



# Engaging the public in ATLAS

Through social  
media and the web

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**LPNHE/IN2P3/CNRS**

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On behalf of the ATLAS  
Collaboration



# Why is public engagement important?

- Inspire the next generation of scientists
- Foster greater scientific literacy
- Fight misinformation and mistrust in science
- Encourage support of basic research
- Connect with physicists, general public, policy makers, students and teacher, media.  
Create opportunities of mutual learning
- Internally: create a sense of pride and purpose

**European Particle Physics  
Strategy Update 2020**

"Public engagement, education and communication in particle physics should continue to be recognised as important components of the scientific activity"

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**Snowmass 2021**  
**Community Engagement**  
**Frontier**

"...recommends a shift in focus from "public outreach" to "public engagement": two-way interactions that ensure mutual learning, which goes beyond the acquisition or transmission of knowledge and includes the understanding of perspectives, worldviews and socioeconomic backgrounds"

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**Latin American Strategy Forum for  
Research Infrastructures for High  
Energy, Cosmology, Astroparticle  
Physics  
LASF4RI for HECAP**

"Encourage the dissemination of knowledge, outreach and the active involvement of the general population in scientific research, boosting Societal Engagement...It allows the possibility to create a positive culture around the facilities and experiments, crucial for their long-term survival"



# The ATLAS Outreach team



Big thanks to the ATLAS core team for all the material provided for this talk

The outreach team **supports the collaboration** in communicating the goals and accomplishments of the ATLAS Collaboration to the public.

## Who we are?

- Two ATLAS Outreach Coordinators elected by the Collaboration
- Core team for essential activities
- ATLAS members contributing to projects

In this talk about public engagement we want to emphasize:

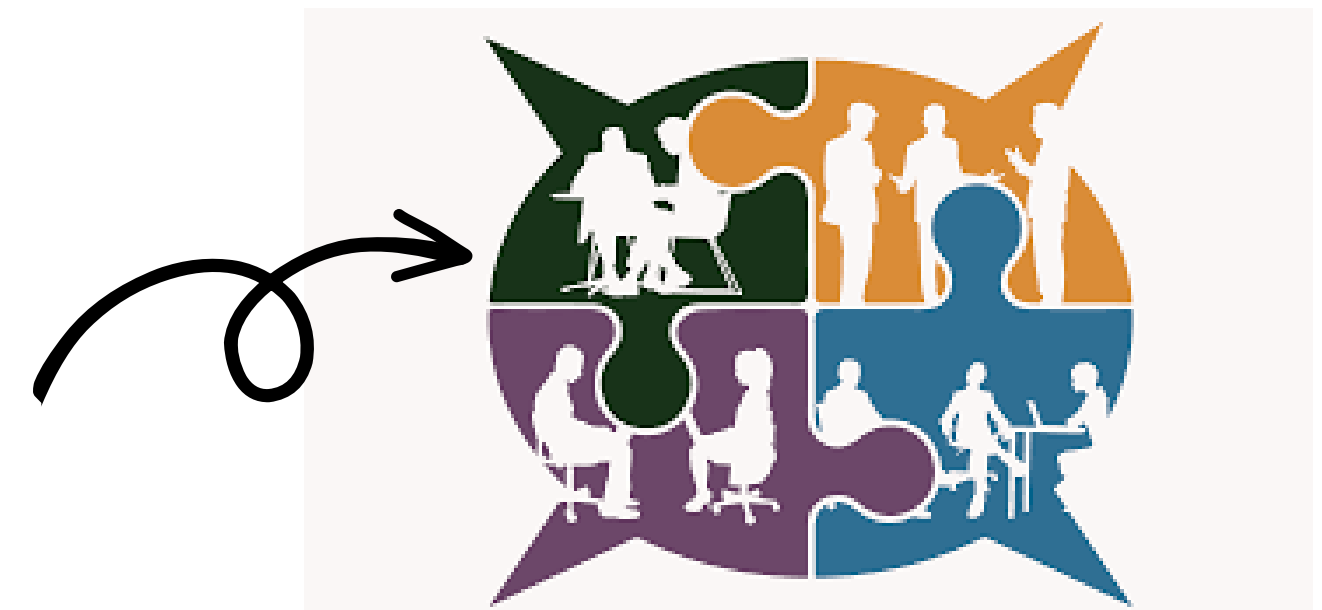
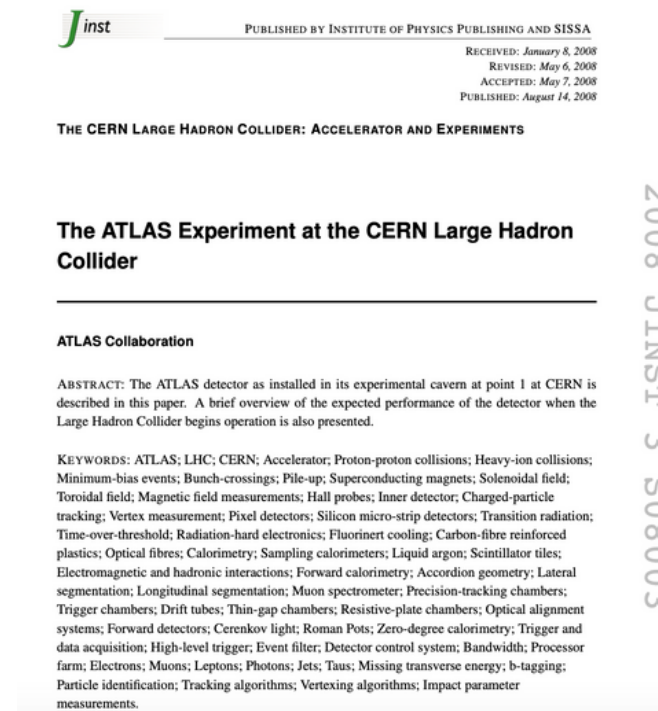
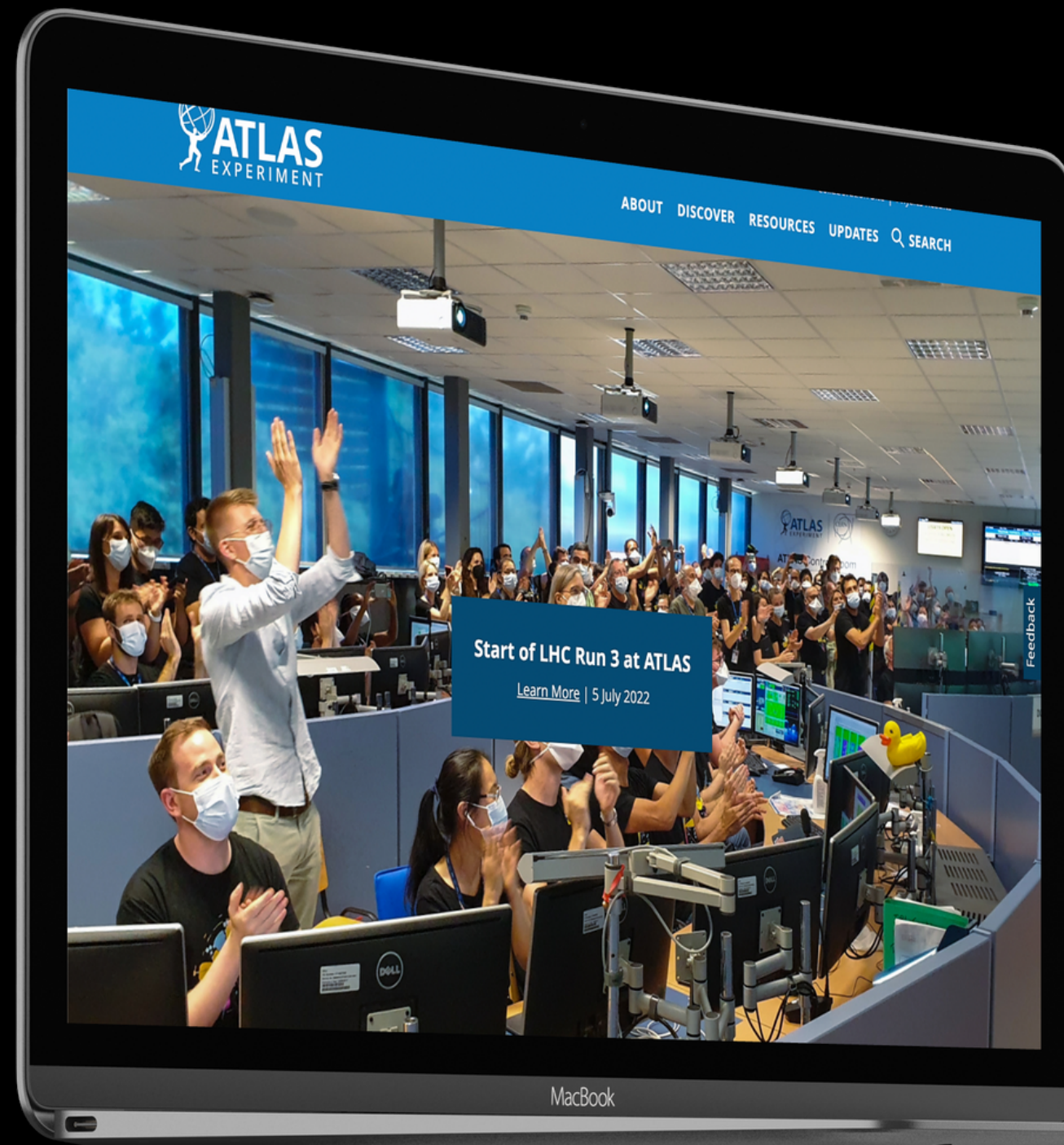
- Our **public communication content path** about ATLAS research: from the paper to other content to engage our different target audiences at different levels of depth
- Overview of **materials and tools** development by the team for direct engagement

