

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

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INCREASING MEDIA VISIBILITY OF PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

**Abstract**

Motivation

In the space sector, public outreach efforts are frequently directed towards large groups of people, a characteristic that raises the issue of reaching the target group through both time efficient and impactful channels. Mass media communication is regularly the means science communicators resort to in an attempt to reach as many people as possible.

Problem statement

However, mass media are at the same time the main channel for information coming from diverse and sometimes more appealing areas for the general public. Under these circumstances, the communication angle chosen by the science communicator becomes the decisive factor whether their activity makes the news or not.

Target and Purpose

This paper is addressed to science communicators, especially to those undertaking public outreach efforts that aim to raise awareness and to promote the understanding of space to the general public. The purpose of this paper is to identify best practices that enable science communicators to attract media interest and to raise media visibility that generates more awareness for their public outreach activities.

Methodology

In order to identify best mass media communication practices this paper presents a case study based on a public outreach activity under the cornerstone project “Galilean Nights” of the International Year of Astronomy 2009, organized in Bucharest, Romania, an event that was internationally awarded for its public outreach results.

The case study illustrates the process through which a science communicator can identify the right perspective from which to present his event to the media, analyzing the target group and establishing clear, achievable, measurable and time framed objectives in order to adapt his communication to mass media particularities and own objectives.

Furthermore, the paper presents an evaluation of the communication efforts done during the Galilean Nights event by analyzing media clippings, media impressions and public attendance. Finally, a list of lessons learned from this event is included, adding examples from similar public outreach efforts.

Conclusions

The paper concludes that science communicators that aim to raise awareness of space among the general public have to firstly interlink two types of research: final target research and mass media research. Secondly, they have to identify an innovative angle that provides journalists with a human story to tell. Moreover, the paper provides science communicators with a series of best practices in communicating their activities and projects to the media.