

## **Key Dates on the modern Science Communication in Spain**

Gema Revuelta  
Universitat Pompeu Fabra  
gemma.revuelta@upf.edu

### **Abstract**

Modern science communication in Spain cannot be understood without taking into account some important recent historical dates. Which are the most notable events in science media?, When did open its doors for the first time the first interactive science museum?, When started the National association for science communicators? When did started the first masters, research degrees in science communication? And the founding of the first National Science Week or the first National program for the promotion of scientific culture? The following pages present some of these key dates in a question-answer way. With a comparative purpose, the same scheme has been used for the rest of the components of this panel, each of them representing a country from different parts of the world. A more detailed document is being elaborated and it will be published in a near future in a collective work.

### **Key Dates on the modern Science Communication in Spain**

The following pages contain a list of some of the most relevant key dates in the history of modern science communication in Spain. There are presented in a question-answer way, following the same scheme used for the rest of the components of this panel. A more detailed document will be published in a near future.

### **Notable events in science media**

- Popular magazines:

Between 1800 and 1900 there are several examples of scientific journals that were not strictly restricted to the scientific community (as “El Tecnológico”, published for its first time in 1833, or “Madrid científico. Ciencias e industrias”, published between 1897 and 1936) but it cannot be considered as to be massive audiences.

The 1st issue of what could be named a popular magazine appeared in 1976. It was the case of Investigación y Ciencia, the Spanish version of Scientific America. In 1981, Muy Interesante (Very Interesting), a weekly magazine even more popular than the previous one, was published.

- Newspapers:

1st October 1792 was the first time that a newspaper started the coverage of science issues on a regular manner. On that date, it was published for its first time the newspaper "Diario de Barcelona", containing a daily table with meteorological data of the city in its front-page (until 1800).

During the Silver Age of Science (in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) most newspaper included science news and science opinion articles, not in a regular way but with regular columnists. This trend was interrupted by Civil War (1936-1939), more or less renewed during Dictatorship (1939-1975), and definitely increased after the 80's. Some of the most known signatures from 20<sup>st</sup> Century were Manuel Calvo Hernando, Vladimir de Semir and Manuel Toharia.

In 1982, the newspaper La Vanguardia launched the first supplement devoted to science in Spain, directed by Vladimir de Semir.

- Radio and television:

In 1996, the program Redes is first broadcasted in TV2, the second public channel in the Spanish television.

### **Science in media: resources for journalists**

2008. Launch of SINC, the Servicio de Información y Noticias Científicas, an internet science news agency from FECYT, the Spanish Science National Agency.

### **The First interactive science centre. When did it open its doors for the first time?**

The first interactive science center of Spain opened in 1981. Previously named Museo de la Ciencia de Barcelona, since 2004 (after a big renewal) it is named CosmoCaixa Barcelona. Very short after the opening of this museum, a similar centre opened its door in La Coruña, La Casa de las Ciencias.

### **Science writing awards, where journalists, science communicators and scientists can gain recognition for their work**

1986 CSIC (the Spanish Scientific Research Council) Award on Science Journalism

### **The first Science festivals**

It is difficult to affirm but, probably the first activity that is still offered on a regular basis, started in 1987, the Murcias's Week of Biology (now in its 27<sup>th</sup> edition).

### **The first significant national government program to support science communication activities**

The National Program for Science and Tecnology Dissemination was launched in 2000. Since 2007, its program is coordinated by FECYT, with the name of National Program for the Promotion of Scientific Culture and Innovation.

### **The formation of a National association for science communicators**

The Catalan Association for Science Communication (ACCC), established in 1990. Its first president was Vladimir de Semir.

### **The formation of a National association for science journalists**

The Spanish Association of Scientific Journalism (now, The Spanish Association for Science Communication or AECC) was founded in 1975, presided by Manuel Calvo.

### **The first masters, research degrees in science communication**

In 1995 the Universitat Pompeu Fabra launched the first Master of Science Communication in Spain

### **The founding of journals in science communication such as Public Understanding of Science**

In 1992, the Universitat de Valencia, published for first time *Metode*.

### **The First national conference for science communicators**

In 1990, Esteve Foundation and La Vanguardia newspaper organized in Barcelona the First Workshop on Science Journalism in Spain. Short after, in 1991, the second PCST conference was celebrated in Madrid

### **The First courses to train science communicators**

Universitat Pompeu Fabra launched the first course of Science Journalism in Spain within a degree in Journalism (1992), the first Master of Science Communication (1995) and the first course of Science Communication within a degree of Biology (1998)

### **The date of the founding of National Science Week**

In 1996, Madrid and Catalonia regions celebrated for first time and on a coordinated manner their regional Science Weeks. Since 2002, the national science agency (FECYT) is coordinating this festival in Spain.

### **The year of graduation of the first PhD in science communication**

This data is difficult to affirm, but probably the first PhD in science communication (or, at least, the most well-known) was the case of the pioneer of science

journalism Manuel Calvo, who finished his PhD at the age of 75 in 1999. There is not an official program of PhD in science communication.

**Date of important National initiatives, reports on science communication: events that changed the way the area was regarded**

- The celebration of the First Iberoamerican Conference on Science Communication in Caracas (1974) marked the beginning of a deep relationship between Spain and Iberoamerican countries, in this case, promoted by the Spanish Association of Science Journalism (now Spanish Association of Science Communication).
- The creation of the Science Communication Observatory from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (1994) supposed a general impulse for the development of science communication as a profession. The centre was a pioneer in university education, research and dissemination on this field, and it was also the promoter of national policies in science communication, like The Year of Science in 2007.
- 1999, the first Conference of Social Communication of Science, organised by Parque de las Ciencias de Granada, was the first multitudinary conference held in Spain devoted to science communication.
- 2002, the creation of the Spanish Agency of Science and Technology, FECYT, supposed a very important impulse for the science communication (particularly for medium and small cities and organisms that weren't active on this field before that date).
- 2007, the Year of Science, declared by the Spanish government following the example of the city of Barcelona, gave big visibility to science and science communication to Spanish Society.