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Rosetta: adventures in science communication

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ESA's Rosetta mission captured the world's attention throughout 2014-2016, with its communication campaign the most successful in the Agency's history. The mission itself was an extraordinary operational and scientific success, but communicating on these topics alone would likely not have brought the Rosetta orbiter and Philae lander to the attention of such a large, global audience. We will present the variety of different communication tools and engagement activities employed alongside conventional press releases, websites and media briefings, to reach previously untapped audiences, and briefly summarise some of the lessons learnt from each project. These included competitions connecting key mission milestones to everyday life, a cartoon series and personified twitter accounts that gave faces and characters to the spacecraft, and a sci-fi film released 'undercover' with no ESA branding in the first instance, targeting film fans. The Rosetta Blog, which bridged the gap from our traditional websites to social media, also provided a forum for discussing the latest events and results throughout the entire mission. The depth of impact the mission and the associated engagement activities had on individuals is clearly reflected in contributions to our 'Rosetta Legacy' project. We will also briefly discuss how lessons learned from these communications activities can be applied to our upcoming and future missions.

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