# Creating content

We take a diversified approach to reach (very) different audiences, tailoring content to multiple platforms

The ATLAS public website remains the main hub for public content, with high quality, in-depth material in the form of press statements (since 2012), news (since 2008), physics briefings (since 2014), features, portraits, blogs and evergreen content.

Content is a collaborative effort with ATLAS members and communication experts. News/Statements pushed to Google News to ensure accurate messaging available to public.





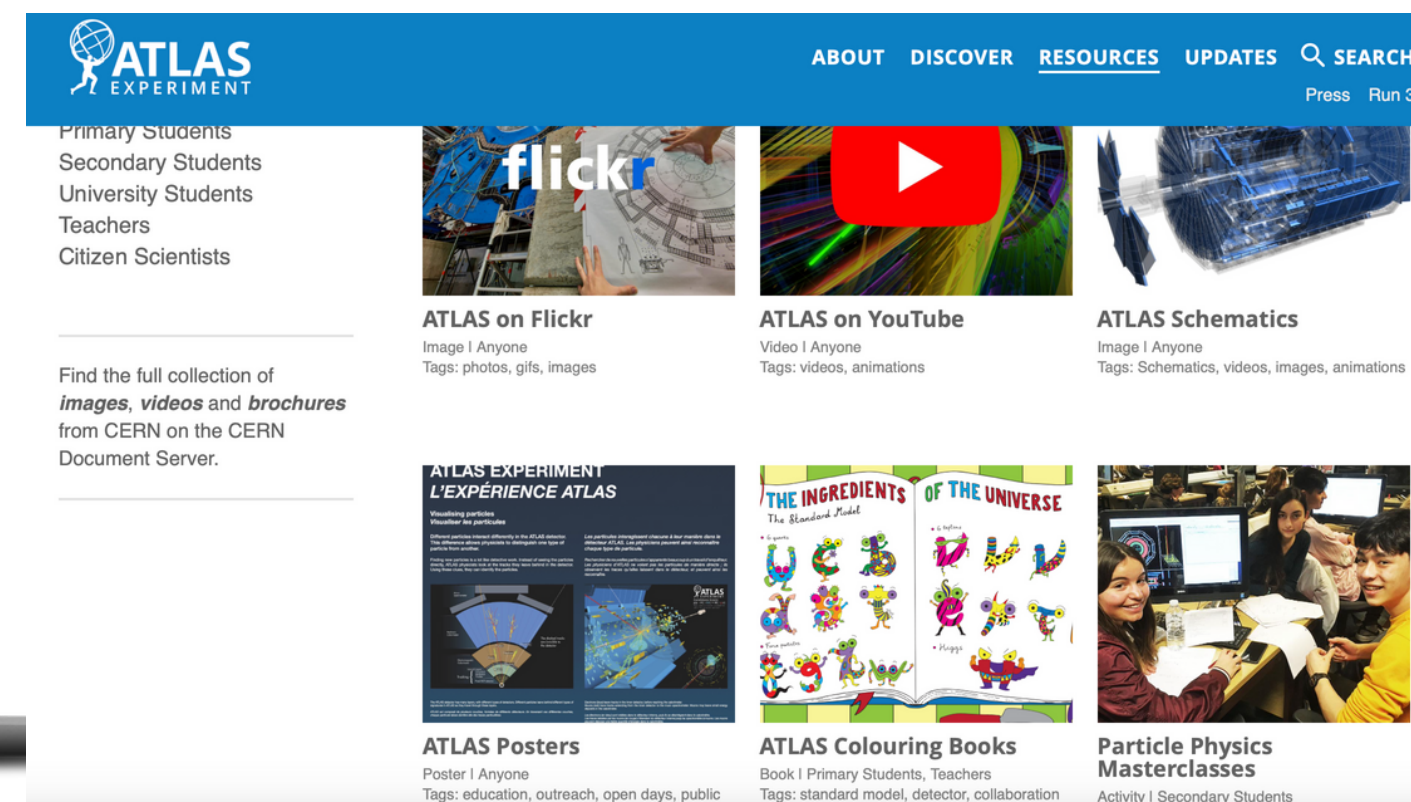
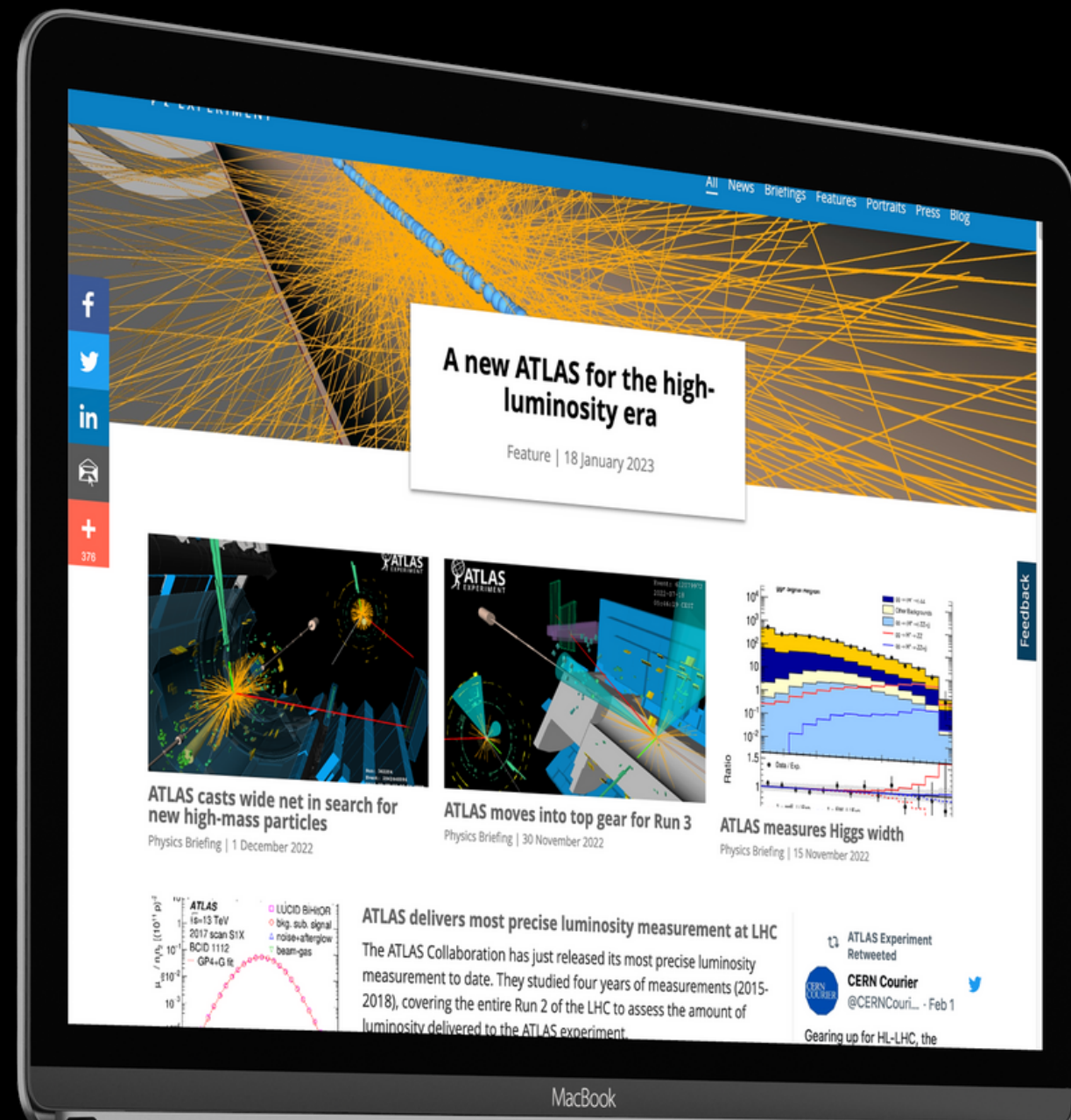
# Creating content Briefings, blogs, portraits, etc

The ATLAS public website remains the main hub for public content. Our statistics to June 2023:

- 650 NEWS
- 217 BRIEFINGS
- 6 FEATURES
- 8 PORTRAITS
- 23 PRESS STATEMENTS
- 151 BLOGS



But also hundreds education & outreach resources & links to many more. Organised by target audience: students, teachers, scientists, general public.





# Creating content Social media

These are no longer optional sharing platforms. They are mainstream media platforms, serving over 48% of global population.

Communication strategies have to adapt to stay relevant and reach the public. There are many possibilities!



