

Martian Multimedia: The Agony and Ecstasy of Communicating Real-Time, Authentic Science During the Phoenix Mars Mission: C. Bitter¹, S. R. Buxner¹. ¹Lunar and Planetary Laboratory (Univ. Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85705, carla@lpl.arizona.edu, sanlyn@lpl.arizona.edu)

Introduction: Although the Mars Exploration Rovers, Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, and Mars Odyssey Missions set the standard for science communication and public education about Mars, the Phoenix Mission was presented with robust new communication challenges and opportunities. Embracing the new frontier of E/PO engagement, managing the message from Mars, and ensuring the highest quality of science data and news releases were our top priorities during the Surface Operations phase of the Phoenix Mission.

E/PO's New Frontier: New media includes Web 2.0, international forums, internal and external blogs, social networking sites, as well as the traditional media and education outlets for communicating science and information via the Web. There were many highlights and difficulties of managing the 'message from Mars' in our current multimedia saturated world while balancing authentic science discoveries, public expectations, and communication demands. Sites such as Twitter, FaceBook, SpacEurope.com and NASA's own forum revealed the nature and character of new audiences that required real-time oversight

Managing the Message: Our goal was to create a more science savvy public and a more communication oriented science community for the future. The key issues were helping the public and our scientists distinguish between information and knowledge and managing the content that connects the two. This needed to be done quickly and accurately, working under the auspices of NASA Headquarters and the well-established media timetable and regulations of a government administration.

Media and E/PO Highlights: The mission was treated to vast interest from filmmakers, science television producers, educational outlets, journal and print publications, radio broadcasters, new media, online journals and space websites, and the general public. A successful mission to Mars has once again revived the science sensibilities of a great nation, and this is reflected in the extensive media interest and public demands that had to be mitigated in real-time.

The Future: As we reflect on the nature of public engagement and access to information, we advise a major change of planning and implementation for future E/PO programs. Flexibility to meet the technology advances as they emerge and expand allows E/PO to meet audiences where they are, not necessarily in classrooms, workshops, or even using traditional media outlets such as press conferences, journals or documentaries. These new technologies may also rep-

resent a cost savings per capita beyond the current paradigm of conference booth presentations, curriculum production or labor-intensive workshops. Exploring new E/PO media for science communications should be viewed as vital to the field of space exploration.

Additional Information: Individuals interested in Phoenix education, multimedia and outreach products are encouraged to contact the E/PO team at the following address:

Carla Bitter <Carla@lpl.arizona.edu>. Educational products and information about the Phoenix Mars Lander can be found on our website at: <http://phoenix.lpl.arizona.edu>.