

Communication and Outreach Branch

<http://www.iag-aig.org>

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Introduction

The period of 2015-2019 is the fourth term in the operation of the Communication and Outreach Branch (COB) hosted at the Department of Geodesy and Surveying of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME).

The Communication and Outreach Branch is one of the components of the Association. According to the new Statutes (§5) of the IAG, the COB is the office responsible for the promotional activities of the IAG and the communication with its members.

The Terms of Reference and program of activities of the COB, and a short report on the IAG website (“IAG on the Internet”), were published in The Geodesist’s Handbook 2016 (Drewes et al., 2016; Ádám and Rózsa, 2016; Rózsa, 2016), respectively.

In the past period of the fourth term (since the 2015 IUGG General Assembly in Prague till June, 2019) the COB’s President attended the IAG Executive Committee (EC) meeting in three cases (Potsdam, April 25-26, 2016; Vienna, April 28, 2017 and Vienna, April 13, 2018), while COB’s Secretary represented COB on the EC meeting in Washington D.C., December 10, 2018. Note that the COB’s Secretary also represented IAG in the UN GGIM GGRF WG (focus group on Outreach and Communication) and on its telecon and personal meetings (Vienna, April 12, 2018).

A joint meeting of the IAG Office (H. Drewes and F. Kuglitsch), the IAG GGOS Coordinating Office (CO: G. Stangl, Ph. Mitterschiffthaler and M. Madzek) and the IAG COB (J. Ádám and Sz. Rózsa) was organized in Vienna at BEV in February 24, 2017, where the following topics were discussed:

- the structure and operation of the IAG/GGOS website;
- issues of the cooperation among the IAG Office (Munich), IAG GGOS CO (Vienna) and IAG COB (Budapest).

Note that the IAG COB’s Secretary also attended at the Potsdam IAG EC meeting in April of 2016. Both the COB’s President and Secretary participated at the IAG Retreat organized at Potsdam immediately after the EC meeting in April 25-26, 2016 (Beutler, 2016).

The COB provides communication, public information and outreach links, in particular via the official IAG Website and the monthly IAG Newsletters. These are the main activities of the IAG Communication and Outreach Branch.

The IAG Website

The Communication and Outreach Branch maintained the IAG Website. The website has been operational, no significant downtime has been experienced in the service. A regular update of

the content has been carried out using the material provided by Association and Commission leaders, conference organizers and other members of the Association.

In the second half of the period the website has been redesigned after a consultation with the IAG Office and the Steering Committee members. Since the IT infrastructure (both the software and hardware) is becoming outdated, a complete refurbishment of the hardware and the development of a new IAG webpage has been initiated in late 2018.

The event calendar of the website is currently redesigned according to the decision of the joint meeting of the COB, GGOS CO and the IAG Office in order to enable all of the aforementioned entities to use the same database for event calendars all over the IAG. Moreover the synchronization of IAG events with the Google calendar is being developed.

The IAG Website is visited by ca. 50 users per day. The daily number of visitors significantly increase at online publication of the IAG Newsletter, that denotes the importance and the efficiency of the latter communication channel, too (Fig 1.).

Furtunately website audience comes from almost all over the world, except some African countries. The demographic distribution of the visitors show that almost 40% of the visitors are aged between 25 and 34 years.

All organizers of the IAG meetings were asked to send the announcements for meetings as well as summarising reports on these events to the COB in order to put these texts into the IAG Website and IAG Newsletter informing the whole community.

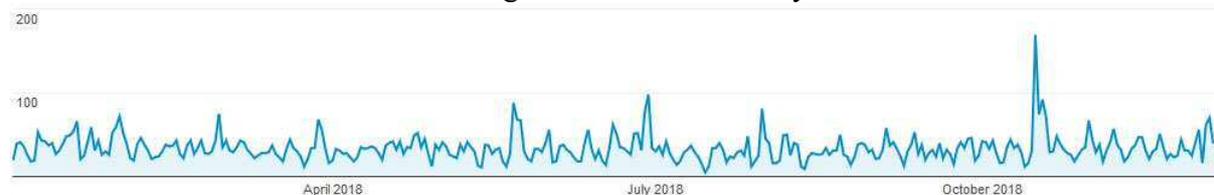


Figure 1. Weekly visitors from January 2018 to December 2018.

