

Participatory Exploration for Inspiration and Education (12)
Engaging Citizens: Results and Future Concepts (1)

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OUTREACH THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKING DURING THE MARS 500 MISSION

Abstract

The Mars500 mission was a ground-based simulation of a trip to Mars lasting 520 days in total. A communication delay due to the speed of light was set in place, just like in interplanetary travel. With such delay, no direct connection and thus, no normal Internet communications were possible.

In order to cope with monotony, during the mission, some of the crew members experimented with social networking services under high delay conditions, even developing software in-mission to facilitate this. The tool of social networking, besides being perceived subjectively as a very useful psychological support, worked out as an outreach tool, gathering attention and awareness of the importance of exploration. The public was involved in all the phases of the trip, giving support and having an active role in the mission through contests and personal questions. An overview of the adoption, use and results of this activity is provided.