

Interactive comment on “SUSTAINABILITY: a science communication website on environmental research” by T. Gravina et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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This manuscript presents the results of a web-based outreach experiment carried out by the University of Naples. The authors created an institutional web site entirely dedicated to dissemination, where scientific results are described in plain Italian language and made accessible to a wide audience. The published contents all derive from peer-reviewed publications and concern research topics that are likely to be highly relevant to the local community, such as natural hazards the environment, or nutrition and health issues. Each posted article was further shared through the associated Facebook page and Twitter account. For a couple of months, the authors provided new scientific contents and monitored the accesses and the popularity of each article. These data were then analysed to identify the factors which are likely to influence the efficacy of the outreach effort. The data suggest a great interest toward scientific information regarding pollution issues. Results also indicated that frequent posting of articles and avoiding

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jargon are critical factors in prompting the interest. Ensuring a more effective connection between science and society is of utmost importance, and I praise the efforts of the authors toward this important goal. I join them in wishing a greater involvement of the academics in outreach activities at any level. I only have two concerns and some minor comments that I hope will contribute to improve the strength of the manuscript. A first, general consideration is that the data collected are not discussed within a reference framework, and this makes them difficult to read: is the obtained number of visualisations high or low? How does this compare to the number of people that could be reached in a more traditional way (for instance with a press release providing information on the same scientific content)? How did the website perform compared to other science blogs or online magazines? Did you engage the sector of population you were aiming for? I think that the manuscript would be much stronger if the objectives of the outreach experiments were clearly stated up front. A second concern is the use the term Web 2.0. In my understanding, this word indicates web applications where the content is generated by the users, or there is a strong degree of interaction between the creators of the contents and users. This does not seem to be the case of this website, that is organised more as a one-way communication directed from the scientific community toward the public. It would be very interesting to know if there were comments or reactions to the articles that were posted, and if there is the possibility for the users to pose specific questions to the experts or to solicit specific themes for future posts. Can you comment on this aspect? In the following, some minor comments. I believe that when dealing with science outreach the English word that is used is “dissemination”, not “divulgation”. The initial analysis of the various ways in which scientific contents are disseminated does not include consider popular scientific magazines that target the general public (for Italy, I’m thinking of *Le Scienze*, *Darwin*, *Focus*...). I think these probably play a role... Can you comment on that? Page 2 Line 31: unfortunately, this is not true: social psychologists have shown that informed citizens do not necessarily behave more responsibly: we’re not always rational in our decision making. Page 4 Line 2: you name “reviewer” who I believe is the author of

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the post. I think the word “reviewer” in this context may be misleading Page 4 Line 15: the web site performance has been monitored for 2 months. How was this time period established? Does it ensure the collection of a representative sample? Page 6 Line 16 The thematic areas of your articles are not equally distributed, with only two posts on natural hazards and 6 on pollution. I do not question that pollution is a bigger worry in this area than natural hazard, but I do not think that you have enough data to make an objective statement on this. You may write that this outcome is consistent with previous findings on people’s concerns in this region. Page 7 Line 21. See above.

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