

Public engagement with science and technology: comparative study between the websites MCTI and Ciência Viva to analyse the public participation in scientific controversies.

Recently, the close relation between science and society has stimulated the debate of the science activity for a more horizontal perspective where the non-necessarily specialized public is more actively present in the science activities. In the same way, political actions with the purpose of making science more accessible to the general public in Brazil and Portugal reflect the current stimulus toward the inclusion of science in the society.

Within this context, digital tools possess a great potential to disseminate science and to facilitate the interaction between science and society to discuss scientific fundamental questions. This new framework provided by the Internet and the digital tools, has opened a promising novel perspective in the area of the communication of science. Hence, the websites tailor-made in order to communicate science, have become important means to provide more access to scientific information and also to promote the interaction between the public and private institutions with the society and therefore, providing an environment for debate and mutual collaboration.

Taking into account that the internet is equipped with a large number of resources to stimulate the interaction between the institutions and the public, this research aims at understanding the way in which the websites of Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação – MCTI, in Brazil, and Agência Ciência Viva, in Portugal, have contributed to promote the participation of the general community and in what extent have encouraged the public to take part of the current scientific controversies in these two countries.

This work has focused on the analysis of how these websites emphasize the activities through digital resources, to urge the participation of people in scientific questions.

To this end, and following the methodology proposed, we have first selected from the literature, the dimensions, the parameters and the criteria to evaluate the quality of the websites. On a second stage, we have adapted them for the evaluation for the two particular websites treated in this research. Both websites MCTI and Ciência Viva were

compared and evaluated in terms of the perception of different groups of Brazilians and Portuguese.

Keywords: MCTI, Ciência Viva, websites, communication science, public engagement, science, society.