



THE PUBLIC COMMUNICATION OF ASTRONOMY provides an important link between the scientific astronomical community and society, giving visibility to scientific success stories and supporting both formal and informal science education. While the principal task of an astronomer is to further our knowledge of the Universe, disseminating this new information to a wider audience than the scientific community is becoming increasingly important. This is the main task of public astronomy communication — to bring astronomy to society.

The next few years will be extremely important for astronomy communication and education. The International Year of Astronomy 2009 will serve as a unique platform to inform the public about the latest discoveries in astronomy as well as to emphasize the essential role of astronomy in science education.

However, as the astronomy outreach community expands globally, it becomes increasingly important to establish a community of science communication experts. The three Communicating Astronomy with the Public conferences held so far have had some success in raising the profile of astronomy, but a forum where professional expertise and know-how can be presented and preserved for posterity is needed. We think a peer-reviewed scientific journal can help to achieve that.

The IAU DIVISION XII Commission 55 Communicating Astronomy with the Public Journal Working Group prepared a study assessing the feasibility of the Communicating Astronomy with the Public Journal (CAPjournal). The conclusions were inescapable. The present situation of public astronomy communication shows a clear need for a publication addressing the specific needs of the public astronomy communication community.

The journal is divided in nine main sections dedicated to: “News”, “Announcements”, “Letters to the Editor”, “Reviews”, “Research & Applications”, “Resources”, “Innovations”, “Best practices” and “Opinion”. The “Research & Applications” section will contain peer-reviewed science communication ‘research’ articles. “News” and “Announcements” will present information and updates, such as conference reports from the astronomy outreach community. “Resources” and “Innovation” will provide a repository of outreach ideas and cutting-edge astronomy communication methods respectively. “Best Practices” aims to be a guide, containing case studies, to the techniques that work best in communicating astronomy. “Opinion” provides space for subjective discussions of topics related to astronomy communication.

Public communication of astronomy is a burgeoning field of science communication. We would like to see the astronomy outreach community deeply involved in this journal’s evolution and production. Please feel free to send us your articles and reviews on communicating astronomy, as well as suitable books/websites/products for review in the pages of CAPjournal. Submission guidelines are available on the back page. Relevant advertisements are also more than welcome.

We are eager to get your feedback, so please feel free to e-mail us at editor@capjournal.org.

We would like to extend a special thank-you to Andrew Fraknoi and Sidney Wolff from Astronomy Education Review — which in some sense can be seen as the sister journal to CAPjournal on the educational side. We look forward to a warm collaboration and much cross-fertilization.

Happy reading!

Editor-in-Chief