

A matter of choice – ocean literacy, marine education, and YouTube

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Communicating our knowledge of marine sciences to younger audiences can be rather challenging. Science educators are routinely faced with poorly motivated adolescent school kids. No simple magical solution to solve this problem can be given here. However, making marine science educational content a matter of choice rather than obligatory might be a more effective approach in reaching out to these target audiences. Short, entertaining and informative YouTube videos, that present fascinating ocean-science content might be an option to better serve the needs of younger people.

The poster will address various aspects of marine-science-related YouTube videos: the communication department of MARUM started producing videos in 2007, and set up its own YouTube channel in 2008. Presently about 70 videos in German and English are available on MARUM TV. To compare and classify these products, the poster will also discuss similar activities carried out by other eminent European and overseas marine research institutes.

Moreover, obvious questions regarding the relative success and the evaluation of YouTube activities will be discussed: How effectively can the above-mentioned audience be reached? How should YouTube videos best be communicated? What role could additional communication via social media play? Does the incredible YouTube upload rate of currently 60 hours of video material per minute – a tenfold increase from the 2007 rate – negatively affect ocean-related educational efforts?

Finally, the poster will present a novel approach that is currently being undertaken in Bremen to produce entertaining YouTube videos covering scientific issues.