Latin America and the Caribbean Social Science Virtual Libraries Network.

(Open access to full-text social science publications from Latin America and the Caribbean: the case of CLACSO´s virtual libraries network)

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Panel *New trends in Electronic Publishing in Latin America: Emerging Models for E-journals and Digital Libraries*

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Abstract

Emerging trends in academic e-publishing and e-libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean are more related to particular problems in the region -reduced number of copies printed, inter-library loans nearly nonexistent among cities and countries due to postal costs, discontinuity in library collections- than to the dynamics of the international academic editorial business.   This presentation describes how CLACSO, an academic network gathering 168 social science research institutions from 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, is working towards a cooperative portal for open access to full-text publications of CLACSO´s network in support of education and research.

The Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO)

Founded in 1967, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences is an international non-governmental institution with formal consultatory status with UNESCO. Today, 168 centers of research and post-graduate programs in the social sciences in 21 countries within Latin America and the Caribbean are members of CLACSO.

Its objectives are to promote the research and teaching of the social sciences, to strengthen the cooperation between institutions and researchers both within the region and with other regions, and to enrich the quality of debate in the public sphere, thus

creating the conditions for the adoption of policies that guarantee the good governance of our societies.

CLACSO activities include:

> Regional Working Groups covering high-priority themes of the region and gathering researchers from diverse institutional and geographical backgrounds.
> Fellowship Program for researchers from Latin America and the Caribbean
> Post-graduate courses administered online in CLACSO´s Virtual Campus
> South-South Research Cooperation of social scientists from Latin America, Africa, and Asia
> Social Observatory of Latin America, publishing a chronology of social conflicts in each country
> Program of Comparative Studies on Poverty
> Publication and distribution of books resulting from research programs
> Program of Audiovisual Communication: production of videos
> Latin America and the Caribbean Social Science Virtual Libraries Network
> Organization of international academic events

Through these activities CLACSO hopes to contribute to the rethinking, from a critical and plural perspective, of the integral problems facing Latin American and Caribbean societies and, in this way, facilitate their progressive transformation.

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55% of CLACSO member institutes are university research institutions, and 36% are research ngo´s.   Together they publish thousands of periodical articles, books, working documents and conference papers each year.

Difficulties accessing documents produced by social science research in Latin America and the Caribbean

Even though Latin America is one of the developing regions with the best regional bibliographic databases, which is mainly due to the common use of Spanish and Portuguese in countries of the region, access to documents mentioned in the bibliographies is a privilege for a very few.

This situation is caused primarily by the reduced number of copies printed (in average 500 copies for books and 300 copies for journals) and the very high costs of postal services which make it difficult to attain the cost of distribution of books to libraries and the implementation of inter-library loans among cities and even more so among countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Opportunities provided by Internet, e-publishing and e-libraries

Very slowly Internet access is being introduced as a regular service for students, professors and researchers working in Latin American academic institutions, as well as being introduced as a platform for e-publishing and offering virtual library services to users.

Authors are increasingly submitting their works for publication online, Desk-top publishing allows institutions to consider using the Web to provide free or payed access to their publications, and also allows institutional virtual libraries or cooperative virtual portals (examples: Scielo, CLACSO, Redalyc) to provide search facilities for collective collections.

We estimate that 20% (34 institutions) of CLACSO member institutes are experimenting with offering open access to a selection of their publications.

