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Project acronym: YOSCIWEB

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Project website : www.yosciweb.eu

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Main goal of Yosciweb

The main goal of Yosciweb (young people and images of science and the internet) is to analyse how web sites dedicated to the popularisation of science build and renew the social representation of science and scientists, particularly towards young people. The project therefore intends to go beyond the state of the arts, bringing a contribution in the sense of offering guidance/ innovation/ reference and best practices in order to improve science communication and to make science and scientific careers more attractive to young people.

Main Conclusions and recommendations

- Literature search and our focus group interviews show that negative stereotypical perceptions of science and scientists dominate.
- The Internet does not seem to improve this negative stereotypical perception of science and scientists. With a few exceptions, most popular scientific websites (PSWs) among the 60 selected showed the stereotype image of science and male scientists.
- The young people did however make very clear what they did and did not like about the 60 selected European popular scientific websites. Based on our interviews and the set of four variables (content, visual appeal, usability and interactivity), we have composed a list of important features as mentioned by the young people from 12 to 17 years old, which is available in the Best Practices and Recommendations Guide (Appendix B).

In short, the Internet does currently not yet provide additional value for young visitors when it comes to science and science careers. The YOSCIWEB project however, also makes clear that PSWs are not the only manner to link young people with science on the Internet.

The YOSCIWEB project has identified a set of recommendations, which help to create a popular scientific website, which would be liked by young people. Below you can find a short summary of these:

- Show a positive image (both in words and image of science and scientists) and show that scientists are also just normal people.
- The text on science websites should be informative without being too difficult to read or boring.
- Identification of websites should be clear, whether it is in the domain name, title or design.
- Credibility of information presented is increased by providing references to hosting institutions, the authors and the editorial board.
- Interesting pictures or figures can enhance the appeal of the content and provide a valuable visual representation of the subject.
- Content should also be relevant with regard to age and gender and make sure this also applies to images and other multimedia, as well as links.
- For young people, school-related tasks are often the motivation for searching scientific information.
- Websites should be visually attractive without being too flashy or crowded.
- Use of multimedia is instrumental in creating a good science website.
- There should be good alternative ways to get the content on websites, besides visiting the site itself.
- Easy navigation is important, especially when it is kept in mind that young users may get lost more easily than adults.
- Science websites are recommended to use more social interactive elements that can be used to share information on scientific topics, both between young people themselves and between them and the editors of websites.

Public policy makers such as ministries and local governments in the field of science, science education and school education might develop a list of policy options, with a broader range than just initiating, encouraging and supporting the development of PSWs. We suggest a few options for consideration:

- Include popular science in online school curricula
- Use social networks for science
- Incorporate search engines and Wikipedia in marketing strategies

Dissemination activities

Each country had one or several final events, where results of the project were introduced to wider public and where Best Practices and Recommendations Guide were distributed to the participants.

Final events included participants predominantly involved in various activities: there were webmasters, science communicators, policy-makers and also scientists present at the events. Interesting and fruitful discussions on best ways of communicating science via internet were held during the final events.

Final event in Bulgaria (april 2010) :

- YOSCIWEB presentations were delivered as an integral part of the programme of FameLab 2010 – an international contest for young science communicators held in 12 countries in Europe, Asia and Africa (290 participants).

- FameLab event was covered by almost all leading national TV stations, the Bulgarian National Radio, newspapers, local popular scientific magazines and Internet media.

Final event in Estonia (march 2010) :

- 27 participants to the final seminar of the project.
- A press release has been sent to most of Estonian newspapers. The following editions and other covered the event: Teachers Journal, Tallinn Health Care College.

Final event in France (march 2010)

- 100 participants to the meeting “Young people, access to scientific knowledge and new media”. Our - media of the Conseil general (newspaper, website) and the website Banque des savoirs

Final event in Iceland (January 2010)

- 70 participants to the meeting “The Icelandic Web of Science for 10 years : Science Communication from all angels”
- The event was covered both in the press media, on the radio and on web based news sites.

Final event in Netherlands (april 2010)

- 200 participants to the final seminar of the project YOSCIWEB

Final event in Scotland (November 2009)

50 participants to the meeting “Designing Science websites for young people”
- Several institutions websites

Final event in Spain (march 2010)

- 18 participants to “Presentación de las conclusiones del estudio YOSCIWEB: Los jóvenes y las imágenes de la ciencia en los sitios web”

Dissemination via media

2009

- Le Républicain (local French newspaper): article - March 6
- Essonne.fr (CG91 website): article with photos in the Research section - March 12
- Expression: text in the News section of the magazine n°52 - March
- NewsEurope (CG91 newsletter): text in the Focus section - March
- Ile de France Europe (regional office in Brussels): article with photos in the Regional Initiatives section of the newsletter n° 130 - March
- Banque des savoirs: two articles with photos in the News section of the website - April 3 and April 14
- Ecsite (European Network of Science Centers and Museums): text in the eNews section of the website - end of April
- AMCSTI (Associations of Museums and Centers for the development of scientific culture): text in the Call for Projects section of the website - end of April
- OCIM (Cooperation and Information Office for Museography): text in the News section of the website - end of April + text in the magazine n°118 - July/August

2010

- Õpetajate leht (Teachers Newspaper), article, Estonia – March
- Le Républicain (local newspaper), article, France – March
- Essonne.fr (CG91 website): article with photos in the Research section - March
- Banque des savoirs: two articles with photos in the News section of the website * March
- Cordis Newswire will publish an article on the week from 31/05/2010. It will be found here: www.ec.europa.eu/research/headlines
- Horisont (a scientific magazine), Estonia

YOSCIWEB
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