RAMB – A reduction in the time taken to decide whether to accept submissions!

Since a new electronic submission system was introduced at the end of 2007 (www.ramb.org.br/sgp/), RAMB has been attempting to improve the editorial process further still in order to shorten the time taken to reply and to emit a decision on the articles submitted (and to make the process less harrowing for authors).[1] The time taken to reply appears to be one of the factors that determines authors' choice of journal. Indeed, some authors have to wait more than a year after submission before seeing their article in print. Online publishing reduces this problem to a certain extent, providing electronic versions of articles soon after they have been accepted. However, the most significant bottleneck in the scientific publishing process is peer review. Although it is the core of the process of assessing an article, peer review has certain drawbacks, which have been pointed out in an RAMB editorial.[2] A minority of reviewers assess articles before the stipulated deadline. Peer review and citation of articles by Brazilian authors published in domestic periodicals is one of the most significant barriers to growth of scientific publishing in Brazil. These two features characterize a lack of a culture of citing and valuing Brazilian authors and articles. Brazil's own Higher Educational Personnel In-Service Training Council (CAPES), which developed the QUALIS system for evaluating periodicals, has not helped to change this landscape. Many criticisms have been published of this assessment system, pointing out its deficiencies.[3-5] The RAMB is doing its bit. In response to the increase in demand and the improved quality of articles, which is related to being indexed on the ISI Web of Science (Science Citation Index Expanded), the Editorial Board has taken the following measures:

All original articles in RAMB are now published online in English and in full.

1. The instructions to authors have been rewritten: http://www.scielo.br/revistas/ramb/pinstruc.htm

2. The number of peer reviewers invited to assess articles has been increased, in view of the elevated no-response rate.[2]

The task is arduous, but the first results can already be observed. Figure 1 illustrates the time elapsed between submission and approval of RAMB articles. We observed a reduction from 194 days in 2007 to 123 days in 2009 (36%). The results shown in Figure 1 are encouraging and represent our thanks to all of the authors and reviewers and the whole team at RAMB!

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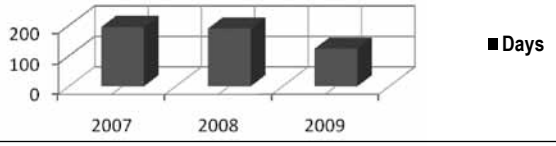
Figure 1. Articles published in RAMB between 2007 and 2009 – Mean time elapsed between submission of articles and approval



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