

Education through digital objects – practical examples from the EMBC Master Programme

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The 'World Conference on Marine Biodiversity in Aberdeen (2011)' (<http://www.marine-biodiversity.org/>) introduced the use of digital objects as an alternative for the classic paper based poster session. The Master Programme EMBC decided to introduce this new form of science communication in different teaching modules, in order to have the next generation of marine scientists ready to use these techniques.

During the EMBC summer school in Galway (Ireland) in July 2011, students were asked to make small documentary movies explaining to a broader public the work that was carried out. One of the teachers specialized in modern communication techniques, assisted the students in making these movie based digital objects. This exercise showed that by using very simple tools (cell phones, small digital cameras and a suite of freeware movie-editing tools) high quality products can be delivered.

Making movies is one of the commonly used techniques to build a digital object. However it was believed that students also need to learn the use of alternatives. The course 'Data and Information management', taught to first year EMBC students in Ghent and Faro (Portugal), includes now a specific module on the creation of digital objects. Students are introduced to different tools and techniques (ranging from classic powerpoints, to screen recordings, to the use of online animation tools), and present as an assignment a 3 minute long digital object about a 'Coastal and Marine Wiki' related topic (www.encora.eu/coastalwiki).