found in the Web, only 7 offer abstracts and full texts of articles (*Ciencia da Informação*, *Transinformação* and *Encontros Bibli, Informação e*

*Sociedade: Estudos*, *DataGramaZero*, and *Revista Online da Biblioteca Prof. Joel Martins*), 2 offer only abstracts (*Perspectivas em Ciência da Informação* and *Biblos*) and another only offers Table of contents (*Revista ACB*). Naturally, this activity will probably increase up to the point that full text will be offered. However, there is also the possibility that they will charge for the access to these publications. *Ciencia de la Información*, published in Cuba, offers only abstracts, but it plans to produce a CD-ROM containing the articles published during their 33 years of existence. *Bibliotecas* and *ACIMED* offer free full text articles. *Investigación Bibliotecológica* (Mexico) includes tables of contents and abstracts in English and Spanish as well as full text for selected articles. Chile has *B3: Bibliotecología, Bibliotecas, Bibliotecólogos* which is published electronically and offers full text but does not include summaries of its articles.

Figures above seem to indicate that countries with better financial resources and electronic infrastructures are the first ones to produce electronic publications. In Argentina and Venezuela, we have an atypical case. The Argentine journal, *Revista de Historia de la Comunicación*, initially distributed via floppies, can now be found in Geosites as an electronic publication. The same is true for the Venezuelan journal, *Revista de Tecnología de la Información*. In general, 56% of the Latin American LIS journals are already published electronically although only 40% of them offer access to full texts and 16% offer only abstracts and summaries of their articles.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

How does one explain the creation of an LIS journal? It is not necessarily an entrepreneurship of adventurers, but rather the recognition of a certain degree of maturity within a scientific area or discipline in the country or region of publication. Furthermore, its “quality” is a manifestation of the quality of the practitioners of that discipline in that area and region. Thus, the journals are not autonomous entities, and they do not auto generate. To evaluate them without considering the social conditions of their production seems to transform them into fetishes. A journal is an object produced by a practice, and as a product of a practice, these journals only show the degree of maturity reached by the practitioners of that discipline in that area. After evaluating them and finding some better than others or some more prestigious than others, it is clear that one is comparing the cultural capitals accumulated in different degrees by the practitioners of that discipline in that region. For example, it will be evident that journals published in countries with a well established tradition in the LIS area and those published by a graduate school with master and doctoral programs -those which have accumulated more cultural capital- will be perceived as the “better” in the field. On the other hand, “lesser” journals will be found in countries where the cultural capital is not sufficiently developed or in the ones which do not have the ability to attract those who possess cultural capital. Then, naturally the solution to the problems of “lack of articles” will not be the improvement of the journal’s quality or the maintenance of its publication but the development of the practitioners’ cultural capital. The solution, following the examples of Brazil and Mexico, would be to create graduate programs, to have research institutions to investigate the national reality, and naturally to improve the professional formation of the Latin American LIS agents. In addition, those countries which already have doctoral programs should also create post-doctoral programs. It is also obvious that there is a need to

improve the practice of the journals' publication, especially their regularity, their adjustment to international norms of periodical publication, and their indexing and dissemination by bibliographic databases. But the central effort should be the improvement of cultural capitals for those agents who publish through those journals. Since the practice returns to the practice, these agents will also be their major consumers and producers.

According to Freiband & Cruz (1991), until 1990 Latin America had only seven LIS journals published in Spanish. In the last decade, there has been a verifiable increase of 350%, without even considering the Brazilian journals. However, also verified was a decrease or disappearance of 3 journals. This means that only 40% of the journals identified by Freiband & Cruz (1991) continue to be in circulation. The three surviving journals are tied to LIS schools or programs. This seems to be the same conclusion arrived at by Ohira; Sombrio & Prado (2000). To these three survivors, had been aggregated 47 other journals identified in this mapping. One-fourth of them are migrating to electronic journals.

Another point for consideration is the concept of "journals of the principal current". Some colleagues seem to see science as an harmonic, universal, impartial field, much in the same way that was proposed by the functionalist Robert Merton. However, one hardly will find a marxist article published in a functionalist journal, and neither will a functionalist article be published in a marxist journal. This is very common in the sociological field. I prefer to speak of "practices" determined by the cultural capital accumulated in the LIS field in a specific Latin-American region. For example, the *Revista Paraguaya de Bibliotecología* only expresses the cultural capital accumulated in the field by practitioners of Library Science in Paraguay and nothing else. This does not make it any better nor any worse than others of its kind. This does not mean that the *Revista Paraguaya de Bibliotecología* does not provide valid content and is not of "principal current" simply because it is not cited or indexed in LIS databases controlled by those who impose the official vision of librarianship. Many factors can cause this to happen, ranging from ethnocentrism to linguistic barriers as well as the possession or dispossession of cultural capitals in the field. It is readily understood that the European and American LIS field is the putative offspring of the functionalist American sociology, and that dialectical materialism analyses are scarce and rare in these regions. American librarians who cite articles written in Chinese are very rare. This lack of inclusion occurs either through ethnocentrism (conscious or unconscious) or from lack of a working knowledge of Chinese. Without the ability to read Chinese, it would be impossible to cite an article written in Chinese. This same observation is valid for Latin American LIS journals written in Spanish or Portuguese. Baldauf (1986) wrote that "*English is the main language of scientific communication, and there is evidence- documented at least in Psychology- that not being a writer of English language or being familiarized with English can have negative effects upon the publication and dissemination of our work*". This would imply we should write and publish only in English. Naturally this would expand the number of *potential* readers. However, we would lose the public to whom we direct our writings: those who speak our languages, are familiar with our cultures, share our information problems, and to whom we owe honesty and loyalty. If we publish in English, would it assure us that Americans and Europeans would read our writings? Would this assure us that foreign databases would index our journals? I do not believe so.



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