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COMMUNICATING BIG SCIENCE IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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Gravitational wave research exerts the fascination of Astronomy and, at the same time, stimulates the curiosity of fundamental physics on the general public: discoveries and results related to gravitational waves are often in under the spot of global communication, both on media and social media.

This has given rise to opportunities, but also to unprecedented problems, for the large international collaborations that run these experiments, as well as for other equally large astroparticle experiments. On the one hand, there is the complexity of the stories and tools, which can allow the general public to get closer to the contents (e.g. of gravitational physics), be part of its progress, but also of the uncertainty of the knowledge processes. On the other hand, the extraordinary number (hundreds, if not thousands) of researchers that make up these research communities, open new issues: how to manage confidential information within such large groups? How to build a public image recognizable to the research community but also to the general public? How to manage the contradiction between the reality of scientific research as a collective effort and the need for personalization of narratives, for example on social media? How provide quick and immediate answers about complex and uncertain questions? Retracing some recent moments in the public communication of gravitational waves could probably help to shed light on the contemporary issues of communication of fundamental research.

Submitted on behalf of a Collaboration?

Yes

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