

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Interactive Presentations (IP)

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INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN SPACE

Abstract

Outreach and education is crucial for the advancement of space exploration. Effective outreach programs will ensure continued and increased involvement of the community in space-related activities, and also encourage public to provide innovative technological insights to advance space exploration. Throughout history, there have been variations of outreach initiatives witnessed in different countries across the globe. There has been a distinct difference between the outreach activities conducted in the developed countries as compared to the developing countries primary associated with political initiatives and priorities to gauge public support and interest in space-related activities.

Although different space agencies like NASA and ESA and other international organizations have tried to promote further exploration of our universe, there is still a gap between the interest of general public about space and scientists. The lack of public participation is primarily a result of the lack of connection between the public and space missions, along with lack of knowledge of the benefits of space developments for the life on Earth. Most of space exploration achievements are difficult to be understood by the general public leading to a mist-perception of space and all related activities. This paper aims to identify social elements that tend to influence perception of the public towards space exploration and develop non-conventional methods to increase public engagement and interest in the field. The paper focuses mostly in finding interactive strategies to communicate the spin offs from space explorations in order to create a platform for the people to connect with space related activities. Also, proposed strategies aim to be suitable to promote space missions in both developed and developing countries.

In order to gain an insight on the current level of engagement of public in different nations, online surveys are conducted in Spain, Albania, Canada, United States of America, India, and United Kingdom. The information gained through these surveys is used as a baseline to develop strategies to target audiences in different countries. In order to further develop appropriate outreach strategies, interactions and knowledge exchange are conducted at a micro level ,mostly consisting of studying the effectiveness of current outreach videos, workshops, interactive presentations on different audience types, including students, young professionals, and educators at a global level.