

SOCICOM's Academic and Scientific Cooperation Activities

Las actividades de cooperación académica y científica de SOCICOM

As atividades de cooperação acadêmica e científica da SOCICOM

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to describe how SOCICOM (Brazilian Federation of Scientific and Academic Communication Associations) engages in academic cooperation by organizing activities that foster dialogue between Brazilian research associations and those in other Latin American countries. Here, we focus on two event formats: the SOCICOM Forum, held in partnership with ALAIC (Latin American Association of Communication Researchers), which is the result of an ongoing policy of collaboration with that association; and the SOCICOM Latin American Dialogues, as an attempt at thematic coordination. These experiences, combined with the panels organized by and in conjunction with ALAIC, demonstrate the importance of forming international networks that discuss, in a horizontal manner, the challenges and potential prospects of Communication and Digital Technologies in contemporary society, while taking into account the relevant local specificities.

Keywords:

SOCICOM-ALAIC Forum, SOCICOM Latin American Dialogues, academic cooperation, Latin America, SOCICOM

Resumen: El presente artículo tiene como objetivo presentar la forma en que SOCICOM (Federación Brasileña de Asociaciones Científicas y Académicas de Comunicación) actúa en materia de cooperación académica, proponiendo actividades que generen diálogo entre las asociaciones de investigación brasileñas y las de otros países latinoamericanos. Partimos aquí

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de dos formatos de eventos: el Foro SOCICOM, realizado en colaboración con la ALAIC (Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores en Comunicación), resultado de una política continua de articulación con dicha asociación; y los Diálogos Latinoamericanos SOCICOM, como intento de articulación temática. Estas experiencias, sumadas a los paneles promovidos a partir de y en conjunto con la ALAIC, demuestran la relevancia de la formación de redes internacionales que discutan de manera horizontal los problemas y las perspectivas potenciales de la Comunicación y las Tecnologías Digitales en la sociedad contemporánea, sin dejar de lado las debidas especificidades locales.

Palabras clave:

Foro SOCICOM-ALAIC, Diálogos Latinoamericanos SOCICOM, cooperación académica, América Latina, SOCICOM

Resumo: O presente artigo tem como objetivo apresentar como a SOCICOM (Federação Brasileira das Associações Científicas e Acadêmicas de Comunicação) atua em termos de cooperação acadêmica com proposição de atividades que gerem diálogo entre associações brasileiras de pesquisa e de outros países latino-americanos. Aqui, partimos de dois formatos de eventos: o Fórum SOCICOM realizado em parceria com a ALAIC (Associação Latino-Americana de Investigadores em Comunicação), resultado de política contínua de articulação com essa associação; e o Diálogos Latino-Americanos SOCICOM, como tentativa de articulação temática. Essas experiências, agregadas aos painéis promovidos a partir e em conjunto com a ALAIC, demonstram a relevância da formação de redes internacionais que discutam de forma horizontalizada os problemas e as perspectivas potenciais da Comunicação e das Tecnologias Digitais na sociedade contemporânea, guardadas as devidas especificidades locais.

Palavras-chave:

Fórum SOCICOM-ALAIC, Diálogos Latino-Americanos SOCICOM, cooperação acadêmica, América Latina, SOCICOM

1. Introduction

The Brazilian Federation of Scientific and Academic Communication Associations (SOCICOM) was established on September 2, 2008, with the aim of bringing together and

uniting research organizations in the field of communication in Brazil around common agendas (Lopes and Rêgo, 2023).

That decade was marked by the emergence of several such entities, dedicated to areas of teaching or research, professional media-specific fields, or scientific subfields. Many of them organized, met, and developed from the thematic/working/research groups of the Brazilian Society for Interdisciplinary Communication Studies (Intercom), an entity that has existed in the country since 1977.

Among other researchers, SOCICOM was conceived under the leadership of the late José Marques de Melo to strengthen the field of Communication in Brazil, in order to facilitate internal dialogue among scientific entities—ranging from 10 to 15 specific ones or those engaged with Communication—and also to unify them around agendas in defense of this science in various social spaces, from broader scientific entities to representations in government bodies, such as the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee and the Social Participation System of Empresa Brasil de Comunicação, or in conjunction with progressive social movements, especially regarding issues of communication, information, and culture.

