

Editorial

WHY THIS JOURNAL? WHY THIS NAME?

Science is the main factor involved in promoting and guiding human progress. It implies hard work, and is based on innovation, validation and diffusion.

Journals play a fundamental role in the validation, dissemination and recording of scientific results. Particularly in recent years, the publication of papers in referenced journals represents the main tool in legitimating and certifying scientific and academic careers. However, whilst an accepted publication should be a natural consequence of a virtuous scientific activity, for many young researchers, publication per se is increasingly becoming the main interest. Seen not as a means of advancing scientific knowledge but rather as a tool to increase bibliometric parameters (Cossu, 2013). Of course this tendency is provoked by the prevailing ranking systems where scientific production is measured by numbers and not in terms of benefits from scientific findings. The interest to publish as much as possible is currently reflected in an increasing number of journals developed for the specific purpose of commercially exploiting this interest, with accepted Authors being requested to pay a publishing fee (Brunner, Cossu, 2015).

In addition, in the submission of manuscripts, and at times in their evaluation, formal aspects frequently prevail over other important quality parameters such as innovation, relevance, applicability and related social, economic and cultural impacts.

Particularly in the field of waste management, science should indeed be part of a triangular network. One of the vertices of the triangle is represented by Science, with the other two indicating Society and Industry. Society (in which culture, policy, administration, welfare, economy, psychology, education are included) drives and stimulates scientific activities and receives benefits from the same. Industry, and entrepreneurship in general, is committed to supporting and applying scientific knowledge, bringing it into the real world, in terms of technologies, products or services, etc.

The aim of this new Journal is to address the above triangle, focusing on integrating all aspects of waste resource management and engineering, and emphasising the sustainability and circularity of material loops for residues.

The journal is aimed at extending the “waste” concept by opening up the field to other waste-related disciplines (e.g. earth science, applied microbiology, environmental sciences, sociology, political science, anthropology, architecture, art, law, etc.) and other scientific sources not limited to research laboratories (full scale plants, best prac-

tices, operational activities, discussions within working groups and associations, unsuccessful experiences, case studies from developing countries, administration, etc.).

As a consequence, various types of manuscripts will be welcome including research, review, strategic and opinion papers, position and prospective reports, case studies, country reports, development of new technologies and technical reports. Papers should target a broad audience including scientists, practitioners, managers, public authorities, educators, and students.

The submitted manuscripts will subsequently be evaluated during the review process not in absolute terms but rather in relation to the typology of articles. In an opinion paper, for instance, the absence of experimental data should not be viewed negatively. The presentation of new ideas may be beneficial to the scientific community. As the journal is intended as a multidisciplinary publication open to the needs of society, reviewers should carefully assess the diverse singularities of a specific discipline and should be receptive to potentially different social and economic contexts.

Another aspect in which this journal aims to stand out is the publishing model. In traditional journals, following the peer review process, publishing is frequently free for authors while readers pay by subscribing or buying individual articles. This model however limits the diffusion of publications. In open access journals authors are normally required to pay a publishing fee, and readers are given free access to the articles. A negative aspect of this model is the concern over the consistency and correctness of the acceptance procedure. Both models impact negatively on readers or authors from countries with economic constraints. Detritus intends to synergize the positive aspects of both models: free publication and unrestricted diffusion.

This approach has attracted the interest of highly qualified experts and scientists who have agreed to join the Editorial Board and to manage the peer review process. The process will be carried out using a traditional single blind procedure but in parallel a temporary online publication of the submitted manuscripts will be offered to Authors, in order to allow the scientific and technical community to express publicly their own views.

Hopefully the above explanation will have provided an answer to the first question: why this journal? Now the second question: why the name Detritus?

The name was inspired by an original proposal put forward by Louis Diaz in 2002 for the naming of the first IWWG journal. It has been selected for the following reasons:

- it is truly international, deriving from Latin, which was the first international language used in scientific communication;
- it reflects the multidisciplinary character of the journal, as detritus represents a debris or discarded matter of any kind which is encountered throughout our daily lives, in Biology, in Geology, in Psychology, in Culture, in Art, in Architecture, etc.;
- technical terms such as Waste, Recycling, Closing the loop, Sustainable Management, Renewable resources, Circular economy, etc. have already been widely used and abused;
- a detritus does not represent an end but rather a step towards the future. It opens up to hope and perspectives affording new opportunities. Leaves that fall from the trees will fertilise the soil and support new lives. The products of erosion or fracturing of rocks, such as gravel and sand, will help to build new complex structures, and so on;
- our mental detritus in conceiving traditional waste management strategies could indeed represent a starting point for new ideas. This is manifested, for instance, in a negative approach to landfilling, in line with the growing opinion that landfills should be abandoned as an unavoidable source of pollutants and nuisances. How-

ever, the deposition of waste on the ground enhances the possibility of controlling the material loop, acting as a sink for substances and elements that, alternatively, would spread and increase the already diffuse contamination.

Detritus, jointly with Waste Management, published by Elsevier, is an official Journal of the IWWG-International Waste Working Group and fully reflects the character of the association as “an intellectual platform to encourage and support integrated and sustainable waste management and promote practical scientific development in the field, ... communicating effectively within the professional community”.

To stick with Latin ... *ad maiora!*

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