

Parallel Session 16: Are Internet expectations being accomplished?

NOVATORES: AN INTEGRAL PROJECT FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

*Miguel Ángel Quintanilla, Marcelo Sabbatini, Sonia Martin Cerro, Esther
Palacios Mateos, Pedro José Gómez López*

*Instituto Universitario de Estudios de la Ciencia y la Tecnología –
Universidad de Salamanca. Paseo de San Vicente, 81, 37007, Salamanca,
SPAIN. Tel: +34-923-294834, Fax: +34-923-294835. E-mail:
maquina@usal.es, sabbatini@usal.es, cerro@usal.es, estherpm@usal.es,
pjgomez@usal.es.*

Abstract

The Novatores project has the objective of promoting the diffusion of scientific and technological information and of building in society as a whole the degree of awareness and understanding of science deemed necessary for eliciting the citizenry support to public activities of scientific research and technological innovation in Castile and Leon, Spain. Its main product is an Internet-based technical platform for the management and diffusion of scientific and technological information, open to the participation of the region's scientific and technological institutions. In the present work we describe the project's background, strategies, sub-projects and expected results.

Keywords: scientific knowledge, models, TIC.

Text

Background

In present times, it is very common to consider scientific information diffusion as a main point in research and development (R&D) policies. A science and technology system disconnected from the society that supports it, due to an absence of reciprocal communication between both of them, is under the risk of losing citizen support and of being condemned to stagnation and inefficiency. For this reason, the major acts in science policy try to incorporate elements directed to harness the diffusion of scientific and technological information, the accessibility of research results accomplished by companies and a general outreach among the population of a culture favourable to research and innovation processes.

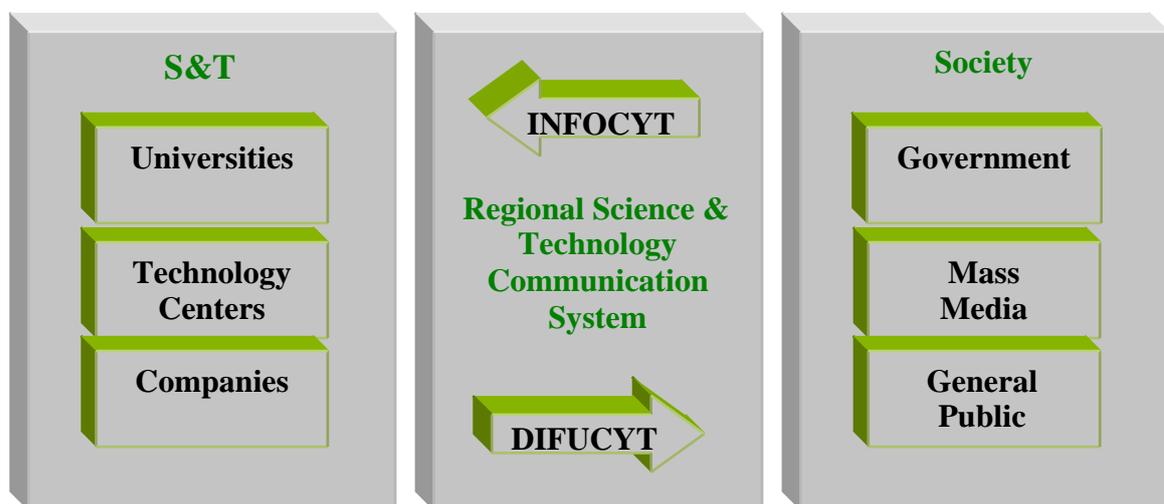
The Novatores Project

Within the bounds of this context appears Novatores Project, whose main objective is to develop a **Regional System for Science and Technology Communication**, bringing scientific activities closer to society and increasing the social valuation of this performance. The project is born from the Regional Science and Technology Strategy prepared by the Junta of Castile and Leon, Spain, that proposed the implementation of a "social" information system directed to the whole of society, to make citizens participant of science and

technological advances' benefits. The Internet based system is being developed by experts from the University of Salamanca, with financial and political support of the Junta.

