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ATLAS public engagement: The CERN Open Days experience

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The ATLAS experiment at the Large Hadron Collider is collecting unprecedented amounts of proton–proton collision data. The ATLAS Collaboration analyses these data, seeking to give answers to questions that have puzzled particle physicists for many decades now. In this process, the Standard Model is being precisely measured and searches for new physics are performed in sophisticated and clever data analyses. When ATLAS physicists explain to non-experts what they are doing and why, they use their passion to come up with equally clever means to achieve that. Their aim is both to motivate the younger generations as potential future scientists, and to reach out to the general public, creating an audience more interested in future achievements and convincing them of the importance of their pursuits. While there are many opportunities for interacting with the public, events like the CERN Open Days in 2019, with about 70000 visitors, carry a special weight in terms of potential impact. This contribution will highlight activities the ATLAS Collaboration used to connect with the visitors during the 2019 CERN Open Days. It will discuss the experience of the event preparation and will conclude with impressions of the impact of the proposed activities to the interactions with the amazing visitors, which made the 2019 CERN Open Days weekend a memorable event.

Author: PEIXOTO, Ana (LIP Laboratorio de Instrumentacao e Fisica Experimental de Part)

Presenter: PEIXOTO, Ana (LIP Laboratorio de Instrumentacao e Fisica Experimental de Part)

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