

Some trends in Electronic Publication and Open Access in Portuguese History Journals

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Abstract. In the last decades, ICT development and the use of computer networks led to major changes in the way scientists communicate the results of their researches. One of the most important transformations occurred in scholarly communication through the acceleration in the unbounded disclosure of scientific information (open access). However, the adoption of new channels varies according to the scientific areas. This study is part of an ongoing research that aims to understand the impact of digital media in the mechanisms of production and dissemination of scientific knowledge within a specific scientific community: historians. This paper will look at whether and how the history journals in Portugal are adopting electronic publishing and providing open access to their contents. To operationalise the study, thirteen R&D Units were contacted and asked to provide a list of the journals published and the format used. Furthermore, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Latindex and European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH) were researched. Finally, the websites of Portuguese higher education institutions with History Departments were consulted, with the aim of identifying any periodicals that might not have been previously identified. At the end, twenty-two titles were considered. Data seems to show that universities and History R&D Units increasingly value the free electronic access to research results produced by historians.

Keywords. Electronic publication, open access, scholarly communication, history, Portugal

Introduction

It is crucial for scientists and scholars to disseminate the results of their research. In order for new scientific knowledge to settle, it should be shared by a group of individuals that validate and incorporate it into new research, on a continuous and ongoing process. For centuries, science has been communicated essentially through traditional printed materials (e.g. books, journals). However, due to recent social, economic and technological developments, several changes occurred in the means used to communicate science.

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Throughout the twentieth century, the commercial interests that have dominated the scholarly communication system caused considerable difficulties in the access to specialised contents, particularly regarding scientific journals. This scenario led to the development of a movement advocating free access to scientific knowledge (Open Access Movement – OA). This movement, which supports open science and free access to information, influenced scientific publication considerably, especially with regard to journals, which have sought, from early on, to profit from the advantages offered by electronic means. Nevertheless, the adoption of new channels to communicate science is not homogeneous in the different scientific communities, being this process influenced by the epistemic culture of each community [1, 2, 3]. If, in the field of "hard sciences" (e.g. physics, chemistry or biology), digital communication is considered natural, arts and humanities, where history is included, have been less keen on taking advantage of the benefits offered by the technological infrastructure to support research. In fact, in this field of knowledge, practices of communicating science tend to remain faithful to more traditional schemes [4]. According to Borgman [5] and Staley [6], humanists should change their attitude in order not to neglect the opportunities offered by the new technological environment, which allows authors to maximise the public exposure of their work.

Stevan Harnad [7] refers to the existence of between 25 and 30 thousand peer-reviewed journals across all areas of knowledge. From these, about a quarter are Gold OA journals, meaning that they provide online free access to their articles shortly after publication [7]. Laakso et al. [8] give an account of the significant growth in the number of Gold OA journals since 2000. Despite the undeniable proliferation of electronic titles in all areas of knowledge, the truth is that arts and humanities still have behavioural patterns that differ from those of natural sciences and technology.

A UK study [9] points out to a significant increase in the use of electronic journals by scientists from different fields of knowledge. However, it reveals important disciplinary differences. In fact, when compared to other researchers, historians are those who less use electronic journals on a daily basis. There seem to be two reasons that justify this type of behaviour. One is related to the absence of the needed information in a digital format. The other may be due to the importance still attributed to other materials, namely books. Considering these elements, it is important to take into account the specificities of the various epistemic communities in studies on the adoption of electronic publishing in different scientific areas [10].

In Portugal, the available data shows that, from 2004 onwards, online access to international scientific publications (journals, electronic books and others) and their use has been increasing substantially [11]. The same is verifiable in relation to free access institutional repositories of scientific information and to the volume of documents deposited in them, especially after 2008 [11]. Even though data analysis seems to point out to an increased acknowledgement of digital information by the national scientific community, including arts and humanities, the truth is that there are few studies on the adoption of ICT among Portuguese scientists. Moreover, studies on electronic publishing and open access to scientific literature are particularly scarce and seem to be more focused on communities formed around an organisation than around epistemological areas.

1. Methodology

This study is part of an ongoing research that aims to understand the impact of digital media in the mechanisms of production and dissemination of scientific knowledge within a specific epistemic community: historians². This paper will look at whether and how the history journals in Portugal are adopting electronic publishing and providing open access to their contents.

