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BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

## OPINIÓN

### Perspective on GeoTrópico

C. W. Minkel

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I wish to congratulate those responsible for initiating *GeoTrópico* and the University of Córdoba for helping to support it. There is nothing more important to young geographers than to see the results of their research published quickly and distributed widely. It is a stimulus that can be carried over for their entire professional careers. At the same time more experienced geographers can benefit, also. They have need to know, as soon as possible, the latest ideas and trends, and to identify emerging leaders in the discipline.

Electronic publication is clearly the “wave of the future,” due largely to savings in time and cost. Yet, there are also benefits to publication in long-established journals in the field, such as having reprints to distribute among colleagues, family and friends. Perhaps, for now, it is best to facilitate publication in both the most modern and the traditional forms.

It is widely believed that only peer-reviewed articles are worthy if dissemination, an idea that has some merit. However, it sometimes works to the disadvantage of less well-known authors and the less prestigious institutions. In any event, procedures for peer review are not generally well defined. By what criteria are the reviewers to be selected, and how many should be involved? What is the role of the editor in selecting manuscripts to be published? Under what conditions should a manuscript be accepted, accepted with minor corrections, with substantial modifications or rejected outright?

In most countries of Latin America, and elsewhere in the tropical regions, there are relatively few professional geographers and few well-known journals in which to publish. For the present, it seems imperative to increase the number of geographers and to facilitate their publication by all possible means. Through time, there will be increasing evidence to identify individuals of outstanding talent and manuscripts of particular merit in terms of intrinsic value. For now, *GeoTrópico* has a major role to play in the further development of professional geography in Latin America.

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