



SSFX (Space Sound Effects) Short Film Festival: Collaborating with independent filmmakers through data to reach new audiences

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The ultralow frequency analogues of sound waves in Earth's magnetosphere play a crucial role in space weather e.g. they can excite killer electrons in the radiation belts which can critically affect the satellites we depend on. SSFX (Space Sound Effects) made 8 years' worth of ULF wave measurements by magnetometers at geostationary orbit audible to the human ear and released them online.

A competition challenged independent filmmakers from across the globe to incorporate these sounds into short films in creative ways. The brief was very open, simply requiring the shorts to include the provided sounds (with their use being a key judging criterion), but the filmmakers were free to modify the sounds and there were no restrictions on the subject or genre of film.

Seven films, of impressively high-quality, were chosen for screening at a special film festival in London which attracted a diverse and predominantly non-science audience and garnered media attention. The films are now being more widely shown, playing ahead of theatrical features and at other festivals and special events around the world.

We discuss how we were able to successfully engage the filmmaking community with this challenge, the steps involved in running a film festival and the incredibly varied and surprising results of the film competition.