

In The News; *A summary report on the Census of Marine Life's media profile*



Census of Marine Life news conference, London, Oct. 4, 2010, as photographed by Agence France Presse

Mandate:

For both the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and Census' Scientific Steering Committee evaluations, create an updated list of the Census of Marine Life news releases, some summary statistics and a 5-10 page summary of lessons learned, covering, for example, such topics as:

- * general approach to media outreach
- * differences in national media interests and styles
- * challenges obtaining multilingual coverage
- * strengths and weaknesses of the style of release used by CoML
- * media outreach implications of technological change, 2003-2010
- * analysis of messages conveyed and media accuracy

- * process matters (eg. checklists, conference calls to refine messages, etc.)
 - * ranking of the top/best stories and conjectures why those came out so well
 - * assessment of coverage not associated with particular releases
 - * disappointments
 - * costs
 - * comparison of CoML success in its communications efforts to comparable big science programs
 - * Contribution to "the hard bottom line Public Understanding question" for all Census participants: *Do publics in many countries know more about marine life in 2010 than in 2000? If so, what did they learn? What fraction of the learning might be attributable to CoML? Did the visibility and reputation attained by the CoML help it succeed (in fund-raising to support research in particular regions, participation by younger researchers, etc.)*
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Overview:



In the archives at EurekAlert, a news release distribution system of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, more than 120 releases make reference to the Census of Marine Life.

These releases were posted over the past decade

- a) on behalf of the Census as a whole,
- b) by the Census on behalf of individual projects, and
- c) by science organizations affiliated with the Census.

All Census-issued releases are collected online at www.coml.org -> Media Resources -> Press releases.

Starting with a practice release in August 2003 regarding coral reefs, and a strategic decision to average three major global Census-wide releases each year, some 23 major campaigns to reach out to global news media were mounted by the Census secretariat. One major release was issued in 2003, two in 2007, three in 2004, 2006, 2009 and 2010, and four in 2005 and 2008.

A spreadsheet summarizing media results of each of these major campaigns is online at: <https://spreadsheets1.google.com/ccc?key=tyHiUPuN2ezfy-Q2DiET9pw#gid=0>)

It should be noted that the comparability of results between 2003 and 2010 is compromised by variations in the news search engines used (eg. a shifting number of media sources covered by Google News over the years, and a major revision in mid-2010 of the Yahoo News search engine) and by improvements through practice in finding results.

That said, the 23 news releases between 2003 and 2010 represented in the spreadsheet resulted in, **on average**:

Stories by global newswires and news syndicates: **24**

Stories captured from online news sites: **321** (across **32** countries in **12** languages).

At the **top of the range** (based on number of newswire stories): The final two news releases in 2010 summarizing the decade-long Census:

1)

“First Census Shows Life in Planet Ocean is Richer, More Connected, More Altered than Expected” (2010/10/04)

It garnered:

43 stories by global newswires and news syndicates (and **1000+** stories captured from online news sites across **59** countries in **29** languages)

Below: some of the front page US coverage accorded the October, 2010 release. (See also separate note on the Wall Street Journal, below)



and

2)

Census of Marine Life publishes historic roll call of species in 25 key world areas (2010-08-02)

It garnered:

37 stories by global newswires and news syndicates (and **564** stories captured from online news sites across **51** countries in **22** languages).

Below: some of the front page international coverage accorded the August, 2010 release, from London, Berlin, Toronto and Calcutta.



Greatest media interest: discovery

Discovery was the theme of the next most popular news releases.

