

Good morning,

Before I go on with my presentation, I would like to show you a few images.

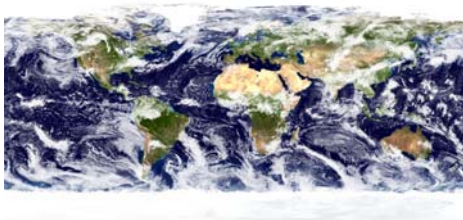


Here is the most up to date image of the whole planet that we have available, it was released by NASA a few weeks ago under the name of “the blue marble”. These type of images have changed the perception that we have of our immediate reality, and showed us that there we are, together, alone, out in space. That we are “boldly going where no one has gone before”. If you like Star Trek you know what I mean.

But we can have many ways to see our world, and our reality.



Here we have a flat image of the planet, a projection, that does not convey at least to me the same sense of wonder than the previous image. Something is missing.



The clouds, the atmosphere, in fact. But the clouds do not let us see the detail next to the ground and the surface oceans. So we remove them.



And we can get rid of the oceans, the atmosphere, and see just what constitutes the “real”, hard rock surface of the planet, and we get a very different image, where the Chomolunga, as

the Everest as is also known, is not the highest mountain any more, of course depending of one's reference point.



We can get rid of the sun as well, and put the Earth in the dark. And see what lurks under the the shadows of the planet. The shadows and some light. We get another picture of reality, and see where most of us live, at least those that have access to electric lights. We can interpret it and see that the Earth must look very crowded for some, and quite roomy for others specially if you live down under.

So, fo me, one of my main quests in general as I am getting less young is to understand what is reality. And specially since I decided to put myself forward as a candidate to become a director, I have tried first to understand, to get some grasp at least, of what most people at ICTA perceive as the reality of ICTA, and what representation different people use. Which reality we share or not.

So, I just would like to thank first anyone that has found some time to discuss with me the present and future of ICTA.

And now for the speech.

I would also like to thank anyone who has supported me and encouraged me to run. Special thanks to those that read through my programme and gave me their feedback. Thanks to those colleagues that were vocal or conveyed somehow the message aimed at discouraging me to run because they helped me to question my reasons for doing so.

Thanks to those colleagues that agreed to be part of an eventual management team, that in my case at this time includes Ma. Rosa Rovira as secretary, Jerome van den Bergh as research deputy, and Montserrat Sarrà as postgraduate deputy, and as vocals Joan Martíenz-Alier, and of course Joan Rieradevall as coordinator of CCAA. Montserrat has done an excellent job as postgraduate training coordinator. We agree that it is time for her to pass on the buck to someone else but she has agreed to stay on in any of the elected teams in her current role to facilitate the transition. Special thanks to them, their trust and time to discuss how we can move forward. As you can notice, we have an overlap of teams with Jordina's. This is the reason why I did not mention them in my programme.

ICTA was created with a mission and a vision that necessarily has to evolve with time. In my opinion this vision and mission has changed in recent years, and I believe that most of us have not had much of a say in this. I believe that most of us would like however a different ICTA than the present one. An institute that goes beyond being a simple work place and a mere administrative centre for projects and funds for a successful bunch of individuals. We would like an organization that help us to do our work more effectively at many levels, that has a

cohesive community that it is involved in the running and sharing of what ICTA has to offer and that help us to become better at what we do and be happier at work, and also promotes research and training for research according to certain shared values (excellence, rigour, accountability, ethics ,etc), which also includes an institutional and moral responsibility for those that are in training or seeking stable jobs. I think that we would all like reliable, effective and accountable governance. We also would like to know why things are decided, what is done with our research funds, how we can get studentships and students, how a colleague or former student can get a job, etc.

But this is all very nice, very rhetorical. Anyone can promise anything. I can assure you that we are not in crisis. I can promise you 400€ each if you vote for me.

But, as Tom Cruise, in the role of a sport agent, had to say to his client in the movie Jerry Maguire: "Show me the money!". Or as Josep Pla the writer said: "i això qui ho paga?".

Indeed we need money, cash, for anything, and at present we are facing pretty hard times, and I am not sure who is really aware of this. I am not just talking about the current financial crisis, but of a reality that I was not fully aware of when I first decided to present my candidacy. As I say in my programme, the current financial plan for ICTA expires after next summer, and it is not related to the crisis at all. Afterwards, the only support that we can expect from the UAB to cover our running costs will be 500€ to cover our annual 10,000€ phone bill. Incidentally, despite the concerns on the percentage of our research time attributed ("adscrita") to the department or ICTA, we as an institute receive zero funds. Plan A, as already in place, is to use increasingly a part of the overheads from our research projects that the UAB already returns to us. But with this arrangement we have to increase our research income by millions to increase our income in a few tens of thousands through the so-called "retorn del canon", and with this model we will just be able to cover our most basic needs. I cannot show you many figures because we have had no budgets at ICTA for previous years except what has been discussed for 2011 since last December and on the 6th February.

