

Секция «Стратегическая коммуникация (подсекция на английском языке)»

Strategies of Communicating Astronomy to Public

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Astronomy is a science that happened to be influenced by social media quite noticeably. The development of social networks and blogs let the scientists use them as tools of the promotion, popularization and propaganda of astronomy and the research conducted at NASA, ESA and other major scientific centers. Information stored within social networks is easy to navigate. "Popular examples of hashtags that astronomers might use include #Perseids, #astrophotography, and #comets. Anytime you use a hashtag in your posts, think of it as broadcasting your message to a select group of (temporary) followers" [1]. Another effective way of using the new media to promote astronomy - to get the audience involved in the exploration of space. The social media are the perfect platform to arrange wide participation of the audience in a short period of time and on a massive scale. An example of the citizen science is the project «Zooniverse». Through this platform everyone can help astronomers to study the Universe, for instance by sorting out pictures of galaxies and classifying them. By virtue of this project, new types of galaxies were discovered. By April, 2011 the project involved almost 500.000 participants. Strategies of the popularization of astronomy by the new media are effectively used at NASA. All the rovers and orbital missions of the agency have accounts in social networks. There are 10 special communication centers at NASA creating and developing content on 13 platforms. That is more than 500 social media accounts. "NASA in particular has made good use of Twitter, twitting from nearly 500 accounts and winning several Shorty awards ("honoring the best in social media") over the years. Nearly every mission from the Voyagers to New Horizons has an official account including Curiosity, Juno, Dawn, and Messenger" [1]. Due to the active social media policy NASA has stopped being a governmental agency, it has evolved into a brand. One of the most resonating samples of NASA's media policy is connected to the New Horizons mission. It took the New Horizons spacecraft more than 9 years to reach Pluto (the historic flyby occurred on July 14, 2015) and it is important to mention, that before this mission there were no high-resolution pictures of Pluto. All the scientists had were blurred images of a spherical object on the edge of the Solar system. Humankind could only imagine how Pluto looked like. On July 14, 2015 the first picture of Pluto was taken by the camera of the spacecraft and the social media team of the mission decided to post the first picture of Pluto's surface in our history on Instagram. Nothing like that happened before. The first photo of Pluto was the most "liked" one in the history of NASA's social media. It gained 300,000 new followers. Moreover, this mission was highly popular among the users of social networks. Many new pictures - "memes" of Pluto were created by activists and distributed through the virtual space very fast gaining popularity and raising awareness of the audience about astronomy. Another social media phenomenon created by NASA is "NASA social". It started up as a meeting of the tweeter subscribers of NASA's accounts, but after that evolved. Now it includes big gatherings and excursions. Citizens get to visit lectures of famous astronomers, astronauts, attend special events like launches of spacecraft, etc. The core of NASA's social media strategy is in the activity of astronauts. The whole policy was created after the first tweet of Mike Massamino in 2009. Nowadays participating in the social media activity is voluntary for astronauts, but

they choose to participate in it despite the technical difficulties. The messages of astronauts are being transmitted to the social media center of NASA, where the specialists do the fact-checking and then post on social media. Considering the decline in the interest of the audience to the “traditional” media, social media are becoming the best platform for spreading any kind of astronomical information and thus educating the audience. The examples of NASA, ESA and “astro-blogging” are illustrating the raising demand in communicating astronomy through the social media and also it is clear, that the audience greet such policy with interest and active participation.

Источники и литература

- 1) Dickinson, David “The New SOCIAL FACE of Astronomy”. Sky & Telescope. Aug 2013, Vol. 126 Issue 2, p36-41
- 2) URL: <https://www.nasa.gov/>
- 3) URL: <http://www.popsoci.com/>