



Communicating Ocean Research Drilling

White Paper WG6.8:

Develop broad vision for outreach, branding and education

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Abstract:

Since the beginning of the Deep Sea Drilling Program outreach and education have been part of ocean research drilling activities. For a post 2013 programme major questions guiding outreach and education are: How can marine science communication further be developed and advantages taken from new means of communication? What is the appropriate balance of internal vs. external outreach activities.

Since the beginning of IODP in 2003, each of the funding agencies, implementing organisations (IOs) and program member offices (PMOs) have worked together to ensure that the science produced by IODP has reached as wide an audience as possible. Until recently, these activities have been co-ordinated by an IODP-MI Director of Communications. At the time of writing, this role is currently vacant and we await the move of the IODP-MI office to Tokyo to find out how the IODP-MI outreach functions and budgets will operate in the future.

Within Europe, the three components mentioned above ECORD Managing Agency (EMA) representing the funding agencies, ECORD Science Operator (ESO), the implementing organisation and the ECORD Science Support and Advisory Committee (ESSAC) have worked together to ensure that the messages delivered about ECORD activities within the programme and mission-specific platform (MSP) operations are co-ordinated and harmonised. Through regular contact with the US and Japanese IOs, ECORD also helps to promote the three-platform approach to ocean research drilling and the successful outcomes of all of the IODP scientific expeditions.

Outreach efforts are focussed on maintaining up-to-date information on websites, community newsletters, brochures etc and by attendance at international conferences such as the annual European Geosciences Union (EGU) meeting and International Geological Congress. During MSP expeditions and the subsequent Onshore Science Party held at the Bremen Core Repository, the outreach team proactively engages TV, online, radio and press journalists to raise the public profile of the expedition and the

scientific objectives. Media releases are issued and media conferences held as appropriate.

The target groups being addressed are numerous and varied, from the IODP science community itself, to the general public. The messages that are conveyed to each group have to be tailored to the appropriate level. In many cases, IODP outreach activities are aimed at making the programme better known to the science community. Public outreach including target audiences like journalists, school classes or the general public tends to be focussed on the expedition activities when there may be local interest (e.g. as seen in New Jersey during the recent New Jersey Shallow Shelf Expedition) or when the scientific objectives stimulate the public's interest, such as the expeditions to the coral reefs of Tahiti and the Great Barrier Reef.

Although the success of outreach activities is difficult to measure, outreach and education activities should be considered as an integral part of future ocean drilling programmes, mainly because ocean sciences are not only fascinating to the researchers involved but – as can be seen for example in many high profile TV documentaries – also to public audiences. The questions that should be considered in establishing a framework for future outreach activities can be considered under two headings:

- a) How can marine science communication further be developed and advantages taken from new means of communication (e.g. social networking etc)? Will these new communication tools significantly change for example our target group concept and/or reevaluate traditional means of communication?
- b) What is the appropriate balance of internal vs. external outreach activities (i.e. science community vs. public)?

There are supplementary questions regarding the benefits of integrated (IODP-wide) and non-integrated outreach (promotion of national interests), however these issues are dependent on the future structure of ocean drilling post-2013.

The outreach teams within IODP would naturally support the need for a well-budgeted programme of outreach activities in any future drilling program.