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About the scientific journal editor as community manager

Within a decade (2010–2022), with the massification and growth of smartphones and information and communication technologies, it is noteworthy how the job and profile of the scientific journal editor have undergone significant alterations that, we feel, were not unexpected and far less arbitrary.

Continuous publishing of papers is becoming increasingly common, defined by a digital format in which the content is released immediately after the editorial process is completed. Furthermore, analogic printed publications are less widespread, so it is no surprise that the rising ecological consciousness prefers electronic forms over printed ones for their impact on the scientific environment.

Nonetheless, over the last five years, scientific journal editors have been witness to a demanding situation that puts our fundamental education to the test: from a profile that must ensure the quality of the journal's contents, we have been quickly changed to flirt with digital marketing, which usually belongs to a community manager or a digital publicist.

Similarly to the profile of a community manager, the profile of a scientific journal editor has altered significantly, or developed, as some believers in technological progress argue, during the previous several years. Most colleges, however, have been surprised, retreated, and halted in the past because they did not believe "the narrative" (or better, the narratives). Although it was formerly common for the journal editor to be a well-known researcher, it may now be much more significant that the "neo-editor" possesses some abilities and career circumstances that are quite similar to those required for community managers at the time.

To investigate beyond their apparent similarities, it is worth briefly addressing some of the characteristics of editors and community managers (henceforth, abbreviated CMs).

On the one hand, many colleagues under 40 years old are comparatively "young" and virtually invariably unmarried (therefore, in principle, they have much more "free" time), and who, in general, seize the flags of a generation that does not comprehend or refuses to understand digital media. In other words, we are witnessing a generational relay that, as time passes, points to younger people and researchers.

This, coincidentally, is the same that is happening with the CMs. According to the research made by Luis Mañas and Isidro Jiménez (2018): "En las pymes vascas y navarras se constató en el quinquenio 2013-2017 que la función de community manager había evolucionado desde un perfil de hombre mayor de 35 años con licenciatura afín a la Comunicación al de mujer menor de 35 años con formación específica en la materia" (2). Aside from the quotation, it is worth noting that it is increasingly more typical to find a female editor in chief, often for a pittance.

On the other hand, some of the requirements, or sine qua non conditions, that rise year after year and that editors must fulfill, as well as academics and researchers who must continue working with our existing position, are quite comparable to those that CMs confront. Some of the more common conditions, according to Maas and Jiménez, are: mastery of the English language; ability to write and generate content; customer service and interaction with customers (which we can change to interaction with authors and readers in our case); management and dynamization of the community (editors, authors, academics, and readers networks in our case); growing and positioning a brand (in this case, our journal); marketing strategies; metrics elaboration and a In addition to these requirements, we must have a master's degree, a PhD, and publications (preferably in Q1-indexed journals) in our field of competence.

Similarly, as editors, we have recognized the necessity to alter our "modus operandi." Academic journals and editors are now associated with academic groups on Facebook, where requests for papers are sent, recent publications are mentioned, and ongoing seminars, lectures, and events are advertised. Potential writers and readers may be able to locate their journals on Twitter and social media if the editor has adequate time. Analogously, it is common to share summary videos and infographics via YouTube

and Instagram; we count with, in various languages, researchers' groups and editors' networks via WhatsApp; we frequently create digital content; we submit our journal to the most recognized and with the best scientific quality indexes; we position our publication; we become more accustomed to, day by day, citation indexes; data mining; SJR rankings; Google Scholar's bot; and very common we also do research and publish it.

To recapitulate, as previously said, all of these new talents have one thing in common: it is not a coincidence that our position is becoming more and more like that of a digital marketing expert. As a result, and following the lead of Luis Maas and Isidro Jiménez with regard to CMs, it is probable that the next criterion for editors will be to become influencers focused on creating engagement for their publications.

For these reasons, I believe it is critical to remain vigilant and resolute in the "traditional" function of the editor: to consider the quality of our journals' content and to maintain the free access to information they provide. These are the cornerstones of democratic editing practice and knowledge that is always accessible to everybody.

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Referências

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