

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth - Space Outreach to the General Public (6)

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INVESTIGATION ON THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC RELATION ACTIVITIES ON SPACEFLIGHT
POPULARITY USING THE EXAMPLE OF GERMANY AND ITS EFFECTS ON EUROPEAN
NEWSPACE INDUSTRY

Abstract

Spaceflight has been a topic of public interest since the early 1960s. Especially in the United States of America and the Russian Federation, a strong sense of pride and excitement was instilled in people's minds throughout their pioneering steps. By today, many other nations and space agencies like ESA or JAXA have developed successful space programs that have come to eye-level with NASA and Roskosmos. However, the pure thrill of pioneering is nowadays no longer sufficient to fascinate the wide masses since spaceflight has become just another part of background noise in the perception of society. While the launch of Sputnik 1 caused great publicity, the latest satellite missions fail to attract attention from daily news coverage. The following paper presents the research of GAIA Aerospace on the popularity of spaceflight in Germany with regards to its public relation activities and the resulting impact on the NewSpace industry.

The first part of the work investigates three representative largescale space projects regarding the work done in public relations during the different project phases. These exemplary projects are the Rosetta Mission by ESA, the Falcon Heavy test flight by SpaceX and the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter Mission by ESA and Roskosmos. With regards to the quantity of search results, a media response analysis serves as an instrument for measuring the success of public relations work and, in terms of the quality of publications, as a measure of popularity. Data on the long-term success of public relations work and the current project-independent popularity of space travel in Europe is provided by a one-off survey in the form of a questionnaire.

The second part of the paper deals with the question of what impact the popularity of European institutional spaceflight has on companies in the NewSpace industry in Europe. To answer this question, data collected in interviews with NewSpace entrepreneurs is presented. The results show that space travel in Europe, even though popular, has an even greater potential for popularity than claimed by institutional space organizations. Individual flagship projects such as the Rosetta mission or self-proclaimed spaceflight ambassadors like Alexander Gerst show that society has a desire to be informed about space exploration.