Four of the six top-ranked stories (and five of the top 10 -- again based on the criteria of reach via newswires) included the word **explorer** in the headline:

- 3) "Census of Marine Life **explorers** find hundreds of identical species thrive in both Arctic, Antarctic" (2009/02/15)
- 4) "**Explorers** find hundreds of undescribed corals, other species on familiar Australian reefs" (2008/09/18)
- 5) "Antarctic marine **explorers** reveal first biological changes after collapse of polar ice shelves" (2007/02/25)
- 6) "**Explorers** Inventory hard-to-see sea life: Tiny but mighty microbes, plankton, larvae, burrowers -- Keys to Earth's food and respiratory systems" (2010/04/18)

and

- 10) Beyond sunlight: **Explorers** census 17,650 ocean species between edge of darkness and black abyss (2009/11/22)

At the **bottom end of the range**: the first Census History of Marine Animal Populations (HMAP) release:

- 23) "***First ever estimate of cod fishery in 1850s reveals 96% decline on Scotian Shelf***" (2005/03/01)

resulted in

10 stories by global newswires and news syndicates (and **123** stories captured from online news sites across **15** countries in **3** languages)

In fact, based on quantitative reach, the four HMAP-related stories all returned results below average for Census news releases.

The other three HMAP-related stories:

- 20) "***Restaurant seafood prices since 1850s help plot marine harvests through history***" (2005/10/23)

- 17) "***Tuna past and present***" (2007/08/05)

14) ***“Ocean life in olden days: Researchers upend modern notions of 'natural' animal sizes, abundance” (2009/05/24)***

Together, the four HMAP releases garnered, on average, **16** global newswire and news syndicate stories, and **120** stories captured from online news sites across **20** countries in **8** languages.

That said, these HMAP results are impressive compared with those of stories done for UN and other clients. And the HMAP release describing the study of restaurant seafood prices as a means of measuring declining abundance was one of the few Census stories written up by the **New York Times**.

Below: photo used by the Times of London to illustrate an HMAP story, 2009

Times of London
844 words

May 25, 2009

Census of Marine Life brings hope of revival to the seas



Frank Pope, Ocean Correspondent

Ranking of the top/best stories and conjectures why those came out so well

Worth framing:

Wall Street Journal **front page**, 1,280 words, Oct. 5, 2010

A great investment was made in preparing for the Census news conference finale on Oct. 4, 2010. This included intensive media training and interview rehearsals, the offer of excellent syntheses and extensive background information, compelling images and video to support coverage, and the assembly of a large team of media experts, including associates in Washington, London and elsewhere, to both solicit and coordinate interview logistics.

A triumph of the effort was this front page splash by the Wall Street Journal:



The text of the WSJ feature article is online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704847104575532031662747228.html#printMode>

Another reflection of the intense preparation for delivery of the final Census documents was the extensive coverage by international television and radio networks.

Hyperlinks to a selection of news clips from Oct. 4-5, 2010:



[ITN 1 – UK](#)



[CNN](#)



[NBC News](#)



[ABC News](#)



[BBC](#)

[Fox TV](#)

[BBC Radio Science in Action](#)

[BBC Earth News](#)

[BBC Science and Environment: Life in the Arctic Ocean](#)

[BBC Science and Environment: Hawaiian sea life](#)

[BBC Science and Environment: Australia's Heron Island](#)

[BBC Science and Environment: Alaskan sea life](#)

[BBC Science and Environment: Philippines sea life](#)

[BBC Science and Environment: Caribbean creatures](#)

[ITN 2 \(UK\)](#)

[CNN Spanish](#)

[REUTERS TV](#)

[AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE](#) ([English](#)) ([French](#)) ([Arabic](#)), ([Japanese](#))

[ZDF - Germany](#)

[EFE - Spain](#)

[TF1 – France](#)

[BFM-TV - France](#)

[Global TV – Canada](#)

[ABC - Australia](#)

[RO Presa - Italy](#)

[Once Noticias - Mexico](#)

[NoticieroHoy - Mexico](#)

[O Globo - Brazil](#)

[Univali Brazil - Portuguese](#)

[CBC National Radio – Quirks and Quarks \(lead story\)](#)

[Le Monde \(recorded interview with Myriam Sibuet\)](#)

[Sky News \(UK\)](#)

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Los Angeles Times **front page**, 1,225+ words, Aug. 2, 2009

and

The Economist (Special Edition)

“**The World in 2010**,” **cover reference** + 943-word article, Nov. 13, 2009

The genesis of these stories, by LA Times feature writer Bob Drogin and Economist contributor Alun Anderson (former editor-in-chief of New Scientist), is obscure but may reflect in part the momentum Census publicity had in 2009 as the project entered its final year.