- In addition to content on ATLAS website, we create content specifically tailored to social media:
  - Social media videos, including “elevator-pitch” physics videos (launched during COVID), and feature videos ( $\leq 5$  minutes) on specific briefing physics results, pre and post-conference recaps, Q&A with students
  - Live events (next slide)
  - Instagram content: multilingual photo stories, quizzes, musical reels, explainers in carrousel format etc.
  - Twitter threads and tiktok trends
- The social media panorama is also changing, e.g. changes in Twitter algorithms have had a negative impact on our reach in that platform



Twitter  
(97.8k)



facebook  
(37k)



Tiktok  
(49k)



Instagram  
(60k)



Youtube  
(9.12k)



Linkedin  
(4.8k)

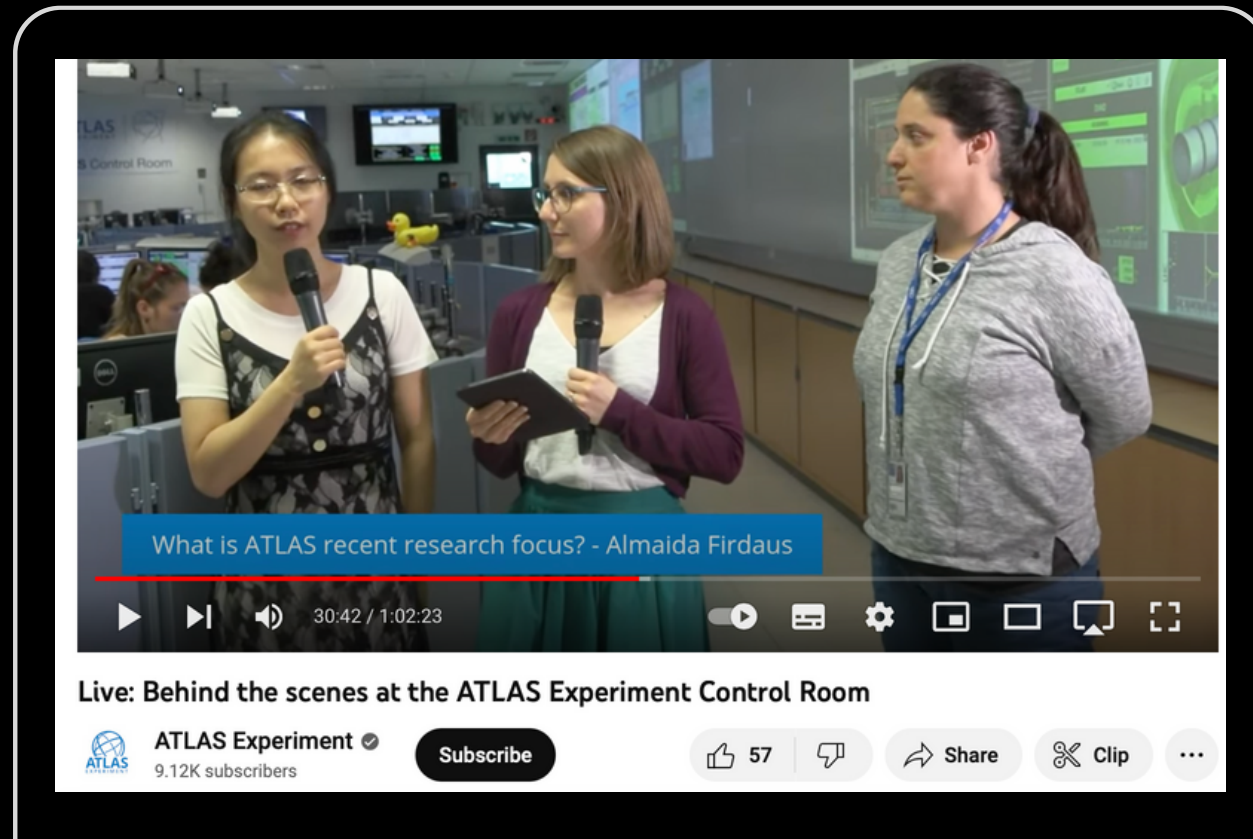
Also on LinkedIn ([company](#) & [group](#) profiles) and [CERN Alumni platform](#). Accessing newer social media like Threads and Mastodon



# Creating content

## Live videos

- Live events highlight a broader range of activities/people than other outputs
  - While short videos are still a mainstay on social media platforms, long-form video content (over 20 minutes) has been slowly gaining the attention of the Youtube algorithm 2019 to increase audience retention.
  - Live videos and events give our audience a chance to engage with us directly.
- Recent lives include ACR operations (Run-3 start), underground tours, and lectures all with interactive public Q&A



Excellent audience response for this example

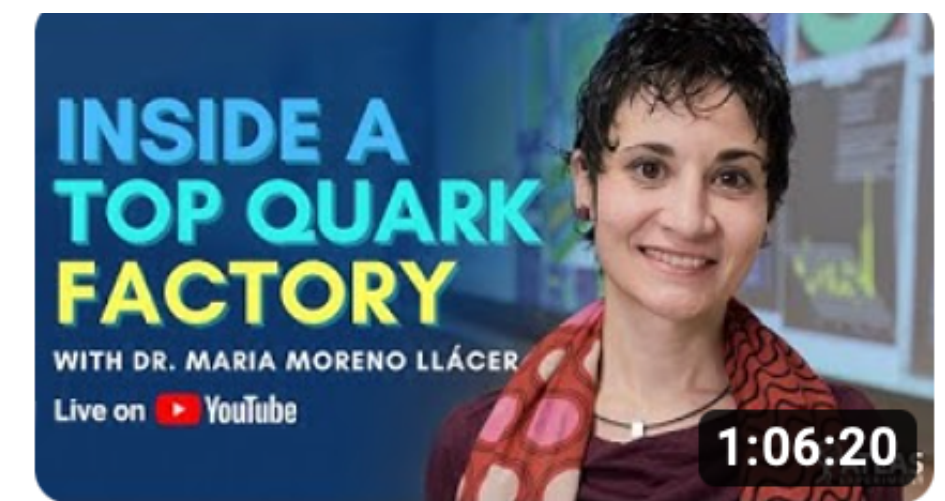
- 1200 views (ATLAS channel) & 5300 views (CERN channel) since live event
- Excellent Q&A session, with 25+ live viewer questions selected and answered



Searching for new, long-lived particles at the LHC - Live...

ATLAS Experiment ✓

2.2K views



Studying the top quark at the LHC - Live talk and Q&A wit...