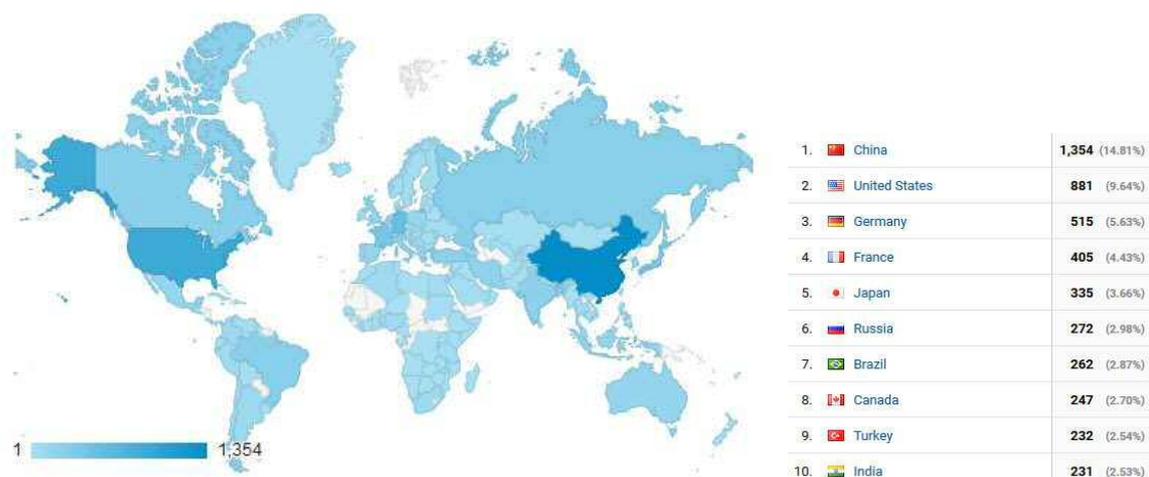


Figure 2. IAG website audience (year 2018)

IAG on Social Media

The COB is maintaining the Facebook and Twitter page of the Association. Our Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalAssociationOfGeodesy/> while you may follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/iag_geodesy . It is remarkable that the geographic

distribution of Facebook followers do not agree with the IAG website. There are many African, Asian and South American countries among the top 10 countries, like Egypt, India, Brazil, Chile, Ethiopia (Fig. 3.). Since social media is becoming a more and more important communication channel, we would like to encourage the geodetic community to follow and like the above mentioned pages!

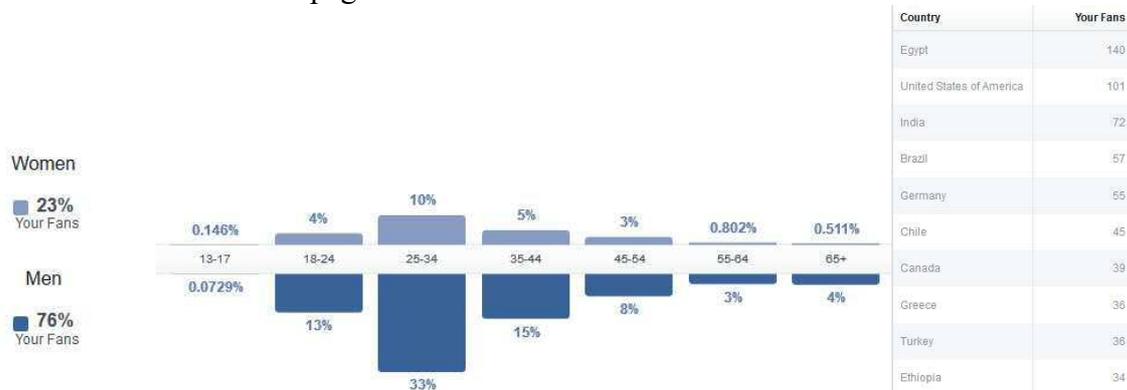


Figure 3. Demographic and geographic distribution of the Facebook followers.