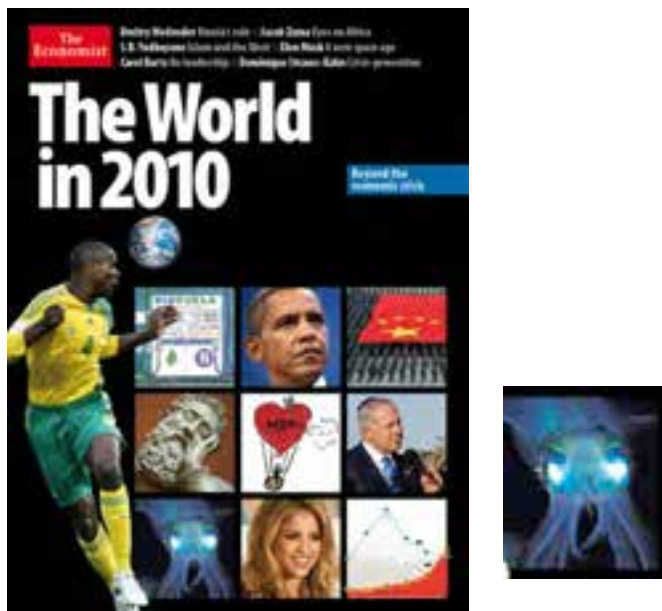
The LA Times had been offered repeatedly the Census' spot news releases through its environment reporter and his editors without success. The absence of coverage by the LA Times was increasingly obvious, compensated to a large degree by a banner story across the top of page A1, Sunday Aug. 2, 2009, headlined:

Mapping an ocean of species

The Census of Marine Life, due to be completed next year, has already made key discoveries: thousands of new species, a shrimp long believed extinct, manhole-sized starfish

(For the full text: <http://articles.latimes.com/print/2009/aug/02/nation/na-fish2>)

Likewise, The Economist had passed over the parade of Census releases that had produced a steady stream of stories in Great Britain's national daily newspapers over the years, then commissioned a feature look at the project.



The text of The Economist's two-page article, represented on the cover by the squid above, is online at www.economist.com/node/14742727

General approach

Key steps involved in the Census media campaigns:

News release development

Consultations, including a preliminary conference call with key scientists, to identify the best story angles, followed by detailed research and drafting. Vigorous efforts were made to scrub

Census news releases free of scientific jargon and acronyms -- communications speed bumps that interfere with a reader's efforts to understand.

Liaison with partner organizations to coordinate efforts and avoid overlap

Logistical organization

Preparation of the news release checklist (**see example, appendix 1**) and interview management spreadsheet

(**see example:** <https://spreadsheets1.google.com/cc?key=tlwvUT5JkD08i6azR41575A&hl=en#gid=7>)

The spreadsheet reflects advice received about the availability of interviewees each day of the interview period, along with information about the interviewees such as languages spoken and contact coordinates

Embargoed media materials URL

A special URL was created so media could easily download auxiliary resources like the full texts of academic papers, videos, or high-resolution images, complete with captions and credit information. The one-stop shop for these media-only materials was advertised at the top of the news release.

When relevant video "b-roll" (background footage for use by broadcast and online media) was available, television interview requests rose in tandem.

The final Census news release in 2010 was accompanied by superb b-roll prepared with the benefit of Census-generated video, supplemented by footage from the archives of the National Geographic Society, which heightened television interest in the story dramatically.

