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CAREER AWARENESS AND EDUCATION IN THE SPACE SECTOR: SPAZIO ALBEDO PROJECT

Abstract

The New Space Economy has brought many changes to the space sector in the last decade, with new players, technologies and markets entering the scene. Opportunities are numerous and the need for figures with different backgrounds and skills is clear. Space is in fact no longer in the hands of a few leading nations, companies and experts, but it has become a field “for all”, where diversity in its broader meaning is fundamental. Despite the thriving scenario, students in their final years of study, especially when coming from different fields, are not always aware of the many opportunities that the sector offers and still consider space a very afar environment, where only specific knowledge is needed. Moreover, the complexity of the industry scenario introduced by the New Space trend has made it more difficult for them to have a solid understanding and to keep a critical eye over the existing companies and their job opportunities. The beginning of graduands’ space professional careers requires them to extend the knowledge and competences obtained while studying and apply them to the real environment, and this is indeed not an easy process, as many students are lost in the vastity of information that is present in the web and do not know how to address this change and/or are not provided with proper guidance. In this framework, Spazio Albedo is a project that aims at fostering the awareness of students and young professionals about their employment perspectives and the existing opportunities in the Italian space environment, whose vision is to complement the academic education with practical information on the space scenario and help them make their first steps towards the industry. This is planned to be achieved through different activities and social media engagement, the core being an online website to spread information. After a brief introduction on the Spazio Albedo project, this work will focus on a survey targeting students in their two final years of university and newly graduates, whose aim is to assess their awareness of the New Space Economy, their perspectives on the space employment environment in Italy, and the main challenges they are facing while shaping their future. The results of the survey will be presented and analyzed, allowing a better understanding of the necessity of a complementary education and the associated activities for Spazio Albedo. Finally, future perspectives, recommendations and best practices to be adopted will be discussed.