



# Using social media for communicating research - experiences from a short graduate course #ArcticCourse

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# Outline

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- The course – basic information
- Science communication – why bother?
- Social media channels
- From observations to audiences
- Use of social media during the course and student feedback
- Take-home points and links to find more information



# The Course: Effects of climate change on Arctic ecosystems and societies

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- 4-14 July 2016 Nuuk & Reykjavík
- Joint Nordic effort of 9 Nordic universities & research institutes
- 26 students from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland and Sweden divided into 6 groups
- Altogether 14 teachers and assistants



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET  
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI





# Effects of climate change on Arctic ecosystems and societies

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- 4-6 days in Nuuk, 5-7 days in Reykjavik (4-14 July 2016)
- 10 lectures
- 2 excursions
  - Kobbefjord research station, Icelandic flux measurement sites
- **2 group work projects**
  - **Effects of changing climate on local communities in Greenland (involving interviews of local people); Data analysis of land-atmosphere interaction processes in Iceland**



# Science communication

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- **Competition for attention is tough!**
  - This is true for academic, policy, media, and lay audiences!
- **Public discourse needs scientific knowledge and good arguments**
  - Make your results available and enhance the decision-making and understanding capacity of the decision-makers and the public
  - Provide new knowledge and correct false opinions – interest groups are eager to take the floor if you don't (e.g. climate change).
- **You have a lot of offer!**
  - You are an expert of your own field and your field is broader than you think!
- **You already have an expert profile (just google yourself) – why not shape it yourself!**



# Major social media channels



- Twitter
  - For quick communication "to the whole world"



- Facebook
  - Your own network → sharing increases attention



- LinkedIn
  - Professional interaction, recruiting, "slow communication"



- Periscope
  - For live broadcasting



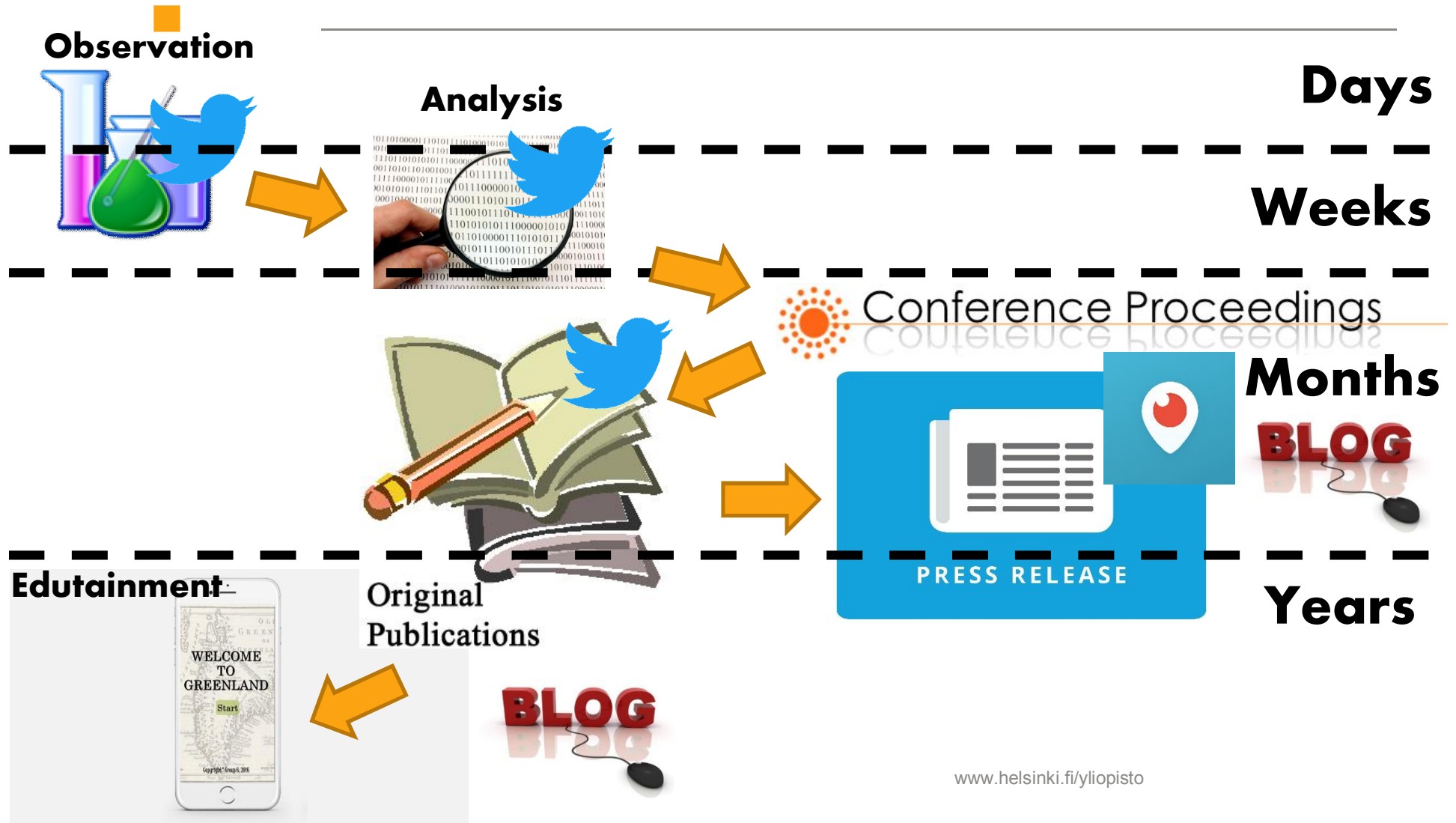
- YouTube
  - For e.g. vlogs; live broadcasting possible



