

THE DAWN MISSION'S USE OF GOOGLE + HANGOUT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCT ASSESSMENT. J. Wise¹, B. E. Schmidt², W. H. Cobb³, J. Counley³, N. Hess³, J. E. C. Scully⁴, P. Gay^{5,6}, S. Lewis⁶, N. Gugliucci⁵, ¹New Roads School, Los Angeles, CA, jwise@newroads.org, ²Institute for Geophysics, University of Texas at Austin, J.J. Pickle Research Campus, Building 196, 10100 Burnet Road, Austin, Texas 78758 britneys@ig.utexas.edu ³McREL, 4601 DTC Boulevard, Suite 500, Denver, Colorado 80237, WCobb@mcrel.org, jcounley@mcrel.org, nhess@mcrel.org, ⁴Department of Earth and Space Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90095, jscully@ucla.edu, ⁵Center for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Research, Education, and Outreach, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, State Route 157, Edwardsville, Illinois 62026, pamela@starstryder.com, ngugliu@siue.edu, ⁶Astrosphere New Media Association.

Introduction: Since the launch of the mission in 2007, Dawn E/PO has investigated new media opportunities to reach diverse audiences, starting with our Educational Launch Workshop in 2007, and continuing with our Mars Gravity Assist Educator Workshop in 2009, in which participants interacted with mission scientists through video conferencing from four nationwide sites. For Dawn's arrival at Vesta in 2011, we created *Vesta Fiesta*, a celebration that invited Dawn fans to join via a flagship face-face event or to hold their own parties supported by virtual elements developed by the EPO team and housed on our website. Sites around the nation and the world shared the excitement of that momentous event in space exploration by listening to mission team member presentations virtually as well as engaging in activities and games. People from venues such as planetaria, ERC's, universities, and backyard barbeques participated from over 110 locations around the world.

After that success, we planned another party for Vesta's departure, *Hasta La Vesta*, choosing to focus on a virtual event. Based on lessons learned from our previous experience with video conferencing, podcasts, and webinars, and the exemplar of Mars Curiosity's landing, we chose to hold a Google + Hangout. Science and engineering team members from all over the world were able to contribute to a discussion about the mission from their own homes, in a session both informative and friendly.

The Google+ Hangout was so successful that we explored using it to inspire and train citizen scientists with our project, *Asteroid Mappers, Vesta Edition*. We are developing ideas for exploiting this medium to provide formal and informal professional development, timely dissemination of information to the general public, and community building around NASA and the Dawn Mission.

We will present an overview of our experiences and discuss the details of planning, implementing and assessing a Google+ Hangout, as well as how we are drawing the public into Dawn's story and events through Twitter, Facebook, Google+ etc.