

TEN YEARS IN LUNAR AND PLANETARY EXPLORATION OUTREACH: “THE MOON STATION” CHALLENGE. J. Terazono¹, S. Tanaka², S. Sakamoto², J. Watanabe³, N. Wakabayashi⁴. ¹The University of Aizu (Tsuruga, Ikki-Machi, Aizu-Wakamatsu, Fukushima 965-8580, Japan; terazono@u-aizu.ac.jp), ²Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), ³National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), ⁴Tokyo University of Technology.

Introduction: There is no question that the educational outreach for all ages are now essential part of each mission, as the public interest in these explorations is increasing. Also, this situation is almost similar in all countries which conduct lunar and planetary explorations.

Japan launched the lunar explorer “Kaguya” (SELENE) in the autumn of 2007 [1]. The website called “The Moon Station” [2] was established on November 1998, the start of Kaguya’s development phase. Originally starting for the mission publication, this website is now becoming one of the most popular and dominant portal of the lunar and planetary exploration, both domestic and overseas. In this presentation, we will review the ten years’ management of the website, and look toward the future vision of outreach in lunar and planetary exploration.

Start of the site: When the site started, many users expressed disappointments of the site publications’ monotonous and difficult contents, and pages without thoughts of designs. To avoid following the same steps, our web team set out four visions for the appropriate website as the publication of the mission.

- Making maximum use of Japanese people’s emotion for the moon which they bore for several hundred years.
- Interactiveness is the key for the users to enjoy. The website designed into a two-way communication, transmitting information as well as receiving widely distributed opinion.
- Unique in design: To attract users to the website by showing its unique design.
- Cooperation with the universities: These concepts cannot be realized without the cooperation of other organizations that have the different skills. In this website, several universities have been joined to form the web pages. They include the department of arts, the totally different from space science. The site itself is a form of joint study of collaboration of the different fields.

The site was originally started for a limited time only because of the limitation of budgets and human resources. However, as we received many voices that we should keep the site all-year round as they can browse every time, we started permanent publication of the website from November 2000.

Current status: Originally started as the introduction of Kaguya mission, the site is now expanding its range to the introduction of worlds’ lunar and planetary explorations. Current topics such as the landing of worlds’ explorers and new findings are promptly put on the website in Japanese (through the translation).

Basic commentary behind the mission and science is also the purpose of our website. The site has several corners such as question-and-answers and scientific description of the moon. Also, some popular topics such as “moon landing hoax” and lunar base are picked up on the web with scientific interpretation.

The most popular part of the website is, however, the display of the today’s moon phase. With other interactive contents such as quiz and fortune telling, the site is forming the light entertainment of the lunar exploration.

The site is currently managed by the cooperation of JAXA, NAOJ and two universities.

Access condition: The average access is approximately 60000 hits / day (9000 PV / day). However, sometimes the access rise to more than one million hits per day as the related topic (mission success, new discovery on the moon or the planets) is placed at the major portals such as Yahoo!.

The number of access are increasing in August and September. In September, Japanese people like to enjoy the harvest moon (*Chu-shu no Meigetsu*), and the interest in the moon grows up through the media.

Future prospects: The site is believed to be the most prominent source for the lunar and planetary science to the public in Japan. The next step should be the education which utilizes an abundance of contents. Some linkage of educational programs conducted by JAXA or other organization will be the first step to set forward. Also, the approach to the new publics are important. To proceed this policy, the kids-oriented pages are now being prepared. With full use of the rich contents formed by Flash®, the pages have the atmosphere which appeals to the children. In future, more multilingualization will also be a major issue.

- References:** [1] <http://www.kaguya.jaxa.jp/>
[2] <http://moon.jaxa.jp/>