Emerging trends in e-publishing show a considerable number of institutions providing open access to a selection of their printed journal articles. Examples of printed journals offered on the Web via open-access to full-text documents within CLACSO´s network include:

- *Ecuador Debate* (CAAP, Ecuador)
- *Lua Nova-Revista de Cultura e Política* (Centro de Estudos de Cultura Contemporanea, Brasil)
- *Cuadernos del Cendes* (Universidad Central de Venezuela)
- *Revista del Observatorio Social de América Latina* (OSAL/CLACSO, Argentina)
- *Perú hoy* (DESCO, Perú)
- *Relaciones* (Colegio de Michoacán, México)
- *Tareas* (Centro Estudios Latinoamericanos, Panamá)

- *Temas de Economía Mundial* (Centro de Investigaciones de la Economía Mundial, Cuba

Less visible is an emerging trend of publishing e-journals with no printed versión, Examples of this in CLACSO´s network include:

- "Economía y Bienestar", DESCO, Perú
- "Argumentos-Revista de Crítica Social" Instituto Gino Germani, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina
- "Revista Virtual", FLACSO, Costa Rica

As for books, only a few of CLACSO members are publishing the digital version of a book on the Web without a printed version, due primarily to the financial constraints of printing the volumes (CIPS, Cuba).

Only a few CLACSO members are providing online open-access the the full-texts of books. In the case of books published from the results of regional research programs sponsored by CLACSO (two books a month), they are sent to the open access Reading Room of the virtual library even before the distribution of their printed version. This collection of books from CLACSO is also distributed annually in an CD-Rom.

Some experiments are taking place to sell books in Spanish online, of which Libroanuta and e-Libros are examples.

Developing a Latin America and the Caribbean Social Science Virtual Libraries Network.

Considering the growing number of institutions offering online access to a selection of full-text publications in the social sciences, and the need to provide a search facility to help users find their subject in all collections available, CLACSO started a Virtual Library in 1998 to provide open Web access to the full-text of books, periodical articles, working documents and conference papers published by its network members.

The collection started with books published as a result of research programs sponsored by CLACSO and eventually member institutes of CLACSO started sending the digital version of a selection of their publications.   Today the collection has 4.100 full text documents, of which:

- 1.230 are author contributions in collaborative books
- 952 are journal articles
- 1.600 congress papers and
- 300 working documents

This virtual library also offers open access to:

- Bibliographic database (some links to full-texts and e-mail contact)
- Database on research projects
- Database with profile of researchers
- Directory of open access journals (50 titles offer open access to full-text articles)
- Videos

The virtual library works in a Linux platform with the open source Greenstone software for virtual libraries[2]. This software allows searching in any field of metadata, and also within the full-text of the documents.

Databases run with open source ISIS software, and with the basic 15 fields of Dublin Core. Members of this network of virtual libraries can input their information online vía Web. Each institution has the copyright ownership of documents sent to the Reading Room.

To help librarians and editors from the network better understand these new e-publishing and e-libraries environments, CLACSO has organized each year a distance course delivered in CLACSO´s Virtual Campus for librarians and editors of its member institutes in 18 countries. It has also edited a book "Bibliotecas Virtuales para las Ciencias Sociales"[3] (Babini,Fraga 2004) distributed free of charge to editors and librarians in the network.

The service is open access, free of charge for Internet users. It is a program sponsored by CLACSO´s member institutes, the Swedish government (SIDA), the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP, Oxford) and ICA/IDRC (Ottawa).

Sample of bibliographic record

Título Analítico: Un breve diagnostico de las universidades argentinas:

identidades alteradas.

Como citar este documento

Mollis, Marcela. **Un breve diagnostico de las universidades argentinas: identidades alteradas.**

En: *Las universidades en America Latina: ¿Reformadas o alteradas?. Comp. Mollis, Marcela.*

Coleccion Grupos de Trabajo de CLACSO, CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias

Sociales, Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina. Enero del 2003. p.203-216. E-mail:

clacso@clacso.edu.ar

Disponible en la Web: http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/mollis/mollis.pdf

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NOTES

[1] Dominique Babini is from Argentina. Following her doctorate in national information policy, she has been active in developing social science information networks in Latin America. Since 1983 she has been the coordinator of CLACSO´s information activities and since 2004, a member of Salalm. Dominique´s main concern in Salalm is to improve access to recent social science research published in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean and to make full-texts available by open access on the Web.

[2] www.greenstone.org

[3] http://168.96.200.17/ar/biblio/biblio.html