- Blogs
  - Various channels, e.g. Wordpress.com



# From the lab/site/model to audiences





# Twitter: a few hints

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- Decision-makers and journalists follow Twitter, find your audiences here!
- 1) The life-span of one tweet is 7 minutes, don't overthink it!
- 2) If your project is short, it is better to use # (hashtag) than create a Twitter account for the project
- 3) Start live-tweeting from a seminar etc. Write a couple of tweets beforehand.
- 4) Twitter is about sharing. Share interesting tweets and choose right #!
- 5) Remember human interest.





**Of utmost importance in quick communication**

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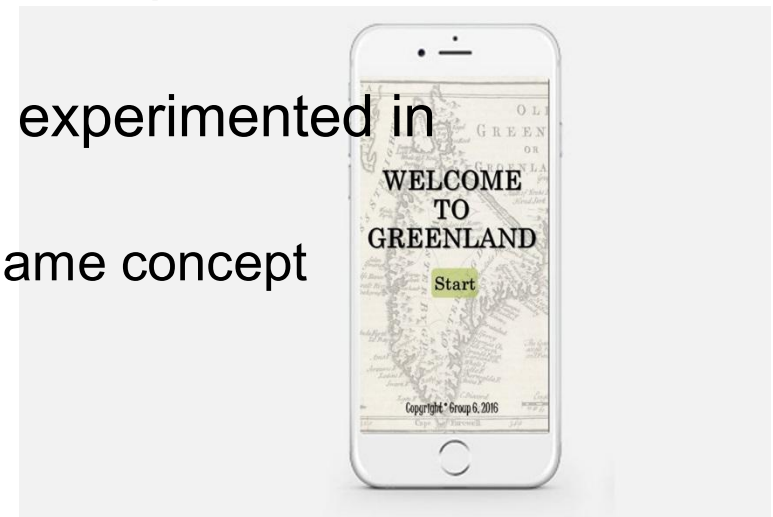
**Don't keep the audience  
guessing:  
Use every opportunity to  
give a clear scientific  
message!**



# Use of social media during the course

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- The course participants were encouraged (but not forced) to tweet about the course activities and their findings
  - Altogether >150 tweets under #ArcticCourse
- In the end of the course, each group prepared 1-2 blog posts about their projects
- Periscope was used as a backup to follow some of the lectures remotely
- One of the student groups experimented in edutainment
  - "Welcome to Greenland" game concept





**Antti Lauri**

@AnttiLauri

Discussing the [#carboncycle](#) at [#ArcticCourse](#) in [#Nuuk](#).



**But what was the outcome of the discussion?**

RETWEETS

5

LIKES

13



ter: "Nice simulator of how CO2, albedo, and clouds affect global  
'rFIPUM7rCQ (survived the first lectures of #ArcticCourse)"

Search

Notifications Messages



arcticcourse



Havu Pellikka

@havu\_pellikka



Following

Nice simulator of how CO2, albedo, and clouds affect global temp. at [ccl.northwestern.edu/netlogo/models](http://ccl.northwestern.edu/netlogo/models) ... (survived the first lectures of #ArcticCourse)

RETWEETS

2

LIKES

2



6:06 AM - 4 Jul 2016



Reply to @havu\_pellikka

**Good! A teaser,  
a link to an  
interactive site,  
personal feeling**





**Liine Heikkinen**

@liinemaria



Following

What is the public opinion towards oil industry in Greenland? [#ArcticCourse](#)



LIKES

4



6:40 AM - 8 Jul 2016



4





# Feedback about the social media part of the course

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- “New for many of us and an eye-opener for me.”
- “If others do it, I can as well!”
- “It also got us an idea about starting to write scientific blog ourselves.”
- “Idea was super, but too little time.”
- “Twitter still does not convince me.”
- “Great initiative! This should be done at each of the course all over the world.”



# Take-home points

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- The society (= our funders) requires more and more proof of impact from the researchers
- Reaching out for the policymakers and lay audience requires new kinds of thinking and skills – but this is doable
- Social media plays an increasingly important role in delivering scientific message

# Further reading

- Twitter: [#ArcticCourse](#)
- [blogs.helsinki.fi/climategreenland](https://blogs.helsinki.fi/climategreenland)
- Periscope: [@AnttiLauri](#)



**Thanks to #ArcticCourse participants!!!**