News release distribution

Personalized international release distribution to more than 1,000 relevant reporters (science, environment, marine)

Online posting to secure embargoed access news sites (www.EurekAlert.org. See eg http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2010-10/com1-fcs092910.php in English (and Chinese, as appropriate)

Media pitching and interview scheduling

Telephone calls to contacts at key news organizations to solicit interest in interviews

Interviewee preparation / management and moderation of interviews

In cases where more than one interviewee was involved in a media call (a maximum of two or three was maintained because too many voices are hard to follow for the reporter's need to attribute quotes), interviewees convened a few minutes beforehand on a teleconference bridge and were then connected by the moderator to individual reporters in sequence. Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes each, though most took only 15-20. Interviewees were asked to introduce him/her self with title so the reporter could hear the voices, followed by a brief

introduction by the lead interviewee that typically included the three key points the Census wanted to register.

Project scientists with varying levels of media experience were typically partnered on each media call with an expert interviewee such as Ian Poiner, Ron O'Dor or Jesse Ausubel, who also provided global context for the story at hand.

Media coverage monitoring and summary

Coverage was captured via low and no-cost news search engines. Those results were then captured and summarized in a spreadsheet (eg:

<https://spreadsheets2.google.com/ccc?key=tctHL7ByQtAMY1t8GuzPnNw&hl=en#gid=0>)

The vast majority of online coverage consisted of reproductions of stories by newswires and news syndicates. Original stories -- those written by different reporters -- were distributed separately.

Twitter and blogs results were expertly obtained and shared by Sloan associate Patti Giglio.

As noted above, preparations for the grand finale in October 2010 included a presentation at the February meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a July communications workshop at the University of Rhode Island at which media trainers were engaged to help craft messaging and rehearse interviewees / panelists.

The latter session was also extremely helpful in defining the ultimate global messages delivered Oct 4.

Challenges obtaining multilingual coverage

and

Differences in national media interests and styles

A large portion of the Census' international media interest was driven from the United Kingdom, the history and geography of which, some argue, endow it with a keen interest in both global and marine issues. The BBC World Television and/or World Radio services alone covered 10 of the Census' 11 media campaigns between 2007 and 2010.

London has an unusually large, strong and competitive community of science reporters and, as one of the world's foremost media capitals, hosts the foreign bureaus of news organizations from around the world, all staffed by English-speaking correspondents.

The latter point is also true of Washington DC and New York. By focusing efforts on media bureaus in London, Washington and New York, the Census was able to reach out to the world via reporters filing stories in languages other than English without the challenge of finding multilingual interviewees.

The large number of English-speaking international media in DC and London influenced the choices of Washington's Smithsonian Museum of Natural History as the public launch site for the Census in 2003, and of London's Royal Institution as the site for releasing the final results.

The national media of a given country are most interested in news and views relevant to local readers, of course. With that in mind, interviewees were prompted to be prepared to speak about the contribution of a particular country's scientists and institutions, and the contacts of local interviewees or other resources were often provided to reporters.

Compiling coverage was accomplished by searching on translations of "Census of Marine Life" and on the surnames of key interviewees, which are seldom translated. It was also possible sometimes to find foreign language coverage by looking for Census-issued photos among the top science stories in the various national editions of the Google News search engine.

For more information:

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Public Affairs and University Relations

Media Strategy and Coverage Summary

Darlene Trew Crist, Director of News and Communications

Public Affairs and University Relations (PAUR) has adopted a multi-tiered news distribution system to maximize positive media coverage for the University in an ever-increasingly competitive 24 hours news cycle. PAUR uses digital technology to repurpose stories and content on multiple platforms to a variety of audiences. We supplement traditional news release with images, art, and embedded video to illustrate content and/or perspectives of the newsmaker. Once a release has been posted on Brown's news and events webpage, it is distributed in multiple ways – pitched to targeted reporters with demonstrated interest in the content, published on brown.edu, tweeted about, posted on Facebook, if content is appropriate, and distributed on YouTube, Vimeo and other video outlets when video is involved. We also redistribute University news and media coverage links in a weekly electronic newsletter, *News from Brown University*, and select stories are re-reported in alumni publication, *The Brown Insider*.

The following media coverage summary captures the audience reach of one news release issued about a quadriplegic woman who with a sensory implant in her brain was able to “think” the movement of a robotic arm to drink coffee for the first time in 15 years.