Besides approaching science to society, it is also the project's aim to provide researchers and people responsible for science and technology institutions and companies access to all relevant information, responding to the necessity of society's demands and priorities being fully met. Thus, science and technology policies initiatives prepared by the government should reach the R&D system and its members: researchers and technologists. Additionally, the system helps in the internal management of the local government's science and technology policy, as well as to any institution that may wish to use it.

Agreeing to the marked objectives, the system is articulated in two main parts: a scientific and technological information system (INFOCYT) and a system for science and technology popularization (DIFUCYT).



The name Novatores hides a demand: it is an archaic word used in 17th and 18th centuries to contemptuously give name to a group of thinkers and intellectuals that claimed for the modern scientific method. As the Authorities Dictionary published in 1743 states, Novatores is one that is a “novelty inventor. It is taken regularly as the one that invents them dangerously in doctrine matters”. The modern Novatores try to recover this innovative spirit.

Subprojects

In order to accomplish these multiple objectives, Novatores is divided into different subprojects.

The **Novatores Core (INFOCYT)** is a system for information on and management of science and technological activities, aimed for individual researchers, R&D groups, universities, public institutions, companies and social organizations that carry out research, technological development and technological innovation activities. Its content is information that calls for a demand for activities or that reveals a supply of R&D results. In the first case, there are calls for congresses and events with scientific character, grants and financial helps and technological demands. In the second case, information

about projects, finished or in course, scholarly publications, thesis, patents and other gray literature, education programs and technological supplies. Additionally, it offers for the individual researcher a set of services: *curriculum vitae* management to make easier their participation in scientific activities calls and an *e-prints* server for the storage of and open access to scientific literature and electronic thesis and dissertations.

The **Science and Technology Communication Agency (DICYT)** is a specialized news agency, focused in science and technology subjects in Castile and Leon. Its final users are mass communication media (radio, press, television), for whom it provides exclusive science and technology information in different genres (news, articles, interviews) which is completed with additional elements like infographics, video files and audio clips. Its main contribution is to make up a reliable and rigorous communication channel, in which information is prepared by specialized science communicators (Sabbatini, Maciel & Coll, 2004).

InfocienciaNet is an Internet portal dedicated to science popularization with a regional focus and reaching for the most general audience possible. It is based upon the experience of homonymous portal that has been working since 2001 as an communication / interaction space in Internet and dealing with Science, Technology and Society subjects and also as a practice field for students of the Science, Technology and Society: Communication and Culture in Science and Technology Master course from the University of Salamanca (Quintanilla et al, 2001). In its objective of bringing science closer to society, distinguishes form other initiatives by integrating all Novatores products, reflecting science as process rather than closed results, as well as promoting its historical sense and social importance. Besides that, the portal makes a creative and efficient use of multimedia elements, improving comprehension of scientific processes and concepts, rather than using it as cosmetic accessories.

Conclusions

Novatores project is a novel science communication experience, considered that it has an integral approach characteristic, in which information is used in different contexts, being reformulated and adapted according to the audience demands, and also establishing a *continuum* between highly specialized and technical information and that information that can be absorbed by the public. With this project, it is intended to bring the science and technology system closer to society, ultimately boosting regional economic development, trough active participation of all actors involved in this dynamics.

References

- Quintanilla, M. A., Sabbatini, M., Cerro, S. M., Maciel, B., Timón, A. (2001). Science, technology and society: training the scientific communication professional in Spain and Latin America from an integral perspective. *6th International Conference on Public Communication of Science & Technology*. Geneve, 1st-3rd February 2001.
- Sabbatini, M., Maciel, B., Coll, I. (2004). Dicyt: a proposal for regional science communication *8th International Conference Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) – Scientific Knowledge and Cultural Diversity*. Barcelona, 3rd-6th June 2004.

PCST International Conference - www.pcst2004.org