In the next term COB plans to open the LinkedIn page of IAG and the establishment of the Chinese WeChat page is being considered, too.

The IAG Newsletter

The IAG Newsletter is regularly issued monthly, usually at the last working day of the month. Altogether 48 IAG Newsletters have been published from July 2015 till June 2019 and can be accessed on the IAG new website in HTML, HTML print version and in PDF formats. Since December 2016 the IAG Newsletter contains a new IAG/IUGG logo. We strive to publish only relevant information by keeping the Newsletter updated on a per-monthly basis. IAG Individual Members, IUGG and JB GIS Presidents and Secretaries as well as interested persons mainly in developing countries received it in PDF and/or text attachments, with a link in the e-mail message to access the actual HTML Newsletter on the IAG website. As of June 2019 the IAG Newsletter is sent to 862 subscribers by e-mail. Selected content of the electronic Newsletters were compiled and have been sent regularly to Springer for publication for 45 issues of the Journal of Geodesy (Vol 89/9 – 93/8).

Outreach Activities

The COB has been active in the publishing of information material in the reporting period. A new version of the IAG brochure has been published (16 coloured pages), which targets the wider public and decision makers by introducing Geodesy in general as well as the role of the Association to the readers (Ádám and Rózsa, 2017). It has a chapter on the Global Geodetic Observing System, and provides information on the IAG components (Commissions, Inter-Commission Committee, Services, etc.).

The brochure can be downloaded from the opening page of the IAG website, together with the updated IAG leaflet (Ádám and Rózsa, 2017).

H. Drewes and J. Ádám (2016) prepared a summary on “The International Association of Geodesy (IAG) – Historical Overview” which appeared in The Geodesist’s Handbook 2016.

Since the website and the newsletter are living from the input of the IAG community, we regularly request (in the middle of the month) the Executive Committee (EC) members, service directors, IAG national delegates, etc to provide us any interesting news, notices, reports, scientific highlights, etc. Note that the four IAG Commissions, the ICCT, the GGOS and the 13 IAG Services maintain their individual websites (which all accessible via the official IAG website) and in some cases newsletters, therefore obviously it's hard to get materials from them. However, the IAG presence on social media needs more frequent geodesy news, short articles, new scientific highlights, reports on satellite missions, etc.

The EC at its meeting in San Francisco in December of 2015 decided to continue publishing short articles in GIM International journal. Therefore, all commissions and services were requested to contribute once per year, and also to report about all IAG sponsored symposia. Since the SF-meeting every month, one report and/or article (up to one page) by a commission/service/symposium was available and submitted to the GIM International (and IAG Newsletter as well). Chris Rizos acts as the editor of the text and submit them to the GIM editors. The scheduling of the monthly report submissions is mainly organized by the COB President. Thus the IAG appeared and is visible monthly on the level of a wider geospatial community. We keep a balance of IAG EC stories, reports on major meetings, highlights of commissions and services, IAG schools, etc.

The COB also keeps track of all IAG related events by the meetings calendar.

Summary

In sum, the following activities were done:

- a) the IAG website was updated, improved and continuously maintained;
- b) four years ago IAG joined to both Facebook and Twitter;
- c) the IAG Newsletter was regularly issued monthly and distributed electronically, and selected parts of them were prepared to publish in the Journal of Geodesy as IAG News;
- d) regularly publishing IAG-related short articles in the GIM International journal;
- e) new version of the IAG Leaflet was prepared, printed and distributed at different IAG meetings;
- f) the large IAG Brochure was reprinted;
- g) some works were made in preparation and for finalizing The Geodesist's Handbook 2016 (Drewes et al., 2016), and
- h) many e-mail correspondences to the community as part of the outreach activities.

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