People with paralysis control robotic arms using brain-computer interface

A new study in *Nature* reports that two people with tetraplegia were able to reach for and grasp objects in three-dimensional space using robotic arms that they controlled

directly with brain activity. They used the BrainGate neural interface system, an investigational device currently being studied under an Investigational Device Exemption. One participant used the system to serve herself coffee for the first time since becoming paralyzed nearly 15 years ago.

<http://news.brown.edu/pressreleases/2012/05/braingate2>

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Print and Online Media Hits: 900+

Potential Viewership: 598 million

(Source Meltwater Media Monitoring)

Broadcast Media Hits: 339+

CBS: 170, including CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley (5.5 million)

PBS: 77, including PBS News Hour in 8 different markets (2.7 million) and Frontline (4.6 million)

NBC provided the story as a feed to 74 local affiliates, ABC to 10 affiliates, and Fox to 7 local affiliates. The story also ran on Reuters TV, which has international reach, CBC News Now with Heather Hiscox, Fox News Live with Shepard Smith, CNN International, and Jimmy Kimmel Live

Potential Local Viewership: 8.9 million

Total Potential Broadcast Viewership: 30 million+

(Source TVEyesResults)

Radio Hits: 30

Radio included NPR's All Things Considered and Science Friday, CBS Radio News

network (WCBS, KCBS, WBZ, WBBM, etc.), Voice of America, BBC, CBC, and Bloomberg radio

(Source TVEyesResults)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook Shares

(More than 600 from postings by Wall St. Journal, CBS News, Brown)

Potential Reach: ~1.1 million people

Twitter Mentions: More than 1,300

Potential Reach: More than 25 million

VIP Tweets

[LiveScience @LiveScience](#)

Brain-Controlled Robotic Arm Points Way to New Prosthetics <http://bit.ly/JjSFjr>

[Boing Boing @BoingBoing](#)

Woman controls robot arm with her mind <http://dlvr.it/1ZWC9K>

[Popular Science @PopSci](#)

New advances allow paralyzed patients to move a robotic arm with their thoughts. Great piece from [@rboyle31](#): <http://bit.ly/Jedh27>

[ABC News @ABC](#)

Paralyzed woman moves robotic arm with her mind <http://abcn.ws/JrK3LS>

[Huffington Post @HuffingtonPost](#)

INCREDIBLE: Paralyzed woman controls robot arm using only her mind
<http://huff.to/L7yypg>

[Roger Ebert @ebertc](#)

Paralyzed woman uses her mind to control a robotic arm. Truly amazing.
<http://to.pbs.org/Mm0LOv>

[TIME.com @TIME](#)

Amazing video: A paralyzed woman controls a robot with her brain.
<http://ti.me/KmTZ6M> (via [@Techland](#))

[Tony Robbins @tonyrobbins](#)

Paralyzed patients use mind control to move robot arm for the first time..
amazing technology!

Representative International Coverage

Number of Countries: 68

BBC (UK)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-18092653>

Globe and Mail (Canada)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health/new-health/health-news/paralysis-patients-move-robot-arms-with-their-minds/article2434600/>

HiNet (Taiwan)

<http://times.hinet.net/news/internationality/8291723;jsessionid=AC59C42B9806DDA2C693ABA7A8E0472E>

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

<http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/paralysed-woman-uses-mind-to-move-robotic-arm-20120517-1yrpn.html>

Folha (Brazil)

<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ciencia/1091666-chip-permite-tetraplegica-mexer-braco-robo-com-a-mente.shtml>

La Repubblica (Italy)

<http://video.repubblica.it/tecno-e-scienze/usa-braingate-il-braccio-robotico-che-aiuta-i-paralitici/95522/93904>

NZZ Online (Switzerland)

http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/hintergrund/wissenschaft/gelaehmte-koennen-mit-gedanken-roboterarm-lenken_1.16925010.html

NTN24 (Latin America/Caribbean)

<http://www.ntn24.com/noticias/cientificos-estadounidenses-lo-049090>

(via AFP)

