

Results of the Mars Communications Survey, conducted March-June 2016

The Mars Program Office cares greatly about providing useful information via convenient and accessible community communications. Towards that end, feedback had been solicited about the ways that the Mars Program Office communicates with Mars community members, via an online survey available since MEPAG meeting 31. In particular, the survey solicited feedback about the Mars Science Newsletter and the MEPAG website. There were 15 respondents (thank you!), and in general the responses were positive, indicating that current communication efforts are sufficient and useful. Below, we list the main points within the results. (And while we have closed this recent survey, individuals can of course always contact us with suggestions and requests — see the end of the monthly Mars Science newsletter for contact information or email mepagmeetingqs@jpl.nasa.gov.)

Mars Science Newsletter

- The calendar of workshops/conferences and announcements about Mars-relevant meetings and workshops, as well as Mars-relevant sessions at large conferences were generally found to be useful. Fewer people find announcements about other events (such as summer school sessions) personally useful, but had no issue with their inclusion.
- Even fewer people use the Mars Seasons calendar or Special Holidays calendar, with a few (1 and 3, respectively) finding those items to be “not useful at all”.
- There was a high level of interest in the potential future inclusion of Reports from non-US space agencies and moderate interest in Mars-focused news highlights. We are now developing a system of locating and listing official press releases that will provide this type of information to the community. Suggestions of press releases or sources for press releases can be sent to mepagmeetingqs@jpl.nasa.gov.
- 11 of the 15 like the monthly frequency for this newsletter; 3 would prefer that it come out less often, and 1 would prefer more often.
- Half of the respondents found out about this survey via the newsletter.

MEPAG Website

- 14 of the 15 respondents have previously accessed the MEPAG website.
- Nearly all portions of the MEPAG website were accessed, with the majority of access focused on “Newly released SAG and other reports”, the MEPAG Goals document, Landing Site selection announcements, and MEPAG meeting information.
- 13 of the 14 MEPAG website user respondents reported that they could generally find the information they desired on the website, and thus its navigation was sufficiently straightforward. And no suggestions were given for additional information that would be desired on the website, that is not there presently.

Additionally, most respondents supported holding a **Fall virtual MEPAG meeting** (to supplement the annual MEPAG face-to-face meeting, typically held in the spring) – although concern was expressed about timing of such a meeting within the academic term and Australia’s timezone.