

Communicating Planetary Science Through Social Media at Europlanet

T. Heenatigala (1,2)

(1) Europlanet, Portugal (2) Science Office, Portugal (thilinah@astroepo.org / +31 649 099 747)

Abstract

Social Media plays a dominant role in Public Engagement of science. From 'Save the Hubble' campaign to Europe's Rosetta Mission, many space missions and discoveries have used social media successfully. Under the Horizon 2020, the Europlanet Media Centre^[1] identifies the importance of using social media for outreach. Europlanet uses primary and secondary social media platforms strategically to engage with the followers and a new audience.

1. Introduction

What are the best practices in using social media for science communication and how much should we invest on it? With ever increasing advancements in science, the ways people communicate have drastically changed. With how scientists interacting with peers and public, the ways that scientific information is disseminated, and methods of scientific outreach/education have changed, in many ways becoming more efficient. The use of social media has not only allowed scientists to engage in more efficient public outreach and education but has provided a unique platform for communication and networking within the scientific community.

2. Social Media at Europlanet

While Europlanet has a representation across all the major social media, it focuses on two levels. Primarily Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube, where content is posted regularly for most dynamic engagement. The campaigns are run on these platforms. Europlanet also produces regular videos for organisational events, planetary highlights, topical discussions, and live webinars. Secondly Europlanet uses Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+ where updates are posted regularly to keep a presence. Each of the platforms serves a different purpose and an

audience. Having a presence in different platforms helps to reach a wider audience. Europlanet also maintains a Flickr profile to archive photos from the organisation related events.

3. Best Practices: Europlanet Social Media Campaigns

While there are regular posts across all the social media platforms. Europlanet organises various campaigns to keep the public engaged. From the past campaign results, it clearly shows the public engagement can be spiked and reach a wider audience.

Europlanet social media strategy uses important planetary milestones and events to create campaigns, such as 'Transit of Mercury' featured video animation reached 17K views, Juno mission video reached 9K views. Europlanet also runs a monthly webinar series featuring planetary scientists with various expertise. The first series of webinars focused on general public while the second series is addressed teachers and students as the primary focus.

As another effort towards building a better relationship between scientists and public, Europlanet will focus on getting planetary scientists involved via Twitter in the future. This effort was highlighted during the EPSC2017 where EPSC was a trending topic in Latvia and Riga.

References

[1] Heward, A., Miller, S., Barrosa, M., Fouchet, T., and Raszler, V.: Europlanet outreach in Horizon 2020, European Planetary Science Congress 2014.