



Sustaining Public Communication of Geoscience in the Mass Media Market

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Most public communication about geoscience is either performed as a derivative of a research program or as part of one-off funded outreach activities. Few efforts are structured to both educate the public about geoscience while also attempting to establish a sustainable funding model. EARTH Magazine, a non-profit publication produced by the American Geosciences Institute, is a monthly geoscience news and information magazine geared towards the public. Originally a profession-oriented publication, titled Geotimes, the publication shifted towards public engagement in the 1990s, completing that focus in 1998. Though part of a non-profit institute, EARTH is not a recipient of grants or contributions to offset its costs and thus must strive to “break even” to sustain its operations and further its mission. How “break even” is measured in a mission-based enterprise incorporates a number of factors, including financial, but also community impact and offsets to other investments. A number of strategies and their successes and failures, both editorially in its focus on audience in scope, tone, and design, and from an operational perspective in the rapidly changing world of magazines, will be outlined. EARTH is now focused on exploring alternative distribution channels, new business models, and disaggregation as means towards broader exposure of geoscience to the widest audience possible.