

ICES CM 2002/poster session L: CoML: turning concept into reality

Poster title:

Beyond the Scientists: the importance of engaging the public, a Public Outreach model

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Rationale

Research results are not the exclusive property of the scientific community. Research institutions have an obligation make their findings accessible, because they directly effect people's understanding of the world they live in. The process of information dissemination works both ways because well funded research programmes depend on the support of a well informed public. A specialised Public Outreach service working in close collaboration with researchers can facilitate the process of making scientific results more accessible.

When making research results accessible it is important to target schools and teachers, in particular. This is because engaged young people mature into engaged adults. These, in turn, will be capable of making informed decisions about supporting on-going research. Reaching out to young people may not only engage and inform them, it may also inspire them to decide to actively participate in the research process, becoming the scientists of the future.

MAR-ECO Public Outreach Model

The MAR-ECO project aims to increase scientific knowledge concerning marine life living around the northern mid-Atlantic Ridge and to widely disseminate this knowledge beyond the scientific community. A special Public Outreach committee has been appointed for the project and will be responsible for collaborating with the researchers to disseminate the project's results.

The MAR-ECO Public Outreach committee has drawn up a model for the effective, professional dissemination of scientific information to the general public. This model is modular (see below). This will make the individual parts of the model easier to fund and administrate. There are currently proposals for seven modules:

1 Film, video

documenting MAR-ECO field activities in various formats (news clips - documentaries - digital web material)

2 School projects

MAR-ECO Network project, teacher's college project, small pilot group project

3 Exhibition

travelling and static, museums and aquaria

4 Conferences

attending conferences to present project and encourage participation

5 Web

one site meeting 4 different needs (scientific participants, general public, interactive - network and online access to cruises)

6 Publicity (project info pack, sponsor info pack)

Folder, Flyer, Ppt
one-pagers (backgrounders, sponsor infor etc)

7 Publications

"coffee table" style on life in deep oceans (photos, art, text)
education series

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