ATLAS Experiment ✓

1.9K views • Streamed 1 year ago



# More on direct engagement: open/virtual visits

Longstanding Outreach programme, connecting visitors to ATLAS scientists in the ATLAS control room or in the ATLAS Cavern ([click here](#) to learn more). Some of them also recorded and available in YouTube for later access

In 2021, launched Open Visits for single visitors to join. 7 held in 2021 on zoom, 4 on Tiktok.

In 2022, ATLAS held its first Open Virtual Visit on Youtube – engaging directly with audience.



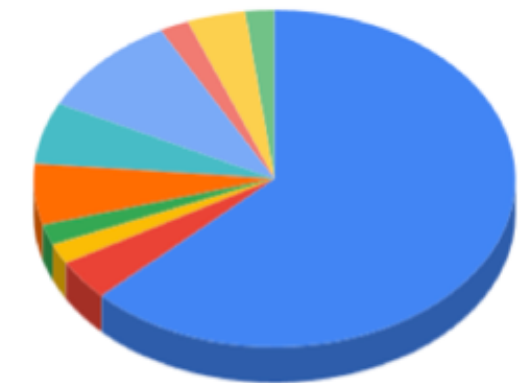
## Some statistics:

- 2023: to-date, 51 visits from 24 countries
- 2022: 121 visits from 36 countries in 8 languages. 6 open visits from the cavern
- Visits across every populated continent: from Australia to Colombia!
- Between 10-600 participants per visit

Countries booking virtual visits in 2023



Languages of Virtual Visits in 2023



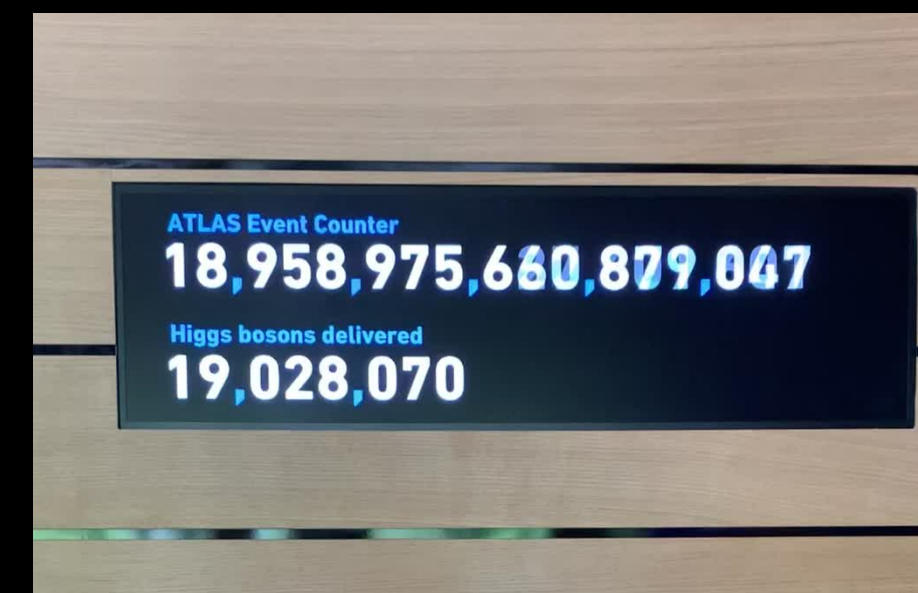


# More on direct engagement: the visitor centre

The ATLAS Visitor Centre, originally set up in 2011 was redesigned and reinstalled between 2018 and 2021, and opened its doors to visitors again last year.

It is one of the most-visited guided itineraries in the CERN Visit programme.

The exhibition was developed as a joint project between the ATLAS Collaboration and CERN, together with design company Point Prod (Geneva).





# More on direct engagement: Inside the collaboration

Important part of visibility & support within the Collaboration and at CERN in general.

E.g. Organising events (Run3 startup in CERN B40), displays (Gingerbread village in CERN R1) & Exclusive Live Streams (NSW lowering).





## Summary:

- Public communication initiatives require top-down support to maximise reach
- Social content continues to be very popular
- Adaptations to new formats & challenges is constant and requires additional resources and engagement from the community members

### Contact People:

outreach coordinators: Dilia Portillo & Darren Price  
comms/social media/colouring book: Katarina Anthony  
virtual visits: Muhammad Alhroob, open data: Kate Shaw, fact sheets: Ana Maria Rodriguez, cheat sheets: Elise Le Boulicaut, Valerie Buxbaum, website: Steven Goldfarb, visitor centre: Steven Goldfarb, Katarina Anthony