2. Socicom-alaic Forum

At the time of writing this article, the president of the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC), Professor Fernando Oliveira Paulino (University of Brasília), had previously served as president of SOCICOM (2020–2022), having held the position of director of International Relations during the previous term.

This is an interesting point highlighting the importance of coordination capabilities within the Brazilian federation's communication field, but also indicating that there has always been a commitment to building international networks through the federation and Brazil's academic associations, given that the position focused on relations with other countries has existed since SOCICOM's first board, formed in 2008.

ALAIC aims to be “an institutional support for the strengthening and consolidation of teaching, research, and extension activities related to communication within and outside Latin America” (Paulino et al., 2023, p. 22). Dialogue with national associations is also part of its history. Thus, it is not surprising that these associations participate in its academic events.

In the case of SOCICOM, the “1st SOCICOM-ALAIC Forum” was created in 2018 for the ALAIC conference held in Costa Rica. Held on July 28 of that year, the event's theme was “Scientific Policies for Communications in Latin America” and featured the following panelists: Delia Crovi Druetta, president of ALAIC; Ruy Sardinha Lopes, president of

SOCICOM; Karina Olarte, president of ABOIC (Bolivian Association of Communication Researchers) and CONFIBERCOM (Ibero-American Confederation of Scientific and Academic Communication Associations), moderated by Ana Regina Rêgo, director of International Relations at SOCICOM.

Based on this theme, the forum aimed to:

[...] discuss the role of scientific institutions in the field of communication in the formulation of public policies. It also sought to highlight the existence, progress, and demands related to policies on research funding and support, internationalization programs, and researcher training, as well as support for scientific publications; it further focused on the formation of scientific networks and observatories in the field of communication. (SOCICOM, 2018)

Two years later, held virtually alongside that year's ALAIC conference due to social distancing requirements caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2nd SOCICOM-ALAIC Forum featured two panel discussions, held on November 17, 2020, both streamed on ALAIC's YouTube channel (@alaicorg). According to SOCICOM (2020), the aim was to "promote academic reflection that contributes to even more dialogue and joint activities."

The first panel was on "Communication as a Science," featuring presentations by Gustavo Cimadevilla, president of ALAIC; Ana Regina Rêgo, then president of SOCICOM; Karina Olarte, president of ABOIC-UCB; and Tanius Karam, scientific director of ALAIC; with Fernando Oliveira Paulino serving as moderator, at a time when he held the role of director of International Relations at SOCICOM.

The second panel, titled "Research in Communication – Perspectives," featured the following speakers: Anderson Santos, president of the then-Ulepicc-Brasil (Brazilian chapter of the Latin Union of Political Economy of Information, Communication, and Culture); Gabriel Kaplún, vice president of ALAIC; Sandra Osses, director of Communication at ALAIC; and Rudimar Baldissera, Director of National Relations at SOCICOM, with Daniela Monje serving as moderator.

The 2022 edition was held in person, with remote participants, on September 23, as a pre-event to the ALAIC congress, which took place that year in Buenos Aires. It featured Anderson Santos, who paid tribute to Brazilian researcher Valério Cruz Brittos, who had passed away 10 years earlier; as well as Fernando Oliveira Paulino, vice president of ALAIC; and Juliano Mendonça, interim president of Intercom.

Following this sequence, Lopes and Rêgo (2023) highlight the joint activities between the Brazilian federation and the Latin American association:

Also noteworthy during this period is the strengthening of the relationship between SOCICOM and ALAIC, as evidenced by the holding of several live editions of the SOCICOM/ALAIC Forums, which addressed urgent and fundamental issues for the construction of a more democratic, inclusive, and high-quality academic and social field. (p. 49)

Two years later, the IV SOCICOM-ALAIC Forum was held in a hybrid format, in person in Bauru, São Paulo, Brazil, with a live stream on SOCICOM's YouTube channel (@socicomorg).