Considering that scientific research in Portugal is mainly developed in Research & Development Units (R&D Units), funded and evaluated by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), this was the setting chosen for the research study mentioned above. Thirteen out of the seventeen History R&D Units currently funded by FCT [12] were chosen (see Appendix 1). These units integrate around a thousand researchers. The remaining four R&D Units were excluded for two reasons: two – Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa and Centro de Estudos Arqueológicos das Universidades de Coimbra e Porto – were not considered for being specialised in Archaeology; the other two were excluded because they are specialised in History and Philosophy of Science (Centro de Estudos de História e Filosofia da Ciência and Centro Interuniversitário de História das Ciências e da Tecnologia – FC-UL/FCT-UNL). The latter integrate mainly researchers from other scientific fields, with epistemic cultures and scientific practices that differ from those of historians.

Being scientific journals the main vehicle to publicise new findings to the scientific community, it was considered essential to identify the Portuguese history journals. Since there is no updated database of journal titles by scientific area, it was necessary to bring together scattered information in order to identify the periodicals that are still active. In order to do that, the thirteen R&D Units were contacted and asked to provide a list of the journals published and the format used. Furthermore, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Latindex were researched, as well the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH). Finally, the websites of Portuguese higher education institutions (HEIs) (public and private) with History Departments were consulted, with the aim of identifying any periodicals that might not have been previously identified. Since some of the sources used were not updated, it was also necessary to undertake some complementary research to confirm the information retrieved. In the end, all the extinguished titles, along with those that have not been published since 2009, were not taken into account. After gathering all the information, twenty-two Portuguese history journals were considered, excluding those specialised in Archaeology and Art History (see Table 1).

2. Results and Discussion

Almost all titles are published by HEIs or R&D Units affiliated to them, being the only exceptions the *Anuário do Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico* (ISSN 1647-3949) and the *Revista Portuguesa de História do Livro* (ISSN 0874-1336).

² The study is being carried out within the 3rd cycle (PhD) in Information and Communication in Digital Platforms, taught, in partnership, by the Universidade de Aveiro / Departamento de Comunicação e Arte and the Universidade do Porto / Faculdade de Letras, and supervised by Armando Malheiro da Silva and Maria Manuel Borges.

As shown in Table 1, the number of printed versions is higher than number of electronic versions: only three out of the twenty-two are e-journals. However, one – the *Anuário do Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico* – is published in CD-ROM, meaning that only two are online. The *e-Journal of Portuguese History* (ISSN 1645-6432), created in 2003, is, as far as we know, the first Portuguese history e-journal. It is an open access journal, jointly published by Universidade do Porto and Brown University (USA) and hosted by the latter. The other online journal is a medieval specialised title, published since 2005 by the IEM: *Medievalia online* (ISSN 1646-740X). There is no information available with respect to the OA model adopted. Nonetheless, no embargo periods are mentioned, which seems to point to the adoption of the Gold OA model.

But if the aforementioned journals have always been published electronically, there is one case in which the electronic version will soon replace the printed one. The *Boletim do Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra* (ISSN 0872-5632), annually published by the Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra since 1973, is going to be, from this year on, available only online [13]. This transition from analogical to digital is part of a joint project developed by Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra and the Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra – ID@UC –, that intend to support all the titles from this University that plan to move into the new media, using an OJS platform [14].

Nevertheless, even when journals are published only in printed format it is possible to access several contents through the web. The adoption of OA policies by the Portuguese HEIs resulted in the growth of institutional repositories and increased information sharing in academic communities. Thus, through the repository of the Universidade dos Açores, it is possible to have access to the tables of contents, the abstracts and some articles in full text from the *Arquipélago. História* (ISSN 0871-7664). The same happens with the digital library of the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto as regards the journals *CEM: Cultura, Espaço e Memória* (ISSN 2182-1097) and *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História* (ISSN 0871-164X). But even when the journals are not archived in a repository, the publishers provide their contents, including articles in full text, freely through their web sites.

3. Conclusions and further research

Although historians are considered a traditional community as regards to the channels adopted to communicate their research, the studies reveal some behavioural changes.

In the Portuguese case, data seems to show that, even if print remains the most common format, universities and History R&D Units increasingly value the free electronic access to research results. Considering that Portugal is a small country, the visibility offered by the Web is extremely important and it is being used as a resource to reach a larger number of other researchers.

In the future, it is our intention to cross the data obtained in this study with other data collected through semi-structured interviews conducted to all the directors of the R&D Units, and through a survey applied to individual researchers. This will arguably allow us to better understand the trends in electronic publishing and OA in the field of History in Portugal and how they are perceived by historians.