**GIVE US A FOLLOW (IF YOU  
AREN'T ALREADY):**

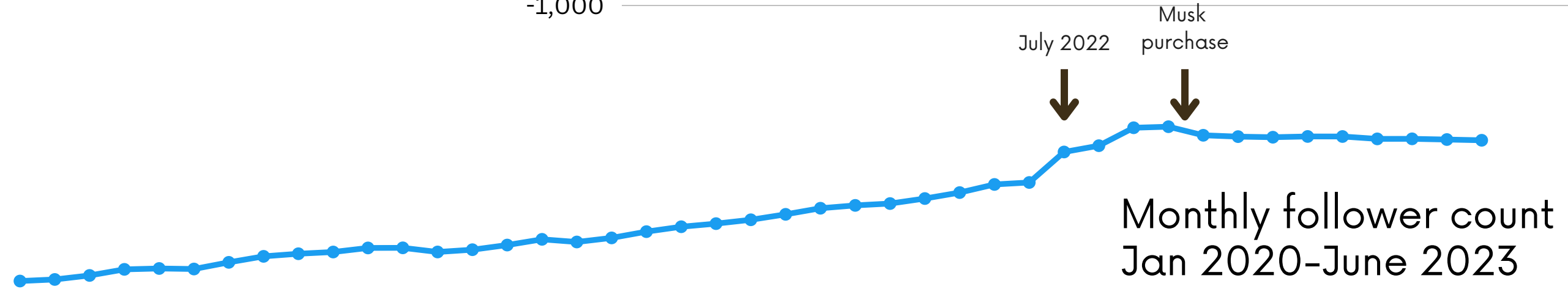
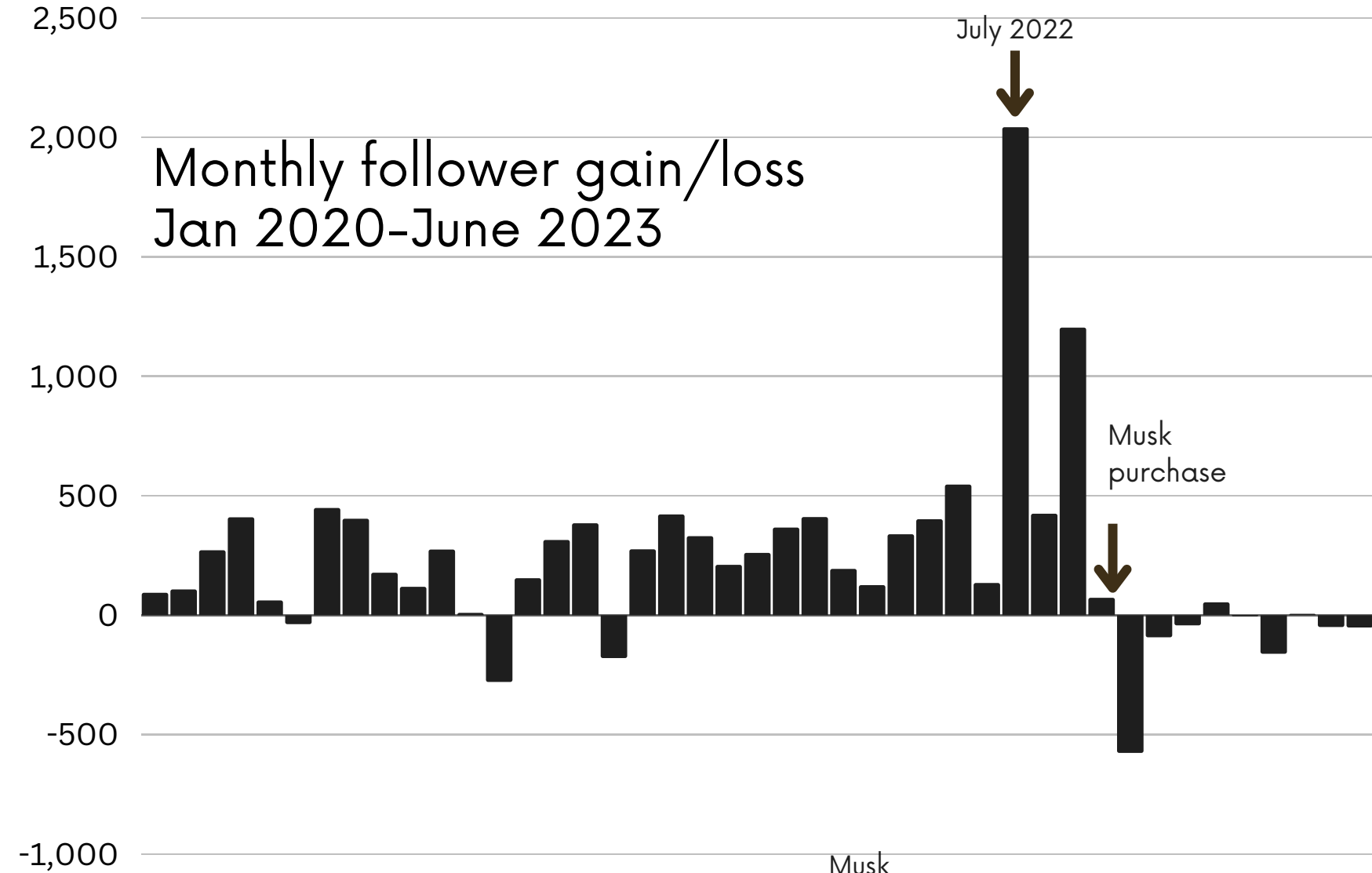
**@ATLASexperiment**

**AND CHECK OUT  
ATLAS.CERN!**

This talk was focused on social media and web content. I invite you to check other amazing initiatives from the team:  
<https://atlas.cern/Resources>

# Thanks! Any question?

Significant reduction in followers since change of Twitter management. Loss of followers also seen by CERN.



