



Youtube? SFBTube! – Through pupils to the people

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Humankind is strongly affected by natural hazards: Earthquakes and volcanoes shake the solid earth, storms and floods happen more and more frequently due to climate change, tsunamis threaten coastal areas. As the human population continues to expand, and stresses on the environment multiply, the need for an understanding of the fundamental issues becomes more urgent. A major task of Collaborative Research Centre “Climate – Biogeochemistry Interactions in the Tropical Ocean” and Collaborative Research Centre “Volatiles and Fluids in Subduction Zones” is to explain how the different components of the earth system interact and how they affect the world’s population. Both Collaborative Research Centres implement a joint outreach program to communicate their research activities and results to the general public.

In doing so, new strategies in public outreach are essential – considering the fast pace of changes in communication media and the increasing importance of edutainment as a way to reach the public and particularly the younger generations. Outreach materials have to be interesting, easy to understand and fun to explore, but without sacrificing the scientific content. Therefore, videos for the internet (e. g. Youtube) are one promising way to reach that target group. Blogs, podcasts, wikis or being part of social networks such as Facebook are further ways. But “being present where young people are” is not enough. You have to speak their language, too. To take another step forward we hence involve a critical part of the target audience actively into this new communication strategy. School students are able to contribute innovative views and their own language in presenting science to the public. In cooperation with pupils and teachers, we experiment with those new approaches to public outreach.

Wherever it is possible, we are also making use of international cooperations of both Collaborative Research Centres with partner institutions in Latin America and Western Africa. Our outreach projects are carried out in close association with representatives of these foreign partners to link the research questions not only to geographic regions but also directly to individuals. In this way, the human aspects of research topics are incorporated.