

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
CALLING PLANET EARTH - SPACE OUTREACH TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC (3)

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EIGHT YEARS IN A 'SPACE MISSION' - LESSONS FROM RUNNING A POPULAR SPACE PORTAL
IN HUNGARY

Abstract

The Hungarian astronautical web portal 'Úrvilág' (Space World; www.urvilag.hu) was established in 2002, with the main aim of bringing news, events and developments closer to the general public. A small group of young professionals and space enthusiasts realized the lack of a frequent, up-to-date, comprehensive and popular, yet reliable space-related information source - printed or on-line alike - in Hungary. Apart from promptly delivering the major international space news to a wide audience in their mother tongue, a special emphasis is made on introducing space applications that affect our everyday life.

We are committed to show the numerous aspects of the modern society and economy that are rooted in space activities. Since 2007 we promote interactivity with our quiz series, and we organized a cartoon-creating competition in 2009 as well. We also provide the Hungarian space research and development community with an opportunity to communicate their results to the public. Such a mission is especially important since Hungary became a Cooperating State of the European Space Agency, with a short-term goal of the full membership.

Here we briefly review the development history of the web portal and show how it is operated day by day on a non-profit basis. We outline its impact made in Hungary during the 8 years of its existence, highlighting some interesting media effects like the tragedy of Columbia in 2003, the 40-year anniversary of Apollo 11 in 2009 or the recent 'Pictures of the week' series. In our paper we show how we improve visibility and effectiveness. We believe these ideas could be beneficial for similar outreach activities as well.