# Twitter panorama

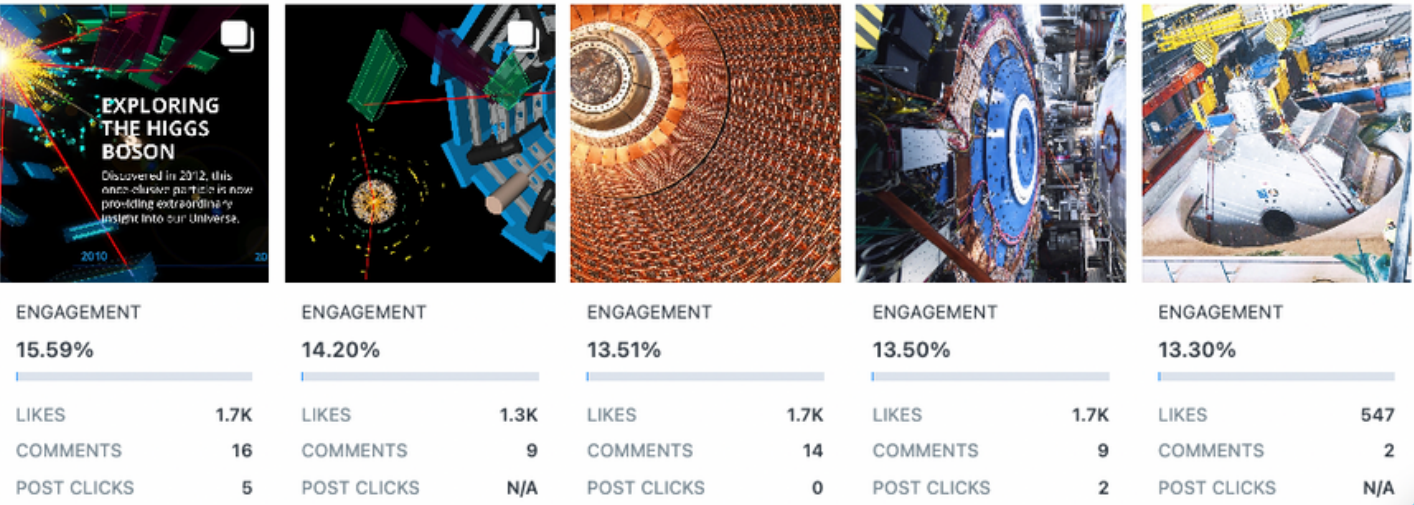
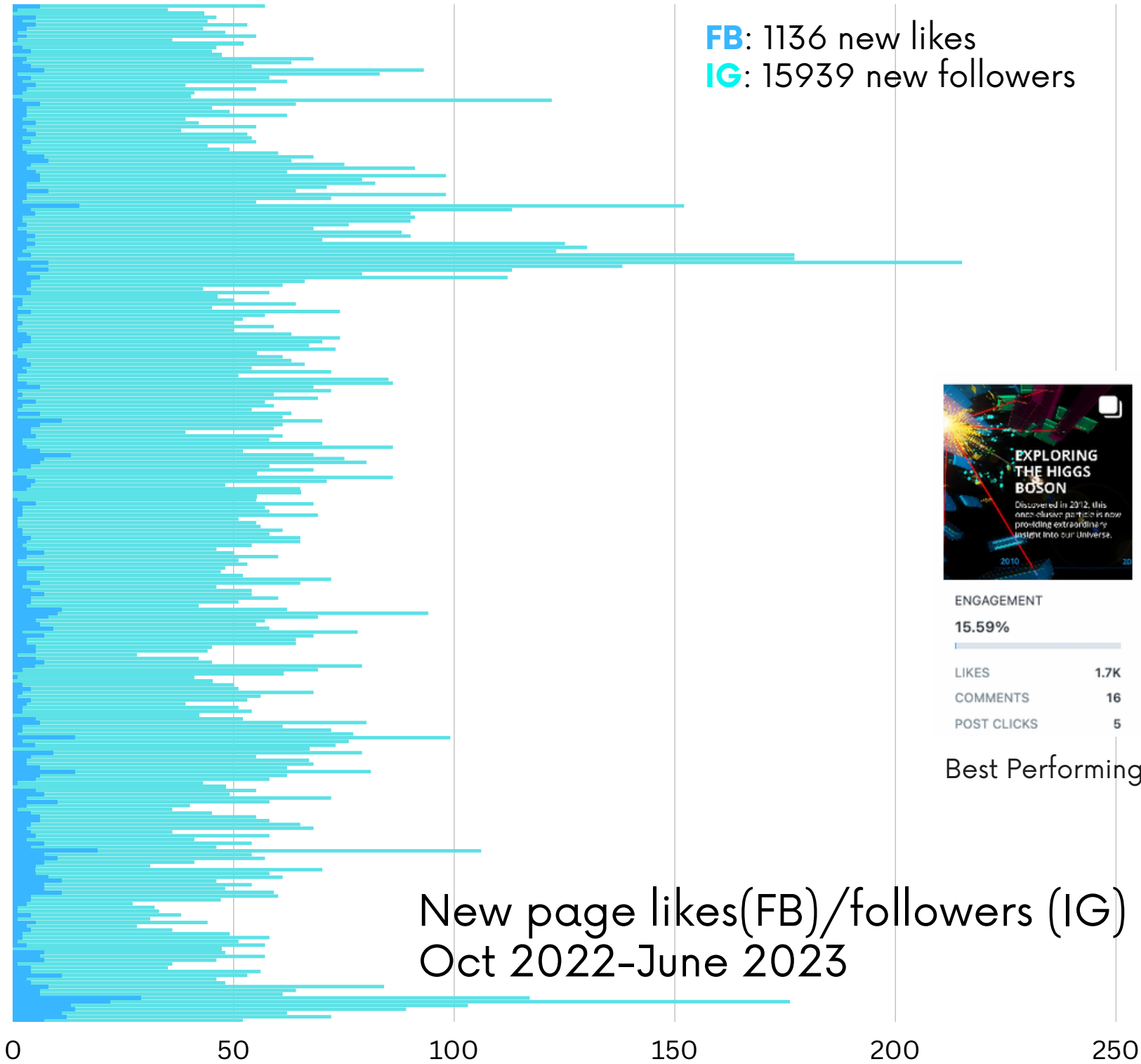


# Facebook & Instagram

Very slow but continuous growth on Facebook. Instagram continues to see large consistent growth.

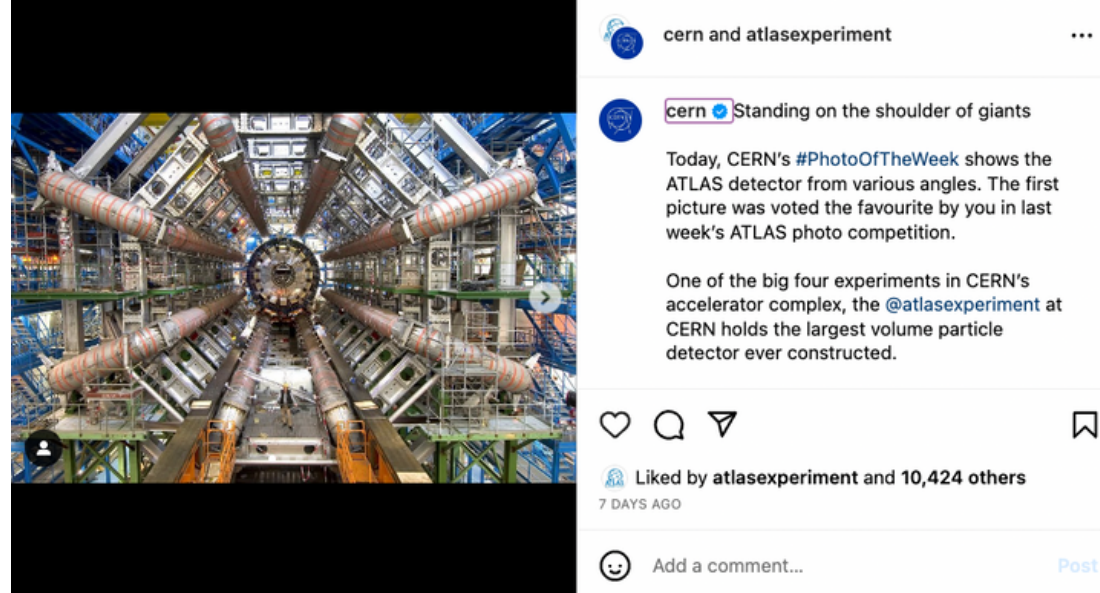
Facebook has an established userbase not present on other platforms. While not gaining popularity, it remains a consistent source of engagement.

