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TICVida '05: A Hispano-American E-congress on Life Sciences Based Upon IT

by

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AHDI (Hispanic Association of Internet Documentalists) launched from March 1-13, 2005, an e-congress devoted itself to the Life Sciences and IT, TICVida. The program introduced the present status of 20 Hispano-American countries plus the Brazil health and biological information services, and discussed policies for sound development of such supply services in the future. The TICVida core subjects have had a considerable impact on the information networks concerned, and 16 Science and Technology and High Education Governmental Agencies from American Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay) have sponsored this internet event.

The topics and issues raised in the electronic conferences have been organized in 5 topics, 3 workshops and 1 round table.

Theme 1: 'IT into Health', was attended by a working group based on 27 messages, integrating a total of 480 pp. Examples of topics covered ranged from hospital digital libraries (Spain) and health virtual libraries (Nicaragua) to data warehouse at national health vigilance agencies (Brazil), virtual immunologic Peruvian labs and Colombian telemedicine flight patrols. Open Access (OA) publishing in the context of today's medical publishing trends were examined.

Theme 2: 'Internet impact on biology', engaged 19 messages, including 192 pp. Through the complexities of meteorological knowledge management policies (Cuba) or ontologies architectures adapted to National Parks (Brazil), the need of action beyond the competence of a single expertise was shared. Marine science and fishery science virtual experiences were exposed.

Theme 3: 'The health information and documentation professional'. The discussion on this topic was fuelled by the achievements contributed in the first group (27 messages). Tailoring the information product supplied, according to the end-user requirements were emphasized, thus making it more user-friendly.

Theme 4: 'Teaching experiences in social sciences and work market implications', the group worked with 13 specific social sciences messages (241 p.). This working group discussed the pedagogical advantages of IT. The teacher's pedagogical content knowledge is challenged, and looking beyond the mentor needs a permanent training in the breadth and depth of each learning field.

At last, on theme 5: 'Social and humanists views on Biology and IT'. The definition and rationalisation needs were explored for such tools as databases, biology information training programs, subject portals and web pages, chemical substance information retrieval tools, and methodologies and guidelines for environmental management.

At the round table, the central question was 'IT into Life Sciences'. The evolutions in biomedical research methods must incorporate the management of information. Adequate training of life sciences professionals in Hispano-America must involve direct and real-time use of IT.

The first workshop dealt with the accessibility to European Union information through the official Spanish EU Documentation Centre (at Alicante). The EU policies on life sciences were exposed.

The second workshop on content virtualization allowed to harvest information and opinions, valuable for understanding and guiding the future use of internet.

The third workshop included a live training session in e-learning from the electronic blackboard of the Andalusian Public Administration Institute.

The online conferencing interface was easy to operate. All participants to theme discussions were permitted to comment or reply by sending a message from their own authenticated virtual space.

The e-conference TICVida saw a major American and European answer to a new wave of interests, applications and users. It gave an impulse to life science professionals and created a Trans-Atlantic opportunity to increase IT equity.

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