CNN International

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2012/05/18/brain-to-robotics.cnn>

National Coverage

Wall St. Journal:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303360504577408222201533252.html?mod=WSJ_latestheadlines

NPR's All Things Considered

<http://www.npr.org/2012/05/17/152944878/new-brain-sensor-lets-amputees-move-robotic-limbs>

CBS Evening News

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-57435652/paralyzed-woman-uses-mind-control-technology-to-operate-robotic-arm/?tag=contentBody;cbsCarousel

The New York Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/17/science/bodies-inert-they-moved-a-robot-with-their-minds.html?_r=2&src=twr

Associated Press (via Stars & Stripes)

http://ap.stripes.com/dynamic/stories/U/US_SCI_MIND_CONTROLLED_ROBOT?SITE=DCSAS&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2012-05-16-14-17-55

MSNBC.com

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/47447302/ns/health-health_care/#.T7vU0L_al7w

Wired.com

<http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2012/05/thoughts-control-robotic-arm/>

PBS Newshour

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/science/jan-june12/roboticarms_05-16.html

Local Coverage

Boston Globe

http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2012/05/17/brain_gate_implant_translates_brain_signals_into_movement_in_patients_paralyzed_by_stroke/

Providence Journal

<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/OLIVE/ODE/PROJO/LandingPage/LandingPage.aspx?href=VFBKLzlwMTIvMDUvMTc.&pageno=MQ..&entity=QXlwMDEwNA..&view=ZW50aXR5>

Providence Business News

<http://www.pbn.com/Brown-scientists-turn-thoughts-into-action,67700>

WHDH (Boston)

<http://www1.whdh.com/news/articles/local/south/12007498915650/paralyzed-taunton-woman-moves-robotic-arm/>

Public Affairs and University Relations

Paul Revere Print Discovery Coverage

Darlene Trew Crist, Director of News and Communication



A rare find buried in the stacks

A donated collection of books once belonging to a member of the Brown University Class of 1773 included a piece of history tucked inside one of the volumes: an exceptionally rare engraved print by Paul Revere. Brown's copy of the print, depicting Jesus and John the Baptist in the Jordan River, is one of only five known to exist. <http://news.brown.edu/features/2012/04/revere>

Total Media Hits: ~228

Potential Viewership: ~158,800,000

National Coverage

The New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/04/us/at-brown-university-stumbling-across-a-rarity-in-the-rare-book-room.html?pagewanted=all>

NPR's All Things Considered: <http://www.npr.org/2012/04/15/150630478/lost-and-found-rare-paul-revere-print-rediscovered?ft=1&f=1003>

The Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/12/rare-paul-revere-print-found_n_1420693.html

The Boston Globe: <http://www.boston.com/Boston/metrodesk/2012/04/brown-university-library-worker-finds-rare-paul-revere-print/H1dBYH23APbFNL1zfveV0M/index.html>

The Washington Post: http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/rare-print-made-by-paul-revere-found-tucked-into-19th-century-book-in-brown-university-library/2012/04/11/gIQA3apAT_story.html

Associated Press (via ABC News): <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/rare-revere-print-found-brown-16117200#.T4x9hOIWp8M>

Local Coverage

The Providence Journal:

<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODE/ProJo/LandingPage/LandingPage.aspx?href=VFBKLzlwMTlvMDQvMTI.&pageno=LTE.&entity=QXlwMTAwMQ..&view=ZW50aXR5>

WRNI:

<http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wrni/news.newsmain/article/0/0/1920439/news/Rare.Paul.Revere.engraving.found.tucked.in.an.old.book>

WBUR:

<http://www.wbur.org/2012/04/11/paul-revere-print-brown>

VIP Tweets

HuffPost Arts: 17k

Julia Rappaport (Writer and Editor of Online Content for @facinghistory): 1k

Ohio Historical Society: 4k

Brittany Curran: 200k

Electric Literature: 151k

Melville House: 13k

Boston.com News: 58k

The Washington Post: 1M

Total reach on Twitter: 1,444,000