

## Public relations activities at the Conrad Observatory

Barbara Frasl

2013 was an exciting year for the Conrad Observatory and great effort has been put into increasing public awareness and scientific recognition of the observatory as a high profile observation and research facility. The observatory's website was transformed into a high quality access point for both scientists and the public. Furthermore, the observatory staff participated in outreach events, university studies as well as many tours.

The virtual home of the Conrad Observatory saw multiple changes and improvements over the last year. Many sections on articles and projects were updated and restructured to achieve a uniform appearance. The website is generally maintained as a bilingual resource in English and German. New sections were added especially regarding detailed information on the infrastructure of both underground facilities. In addition, the website provides a restricted area for staff and project partners to access real-time data of the respective instruments.

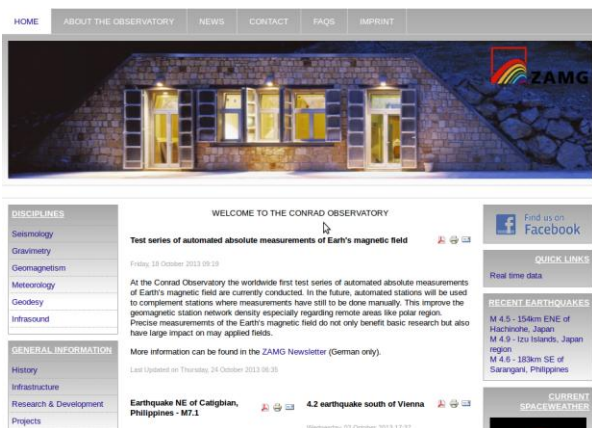


Figure 1: Website of the Conrad Observatory (<http://www.conrad-observatory.at>).

The Conrad Observatory is also well-represented on social media sites. The respective Facebook site reached 187 likes by January 2014. On a regular basis information on activities at the observatory, geomagnetic storms, recent earthquakes, news as well as Earth science trivia were posted. Extremely popular and very well received was the "June 2013 Photo Challenge: COBS Impressions!" highlighting one photo a day of the observatory and its trademark items.

Many efforts to increase public awareness were of a more physical nature. A small delegation participated twice at the science and education initiative "Marktplatz der

Wissenschaft[ft]". First, in July at the "Junge Uni der FH Krems" and second, in September at the "European Researchers Night" in St.Pölten.



Figure 2: Science communication event „Marktplatz der Wissenschaft[ft]“ initiated by the state of Lower Austria.

A great opportunity in gaining insights into communication science was provided by the University of Vienna by partaking as a research subject in the course "Öffentlichkeitsarbeit" run by the Department of Communication. The wide range of new ideas will surely find application in the upcoming years.

Another big milestone in outreach was marked by the preparation of a new information pamphlet which was initially distributed at the EGU 2013 in Vienna.

Although there was no open day in 2013, the Conrad Observatory was still a popular destination for many field trips by researchers, students of the Earth Sciences and the public. In November 2013 the ORF broadcasted a segment on the Conrad Observatory in Ö1's program "Vom Leben der Natur" (04.11.2013).

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