

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
 Space Culture – Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

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VERY VERY FAR AWAY (VVFA) – ‘FROM DISSEMINATION TO ANTICIPATION’
 DEMOCRATISING THE FUTURE USING PUBLIC CO-ENQUIRIES AND SERIALISED FICTION
 PODCASTS

Abstract

VVFA is a public facing research platform composed of a radio podcast, a website (www.vvfa.space), and a workshop series, seeking to re-ignite future ideologies. Its methodology uses Space Exploration as a lens to examine current ideas and values which may pertain to future societies through technological advances.

VVFA focuses on democratising future narratives, through exploring multiple perspectives simultaneously, and disseminating new cultural fictions. Bringing members of the public and experts together through workshops, we collectively craft a web of stories capturing new space potentials (future roles, future social and organisational structures, and collective aspirations) subsequently documented and disseminated via podcast on dublab.com, iTunes, Acast, and Soundcloud. This process enables the conceptualisation of future worlds, through which newly formed ideologies can permeate the public realm.

Today’s society is based on collectively agreed upon fictions. Cultural beliefs appear to be dominated by a ‘utopia of normality’, characterised by an absence of anticipation, where future projections can be perceived as speculative predictions omitting major societal aspects -social, economical or political- by primarily focusing on technological prowess resulting in nothing more than exercises in escapism. Conversely, proposing Space Exploration as a lens to examine today’s narratives, encourages participants to take a step back and re-evaluate cultural values informing technological development in space whilst empowering them to create long term cultural projections.

VVFA articulates 2 approaches;

- Collaborative world creation: an inspirational strategy established around scientific, social and ethical questioning induced by space exploration.

- Reverse archeology: the embodiment of future narratives into designed artefacts, services, and other, similarly to the way the Pioneer Plaque then Voyager Golden Record embodied the values of the time.

In this paper we will discuss how VVFA engages with new audiences generating contemporary aspirations to do with space and space education, by examining previously run workshops in Europe (Arduino in Turin, FHNW in Basel, SpaceStudios in London). VVFA’s dissemination emphasises the podcast, a medium whose listenership increased by 73% since 2013, a growth driven by mobility, reaching an audience of 57 million in the US. Dublab.com broadcasts to an international audience of over 350K per monthly streams, age 16 to 40 including creative professionals, social activists, students and technology savvy trendsetters. We will also examine the role of this dissemination in mediating future ideologies from the bottom up, the ability to quickly rally audiences for further co-enquiries, and the underlying feedback loop model enabling an evolving content.