There are no B plans as far as I know, except to use research funds to foot the bill of our current administrative and management costs that the UAB cannot cover. Nothing has been arranged with anybody. Unless we get a solid financial plan we basically have not got money to do anything by ourselves as an institute. We may have to sack people, no support for research, no for nothing. In my opinion, this should be the focus of the discussion and debate for choosing a new director. Ask her or him, show me the money!. "I això qui ho paga?".

I cannot show you any money of course. It has been difficult enough for me to understand in my current status that indeed there is no plan B, that there are no alternative arrangements. That we have no money other than the salaries of the people in our administration, the money of all your salaries if you get paid from the UAB, and for the water, cleaning and utilities. But we have no money, no savings, no planned income from the UAB, other than 500€, to spend on the telephone. There is no plan yet for how to have additional funds for the transfer and management to the new building in 2014. And we are talking of a lot of money needed.

So, for me, again the question that a new director should answer is, where is the money going to come from for everything that you have promised in your programme?. Is there a magic bullet?. Show me the money!. I això qui ho paga?.

I certainly do not have it, as I said. I only know, it is very obvious to me, that we need a new model of institute. I also see that the current situation has some links to the one described in a letter published in the journal Nature this week, on Spanish science which ended with this: “No plan. No backup. No choice. Mission: Impossible. Ghost Protocol.”

So, what shall we do about it?.

Well, why do not we turn ourselves into a department?. How would that help?. Show me the money!. I certainly do not see it.

But, despite the general hardships, in our surroundings, in the UAB, there are institutes in similar or less “sexy” topics than ours that manage millions of euros by themselves, composed of people like us, some with a senior body of researchers composed mainly by UAB civil servants, and have less or no ICREA, RyC etc researchers and less income from EU projects or others than us. They have their own personnel too. How do they do it?. Well, they have a clear governance and get funds from outside the UAB. And they also control their own project overheads. Do we have to become an external institute to do so?. Not necessarily, but why not?. They can show us the money!.

In fact, I am not aware that we have negotiated, not even asked the UAB how to change the proportion of our project overheads that they keep and we can get. In meetings that I have had in the rectorat with vice-rectors I was informed that they are wondering why we are not discussing these issues with them, and that they have already been wondering how to do so themselves. Unbelievable perhaps?; perhaps it is easier to argue that I was misled?. But for me it is not an option to sit tight whilst knowing that the money trickle is drying out, while others have already showed the way. And which is the way?

In my opinion, the way is my motto: “cohesió, participació, ambició i lideratge”. The current challenge is so huge that we need everyone to put some weight behind a strong leadership to pursue a goal that is necessarily ambitious, and probably sounds impossible to some, but it is the only option we have unless we want to stay put, close down partially the premises, waiting for the day that someone will get us out of the hole. The alternative I think is that we, ourselves, find a new financial model for ICTA so that we can pursue our objectives.

I explained in my programme which are the priorities in my opinion to achieve this goal:

- To unite and dynamise the ICTA community
- Optimize the organization and administrative management
- Plan the move and management of the new building
- Define and execute strategic plans on
 - Research lines
 - Postgraduate training
 - Promotion of research activities
 - Communication
- Define a strategy for human resources and to provide support for career planning

- Accountability and transparency
- Apply to the Severo-Ochoa programme

So, I can't show you the money to do some of this. How can I show you that I am the right person to lead you all through this?.

Well, I can't. As I have been learning over the last few weeks there are four facts that I must accept:

- First fact. The problem is much bigger than I ever imagined. I have been using the poetic metaphor of a boat heading into a storm, and the director being the pilot/captain that steers the ICTA boat through the storm, while just needing a team of people to help with the sails and so on. I have come to appreciate in the last 10 days that the ICTA boat is already in the storm and may sink if we do not do anything about it. We have been taking on water for several years already, we just did not know.
- Second fact. Anyone who becomes the next director needs a lot of support. We have taken a lot of water already and everyone is needed to contribute doing something.
- Third fact. I do not have at present, and I am convinced now that I will not get the support I need to lead the ICTA boat out of trouble. The reasons are varied, and I'd rather not discuss them today.
- Fourth fact. It has never been one of my professional goals to be a director, and I am very concerned about the gravity of the situation that has been allowed to develop and that has got us into the current mess. As a result, I cannot see that I am in a position to become a director and accept that it is really my duty or responsibility to do so given the situation that is being inherited, and consequently, given the current dimension of the challenge, it is not really the right thing for me to do, professionally, to give up and to put aside my current commitments with my collaborators and students, ICREA and family, to sort out a mess that I did not create and for which I do not have enough support to rectify.

So, with a mixture of considerable regret and relief, I withdraw my candidacy to become the next director of ICTA. I wish Jordina and her team the best of luck, and they have my support when needed. I will now step down from here, and let Jordina take the centre stage.

Bellaterra, 17 febrer 2012

Antoni Rosell