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ATLAS and CMS Virtual Visits: Bringing Cutting Edge Science into the Classroom and Beyond

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Advances in information and communications technologies (ICTs) has given rise to innovative use of web-based video tools for global communication, enhancing the impact of large research facilities and their Outreach and Education programmes. One such example involves videoconferences to schools and remote events around the globe, known as Virtual Visits, conducted by the ATLAS and CMS experiments at CERN. The goal of these programmes is to help the public and especially young people engage and understand how science works in the field of particle physics, through direct dialogue between ATLAS/CMS scientists and remote audiences.

Both experiments enhanced the Virtual Visits concept in different ways but with the same objective, which is to break geographical barriers, allowing more people to enter the world of science, physics and particle physics, and to support local education and outreach activities. Both experiments have hosted virtual visits by thousands of people from all seven continents, with participants connecting from locations such as Kathmandu to Rio de Janeiro, Ghana to Riyadh, and also the South Pole. Audiences included mainly high-school students and their teachers but also policy makers and the general public.

This talk gives an overview of the educational, technical and organizational aspects of both programmes, with their unique added value. We also present feedback collected from the participants, followed by recommendations for the future development envisaging creating sustainable tools.

Author: LAPKA, Marzena (CERN)

Presenter: LAPKA, Marzena (CERN)

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