The theme was "The Role of Brazilian Communication Scientific Entities in Latin America," featuring presentations by: Ana Regina Rêgo, president of the SOCICOM Deliberative Council; Betania Maciel, president of SOCICOM; Fernando Oliveira Paulino, president of ALAIC; and Tanius Karam, scientific director of ALAIC, moderated by Anderson Santos, director of International Relations at SOCICOM.

An article on the event highlighted the "[...] significance of the ALAIC and SOCICOM Congress in strengthening the communicative dynamics of the Latin American 'homeland'" (Perobelli, 2024) as one of the hallmarks of the relationship between the two scientific organizations.

In 2026, the 5th SOCICOM-ALAIC Forum will remain one of the pre-conference activities of the Latin American association's congress, but will once again be held exclusively online. The theme will be "Sovereignty, social justice, and informational autonomy in Latin America."

Representatives from both associations will participate in July—when this text is likely to be published—including the current presidents of ALAIC and SOCICOM, respectively, Anderson Santos and Fernando Oliveira Paulino; and ALAIC Vice President Daniela Monje, with Marluce Zacariotti, SOCICOM's Director of International Relations, serving as moderator.

In addition to continuing the joint efforts also outlined at ALAIC congresses, this forum aims to foster dialogue based on the event's theme, which will address the sovereignty of Latin American countries, the defense of autonomous democratic processes, and the issue of misuse of internet platforms.

3. Socicom Latin American Dialogues

One of the initiatives of SOCICOM's International Relations Board in 2023 was to create a space where a representative from a Brazilian affiliate could converse with a

representative from an association in another Latin American country via a live stream on the federation's YouTube channel (@socicomorg), thereby amplifying the impact of this conversation and establishing contact between the two organizations.

The activity was named "SOCICOM Latin American Dialogues," with the general theme "Challenges in Communication" (Socicom, 2023), and respected each representative's native language, thus taking place in Portuguese and Spanish.

The initiative featured four live streams in 2023, discussing the following topics: An interdisciplinary perspective on Communication studies; Praxis in Communication studies; Challenges for Communication education; and The relevance of Communication today.

Held on May 2, the then-president of the Mexican Association of Communication Researchers (AMIC), Dorismilda Flores-Márquez, spoke with Intercom's president, Juliano Domingues. The theme focused on the "interdisciplinary perspective" resonated with the two organizations, which are more general in scope within their respective countries, receiving research on various topics from their working groups.

The second livestream, on June 28, was the first to feature an organization whose activities were not limited to the academic world. The Organización de Comunicadores Populares de Bogotá (OCP), Colombia, represented by one of its coordinators, Juan Diego Muñoz Socha, spoke with the president of the (current) EPTICC Society (Brazilian Society of Political Economy of Information, Communication, and Culture), Verlane Aragão Santos.

Since there had been joint activities in OCP training spaces and in Latin American working groups with researchers from the EPTICC Society, the proposal was to discuss how critical research and social action could be even more closely integrated. This initiative was instrumental in the Brazilian organization creating the "Special Sessions on Communication and Outreach," which will be featured at its events in 2024 and 2026.

Meanwhile, the dialogue on July 18 brought together the Brazilian Association of Journalism Education (ABEJ), represented by its Director of Institutional Relations, Marcelo Bronosky, with Gissela Dávila, General Director of the International Center for Higher Studies in Communication for Latin America (CIESPAL), based in Ecuador. Both play an important role in training communicators, establishing a conversation on this topic.

Finally, on July 15, Rayén Condeza Dall'Orso, president of the Chilean Association of Communication Researchers (INCOM Chile), and Claudemir Edson Viana, executive secretary of the Brazilian Association of Educommunication Researchers and Professionals (ABPEducom), co-hosted a live stream to discuss the importance of communication.

That year's INCOM (2023) event highlighted the relevance of being an interdisciplinary field, since: "Realities, as we know, are complex and difficult to address, and this complexity is heightened in contemporary media-saturated and global society." Meanwhile, the field of educommunication operates within an interdisciplinary framework that inherently recognizes the broader relevance of deepening knowledge of and for communicational practice.

