

C.C2 Working group: Science communication research in Astronomy

Report for the period September 2015 to November 2016.

Chair: Marta Entradas

WG Members:

Marta Entradas, Marie Curie Fellow at the London School of Economics (LSE)

Pedro Russo, President of Commission C2 of IAU, Leiden University.

Lars Lindberg Christensen, IAU Press Officer, IAU Commission 55 former President, ESO

Agata Hidehiko, Supervisor of OAO IAU, Director of NAOJ Public Outreach office

Steve Miller, Professor of Science Communication and Planetary Science at University College London (UCL)

Goals of the WG

The main goal of this working group is to facilitate the link between the scientific community working on science communication, in particular related to astronomy and space exploration, and the community of science communication practitioners and the astronomical community more broadly.

Work done in the last 12 months:

The main tasks performed by the WG in the past 12 months (since the WG's creation) were:

1. The WG proposed to conduct a survey in 2016/2017 of the practices of outreach of astronomers aimed at understanding the practices, motivations, and barriers to public communication of the community, and produce evidence to inform best practices of communication of Astronomy with the public.
We anticipated the task and ran the survey between November 2015 and January 2016 with the International Astronomical Union (IAU) active researchers. We developed a questionnaire which was distributed online to the IAU membership list (10,450 members at the time of the survey). The survey was well received by the community and its value acknowledged by many members who sent private messages. The response rate was 38%, which confirms the interest of the community in the study.
2. We presented preliminary results of the survey at the 2016 CAP conference in Medellin, Colombia – Presentation title: ‘Preliminary results of the outreach practices of the international astronomical community’.
3. A paper with detailed analysis of what factors influence communication in Astronomy is under preparation, to be published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Pedro Russo, Marta Entradas

2 December 2016