

Astronomical Information Services: What Can We do when Problems become Big Problems?

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Abstract. The libraries and information services at astronomical institutions in Argentina, prior to the current economic crisis, will be discussed. What can be done in the near and long term future?

I don't intend to mention any political matters, even if politics are the real cause and effect of what is happening in our country. Instead, I shall focus on solutions instead of crying over spilt milk.

Over the past few years, things were going well, at least on the surface, so, the principal item we needed to work on is money. Normally, money arrived regularly to our institution from the government, and we could continue buying bibliographies, paying our subscriptions and accessing electronic services such as SIMBAD, etc. In other words, we had the tools. We had problems, normal problems, but nothing that we couldn't handle.

Then, things changed. I think things have changed in a way or another all over the world, but our change was drastic and hard, very hard indeed.

So, I am going to talk about problems, or more precisely, what happens when problems become big problems, let's see the difference. I heard about problems here, such as not enough room to keep paper collections, metadata, the question about paper or online subscriptions, or both, and so on. Well! Big problems are when the "either, or" becomes "neither, nor". Probably we will get no budget at all.

Our problems became big problems. So, what to do? If we had to start at that moment thinking what to do, the big problems could become huge, unreachable and impossible to solve.

Fortunately, one year before the crisis, we had begun the creation of a foundation, for the purpose of receiving funds from private institutions and individuals. The name of the foundation is FUPACA (Foundation for the Advance of Astronomical Sciences) and enables us to legally receive monetary allocations (from 5 % of the taxes) that institutions and individuals are required to pay. However, this doesn't mean that everything is all right and we have solved all the problems, because those who could provide us with funds at present can hardly afford to pay their taxes.

But we did something. We didn't sit and wait for things to come from the sky, or from the government.... Our scientific staff (S. Malaroda and H. Levato), compiled and updated the *Bibliographic Catalogue of Stellar Radial Velocities*.

The Bibliographic Catalogue of Stellar Radial Velocities, is available at <http://www.casleo.gov.ar>. It does not include all the journals of the as-

tronomical literature, but the most important ones. It was prepared as a plain ASCII file with the object specifications as provided by the authors. Using the proper formats and filters, the catalogue is periodically transferred to the SIMBAD database.

Also, we maintain a file of research publications from observations taken at CASLEO. The file is divided into three parts. The first part is a complete list of the publications for each year; the second is a list of papers published in refereed journals, and the third is an alphabetical list of the authors.

If authors find any corrections, please contact Dr. Levato (hlevato@casleo.gov.ar). You can visit our page, www.casleo.gov.ar, for more information.

Things will continue fairly well until the end of the year and then the subscriptions will end.

My message points out the fact that we shouldn't just bear our problems, suffer them. We have a saying in Spanish, "A Dios rogando y con el mazo dando" that is translated to, "Pray, indeed, but do your utmost".

Here I am, in front of you, telling our reality. I am also asking for any ideas and any kind of help to keep the library going.

You may think, "Beggars cannot be choosers" but you are wrong because unlike a beggar, who has nothing to offer, my institution and my people have a great deal to offer. We are very wealthy because we have will, we have strength and we have culture.