The "SOCICOM Latin American Dialogues" returned the following year, but with only one edition, dedicated to the overarching theme of the cycle: "The Challenges of Communication." The live event reinforced the partnership with ALAIC, with the presence of its president, Fernando Oliveira Paulino, in direct dialogue with the then-president of SOCICOM, Betania Maciel. The aim was to evaluate and consider strategies based on these two major entities in the field in Latin America.

Figure 1 below shows the playlist of all the "SOCICOM Latin American Dialogues" that have taken place.

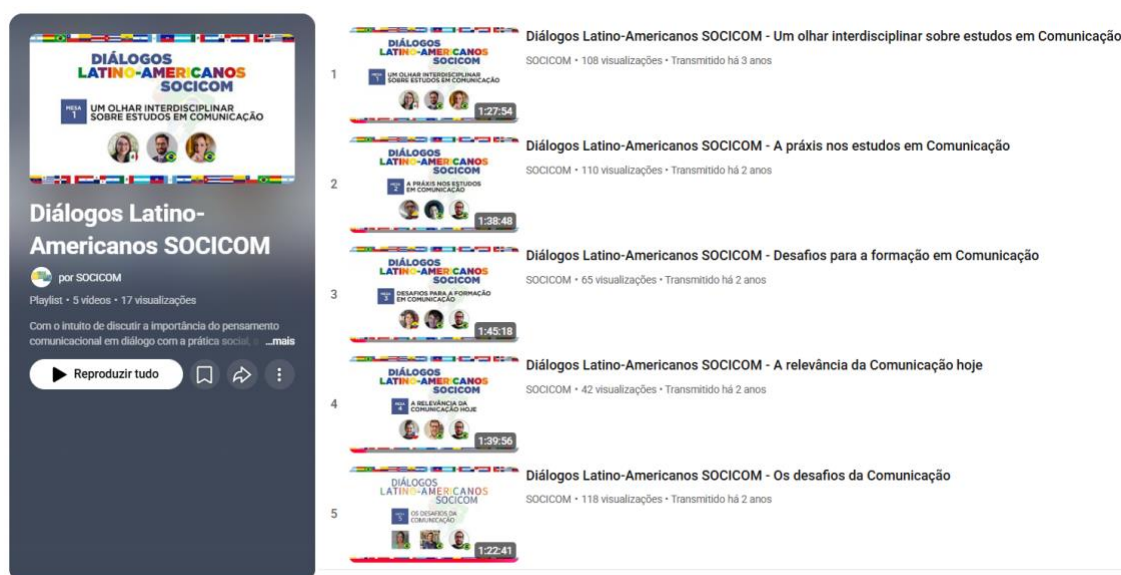


Figure 1: Playlist for "SOCICOM Latin American Dialogues". (Source: @socicomorg YouTube channel)

The platform was to be revamped during the following administration in order to expand ties with Portuguese academic institutions, but as of the writing of this article, no new broadcasts have been possible.

4. Conclusions

Institutional academic cooperation has been a part of the Brazilian Federation of Scientific and Academic Communication Associations since its inception. Figuring out how

this can be achieved on an international scale has been a challenge for successive leaderships since the Federation's founding in 2008.

Amid the various demands that have shaped not only communication and cultural issues over these nearly 20 years, the organization has also served to establish political stances and mobilization in defense of democracy—a task that is all the more demanding in today's contemporary context.

Direct coordination with ALAIC, as the largest entity in this subfield in Latin America, has proven to be the right approach. Here, we mention only the organization of a joint event at ALAIC's congresses, but this is part of an ongoing dialogue surrounding various projects, including discussions on cooperation, which are the focus of this issue of the Journal.

The “SOCICOM Latin American Dialogues,” on the other hand, sought to advance through other avenues, creating spaces for conversation between an affiliated association in Brazil and one from another Latin American country, striving as much as possible to build on themes of common interest that arose from concerns regarding the “Challenges of Communication” in the contemporary landscape.

In this case, having the videos on SOCICOM's YouTube channel also allows us to document how the topics were addressed, creating a media record of these experiences so that they can be more easily retrieved and followed by future generations.

As SOCICOM approaches its 20th anniversary, it is incumbent upon the organization to continue seeking to strengthen academic ties, especially—but not exclusively—with associations and entities in subalternized countries, in order to advance the goal of “another form of communication.”

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