

The awareness of civil society on ocean issues: do we communicate contexts understandable enough? Presenting the results of our survey

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This year, the German Ocean Foundation ran an online survey on how civil society evaluates main issues regarding the oceans. Besides the elaboration of a personal rating on priority issues for the protection of the marine environment, participants could declare what behavior they would change to limit its degradation. Finally, people could express how well informed they feel about different ocean topics.

In a second step, we compared the results of the online survey with the ocean issues marine scientists and activists defined as the most urgent and influential topics. The possible gaps and overlappings will have been discussed by experts from non-governmental organizations based in Germany.

In our short oral presentation, we want to present the results of our survey plus the results of the discourse with the scientific community. We will also summarize the main points of the discussion held about the survey with environmental communication experts during the “Festival of the Future” of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety in September 2016.

Thereby, we will focus on the possible reasons for gaps in public awareness.

We also want to briefly discuss what communication strategies are necessary to close possible gaps, to make contexts clear and to strengthen public awareness of influential issues regarding changing oceans.

References

- RENEW Tour, 3rd Oct 2015 to 31st Jan 2015, to the COP21 from Berlin to Paris and back to the world`s biggest boat show in Germany.
- German Ocean Contest: Yearly expeditions for young ocean scientists with communication to the broader public, www.meereswettbewerb.de
- Wild, Christian et al. (2014). Turf algae-mediated coral damage in coastal reefs of Belize, Central America. In: PeerJ DOI 10.7717/peerj.571 Example of a publication summarizing the findings of an expedition with Aldebaran.
- Press campaign: “Von der Vergangenheit bis in die Zukunft: Neue Klimasimulationen für die Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft” for the Max-Planck-Institut für Meteorology and the German Climate Computing Centre.