

Promoting Global Inclusivity and Engagement in Geoscience Through YouTube

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Geoscience departments are currently suffering low enrollment largely due to lack of understanding among the general public regarding the meaning and scope of geoscience. Efforts to increase enrollment often focus on incorporating recruitment strategies in introductory courses or conducting outreach for students at the K-12 level. These methods are often effective on a local scale, but the decrease in geological interest among undergraduate students is a global issue. For over two years, I've been posting educational geoscience videos on my YouTube channel, GEO GIRL. My target viewers are students at the high school or undergraduate level, but my actual viewers represent a wide range of age and academic level. The reach I can achieve through YouTube far outweighs that of any other outreach activities I have conducted. YouTube is globally accessible, giving my channel an international stage on which to grow. Based on YouTube analytics, my videos have reached viewers in over 140 different countries so far, with over 50% of views coming from outside the United States. Moreover, my videos are available to not only students or members of the scientific community, but also those outside of science who are interested in one or more of the individual topics I cover on my channel. Therefore, this method of outreach gives me the ability to convert nonscientists into scientists or influence a student to major in the geosciences or related fields. Since starting the channel, I have received numerous messages from people who say my videos inspired them to pursue geoscience as a major and eventually a career. I also receive messages from viewers who say my content has helped them learn about a topic which is otherwise not available to them. Online video allows us to inspire, influence, and engage students and non-students globally. Here, I present my experience and findings from online science communication with the goal of inspiring other geoscientists to share their research and knowledge online as it can serve as a global recruitment tool.