Instagram is still very active.

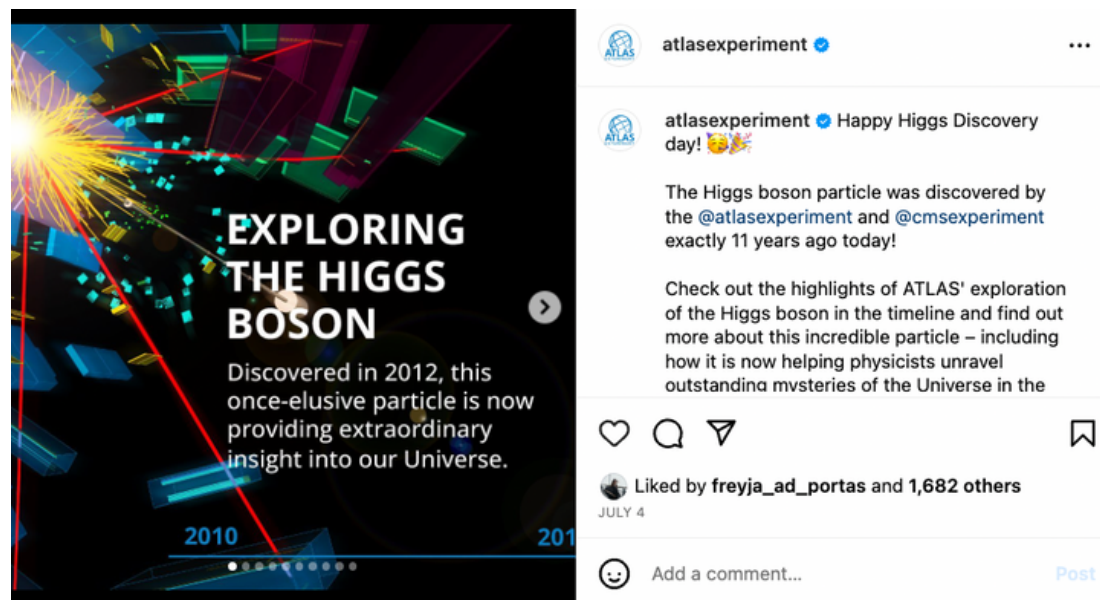


# Facebook and Instagram panorama

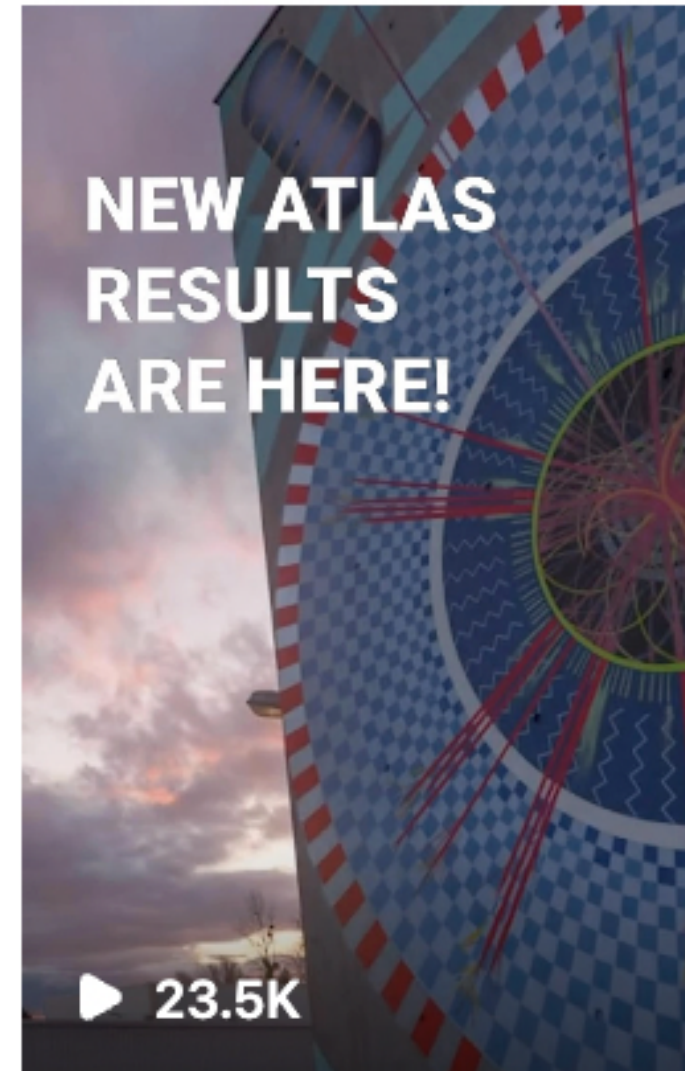




Instagram photo competition & Cross-posts with CERN



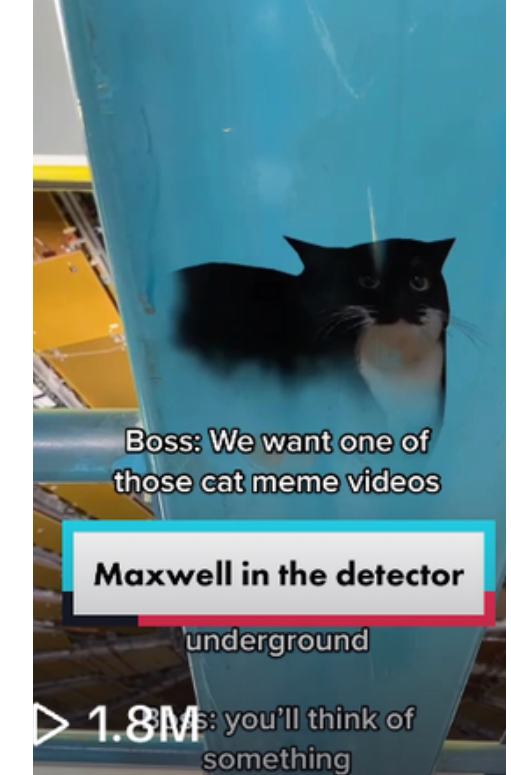
Instagram explainers in carousel format



Video promos pre-conference highlighting new results



Video recaps post-conference



Tiktok trends



Vox-Pop video at ATLAS week

# New content/type strategies