

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

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THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY'S COMMUNICATION EVOLUTION TOWARD SPACE 4.0

Abstract

The 21st century has seen wonders of technology having dramatic effects on people's lives. Moreover, the titans of search engines and social media offered new opportunities and reshaped society's interactions while taking advantage of greatly increased connectivity, especially mobile. Today information flow is significantly faster than ever before, news distribution is more immediate and interactive, and people are hungrier for new and astonishing details. The European Space Agency and its communications are adapting to these changes.

In the early 2010s, the arrival of the millennials coincided with the rise of a new social class: inspired billionaires who had earned their fortunes exploiting technologies in more creative ways. In 2012, Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, forecast the beginning of 4th Industrial Revolution. This revolution consists of a combination of physical, digital and biological technologies impacting all disciplines, connecting billions of people and drastically improving the efficiency of business and organizations. Riding this wave, a generation of Silicon Valley visionaries, charmed by the progress of the first space age, originated the so-called New Space Age: a movement that applies new technologies and business models to the space sector, addressing high costs and eliminating access barriers to exploit the potential of commercial space.

In Europe, New Space was dubbed 'Space 4.0', with reference to the widely discussed 'Industrie 4.0', report drafted by a strategic working group advising the German federal government on automation and data exchange technologies. In this context, ESA's Director General, Jan Wörner, presented Space 4.0 to ESA's stakeholders to raise awareness and prepare the Europe for the space paradigm shift. New Space functions in an informal and dynamic mode and the public has become increasingly engaged in its development and achievements.

ESA's Communication Department has decided to reply to these paradigm shifts and to review its strategic vision and operations. Priority is given to a Content News-driven organisation including a new ESA Editorial Board and an ESA Newsroom having a strong multimedia and mobile focus. The teams face, evaluate and steer numerous internal and external topics. Within a 3-year strategy horizon, this ambitious approach aims to reinforce the Space 4.0 vision and actively take Europe's citizens on board. As the main target, the general public should be inspired by major, well-developed stories that show fascinating scientific discoveries, concrete application results and innovative business cases that are useful for all ESA stakeholders, including governments, scientists and industry.