Table 1. Journals considered in this study

Title	ISSN	Publisher	Versions		Available online			Indexed by
			print	electronic	table of contents	abstracts	articles	
<i>Anais de História Além-Mar</i>	0874-9671	CHAM	X		X	X		ABC Clio; America: History and Life; ERIH; Historical Abstracts; Latindex-Directorio
<i>Anuário do Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico</i>	1647-3949	Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico		X	X	X		Latindex-Directorio
<i>Arquipélago. História</i>	0871-7664	Universidade dos Açores	X		X		X	
<i>Boletim do Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra</i>	0872-5632	Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra	X		X	X		Latindex-Directorio
<i>Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies</i>	0874-8438	CHAM	X		X	X		America: History and Life; ERIH; Historical Abstracts; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio; RedALyc
<i>Cadmo. Revista de História Antiga</i>	0871-9527	CH-UL	X		X			
<i>CEM: Cultura, Espaço e Memória</i>	2182-1097	CITCEM	X		X		X	
<i>Cultura. Revista de História e Teorias das Ideias</i>	0870-4546	CHC	X				X	ERIH
<i>e-Journal of Portuguese History</i>	1645-6432	Universidade do Porto and Bown University (USA)		X	X	X	X	AERES; ERIH; DOAJ; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio; SciELO
<i>Estudos do século XX</i>	1645-3530	CEIS 20	X		X	X		ERIH; IBSS; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio
<i>Ler História</i>	0870-6182	ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa	X		X	X		CAPES; EBSCO; ERIH; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio
<i>Lusíada. História</i>	0873-1330	Universidade Lusíada	X		X			Latindex-Directorio
<i>Lusitania Sacra</i>	0076-1508	CEHR	X		X			Historical Abstracts; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio; Ulrich's Periodicals
<i>Medievalista online</i>	1646-740X	IEM		X	X	X	X	Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio

Table 1. Journals considered in this study (continued)

Title	ISSN	Publisher	Versions		Contents available online			Indexed by
			print	electronic	table of contents	abstracts	articles	
<i>População e Sociedade</i>	0873-1861	CEPESE	X		X	X	X	ERIH; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio
<i>Res Antiquitatis. Journal of Ancient History</i>	1647-5852	CHAM	X		X		X	
<i>Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História</i>	0871-164X	Universidade do Porto. Faculdade de Letras	X		X	X	X	Latindex-Directorio
<i>Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura</i>	1645-2259	CHSC	X		X	X	X	Latindex-Directorio
<i>Revista de História das Ideias</i>	0870-0958	Universidade de Coimbra. Faculdade de Letras, Instituto de História e Teoria das Ideias	X		X	X		IBZ; ERIH; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio
<i>Revista Portuguesa de História</i>	0870-4147	Universidade de Coimbra. Faculdade de Letras, Instituto de História Económica e Social	X		X			ERIH; Latindex-Directorio
<i>Revista Portuguesa de História do Livro</i>	0874-1336	Centro de Estudos de História do Livro e da Edição	X			X	X	Latindex-Directorio; SciELO
<i>Via Spiritus. Revista de História da Espiritualidade e do Sentimento Religioso</i>	0873-1233	CITCEM	X				X	ERIH; Latindex-Catálogo; Latindex-Directorio

Appendix 1. R&D Units considered

Abbreviation	Unit designation	Institutional affiliation
CEHCP	Centro de Estudos de História Contemporânea Portuguesa	ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa
CEHR	Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa	Universidade Católica Portuguesa
CEH	Centro de Estudos Históricos	Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas
CEIS 20	Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares do Século XX – CEIS 20	Universidade de Coimbra
CHC	Centro de História da Cultura	Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas
CHSC	Centro de História da Sociedade e da Cultura	Universidade de Coimbra. Faculdade de Letras
CHAM	Centro de História de Além-Mar	Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas and Universidade dos Açores
CITCEM	Centro de Investigação Transdisciplinar «Cultura, Espaço e Memória»	Universidade do Porto and Universidade do Minho
CIDEUS	Centro de Investigação Transdisciplinar de História, Culturas e Sociedades da Universidade de Évora	Universidade de Évora
CEPESE	Centro de Estudos da População, Economia e Sociedade	Universidade do Porto
GHES	Gabinete de História Económica e Social	Universidade Técnica de Lisboa. Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão
IEM	Instituto de Estudos Medievais	Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas
IHC	Instituto de História Contemporânea	Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas

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