



Engaging the public via competitions – lessons learnt from Rosetta

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2014 was an historic and challenging year for the European Space Agency’s Rosetta mission as it awoke from a 957-day slumber, arrived at Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, and deployed a lander on the comet’s surface.

One of the biggest challenges facing the mission’s science communicators was to awaken interest in the mission and generate a sustained engagement in the broadest possible audience in a relatively short time. New and innovative means were adopted alongside traditional approaches to achieve this goal.

In this paper, we describe one of these outreach projects: engaging the public with open competitions. We describe three different competitions that were run for three important mission milestones: ‘Wake Up Rosetta’ – a video competition to celebrate the end of hibernation; ‘Rosetta, are we there yet?’ – a photo competition to coincide with Rosetta’s rendezvous with 67P, and ‘Name Site J’ – to name the landing site chosen for the Philae lander.

We discuss our experiences of these competitions: the channels we used to promote them, the audience we reached, the different levels of engagement, the issues that we encountered, and the outcomes, including lessons learnt.