

# **Europlanet Webinars: opening up space research to the general public**

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## **Abstract**

We report on the implementation of a webinar series, created and supported by Europlanet, NUCLIO and the Galileo Teacher Training Program. Since October 2016 this series of regular online presentations has introduced hundreds of viewers, including many classrooms, to current space research and related topics. More than 20 scientists, artists, engineers and educators have presented their work to a diverse and markedly different audience. We have had very positive reviews and feedback from participants and presenters alike.

## **1. Introduction**

The main objective of this program is to provide a space for scientists, engineers, educators and artists to show their work and passion. The one-hour live events are freely available to everyone with internet access and are aimed at being anyone from secondary school age and up. They are intended to be accessible and engaging to lay people and academics/professionals alike.

## **2. How it works**

A host presenter gives a brief introduction to the speaker and the subject, after which the speaker gives a 40-minute presentation using slides, audio and video. At the end there is a Question and Answer session where the audience can pose their questions live through the video conferencing software.

The webinars are recorded and shared on the Europlanet YouTube Channel [1] for anyone to watch, review or utilise as they see fit.

## **3. Platform, dissemination and evaluation**

Webinars are hosted and recorded through a professional video conferencing platform, and simultaneously live streamed to the Europlanet YouTube channel. This combination allows for flexible accessibility: the YouTube live stream can be openly accessed on a wide variety of devices and is supported by a robust technological system; the video conferencing platform requires registration and the installation of a proprietary application, though provides high quality video and audio, as well as useful Q&A tools with near real time responsiveness.

The webinar recordings, including Q&A sessions, are lightly edited, uploaded to the Europlanet YouTube channel and listed on the Europlanet website's webinar page [2] where they can be watched on demand and used as seen fit by the viewer - for instance, as a teaching resource for a school assignment or just for personal interest.

Various channels are used to advertise and inform about the webinars, including social media (Facebook and Twitter) and websites for each of the organisations involved in the project, as well as a dedicated mailing list.

The infrastructure and systems used to provide, disseminate and evaluate the webinars have evolved over the course of the webinar series, providing valuable insight into how to implement such a project, and giving the scope for further implementation in the future.

Registration and other analytics gathered through the platforms used provide insight into viewers' circumstances including where they find out about the webinars, background, country and how they utilise the webinars (e.g. watching live in the classroom).

Further information is being sought to provide further evaluation and insight into successful implementation of similar initiatives in the future.

## 4. Summary and Conclusions

The webinar programme has proven to be beneficial to both viewers and presenters alike. Viewers are able to garner new knowledge and exposure to topics that they might not ordinarily have access to in an interesting and accessible format. Presenters can reach a wider audience and are challenged to demonstrate their work and understanding to people outside their usual community and focus.

The format has proven itself to be an inclusive and far reaching strategy to bring planetary science research into the public domain, whilst helping to remove many geographical and accessibility barriers.

The archive of recordings will continue to be relevant and accessible for many years to come, allowing further knowledge transfer and development.

There is scope for further work on the extent and usefulness of such a mechanism of knowledge transfer, as well as opening up the learning gained from the implementation of such a project.

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## References

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7rd9lqUN0bOn3i72pJpFyw>

[2] <https://www.europaplanet-society.org/webinars/>