

DOSI Participation Report: CommOCEAN 2022 (Online and in Sète, France)

Overview

From November 29th through December 1st, 2022, DOSI Director of Communications Brandon Gertz participated in online portions of [CommOCEAN 2022](#). This conference aimed to “provide communication skills and inspiration to (ocean science) communicators across a range of experience levels.” While mostly an in-person event, CommOCEAN 2022 had some segments designed specifically for online attendees.

Participants

Brandon Gertz

Participant Perception

Overall, the online sections of CommOCEAN were not as useful as I had hoped. Opportunities for networking were very limited, as breakout rooms were used for moderated series of talks rather than for any free discussion. Most online content also seemed targeted toward ocean scientists attempting to communicate their own science rather than being designed for communication professionals.

Still, some interesting points were raised that I will remember. The in-person event program seemed to include a wider range of interesting sessions as well. If it is ever convenient, I recommend having any future DOSI participation in CommOCEAN be in-person. Attendance is probably not worth the cost of intercontinental travel, so pairing attendance at this conference with another event or sending a team member already in Europe would be ideal. If DOSI has the chance to present at the event, travel could be worthwhile.

DOSI Actions

DOSI did not present at CommOCEAN 2022.

Interesting Points from the Event

- The key to crisis response is preparation and relationship building. The same goes for sharing DOSI's messages. The stronger our network is, and the better communication material we have prepared, the more we can take advantage of moments when policymakers and the public need our information the most.
- Media interest in one part of our work can be directed to other parts as well. Even if an initial story isn't related to the core of our mission, building those media relationships and recognition can attract media attention to those core goals for future stories.
- At the same time, make sure that DOSI is benefiting from media relationships. The relationship should be managed so that media outlets aren't simply using us however they like. Choose reliable journalists, take care of our scientists, and make sure our messages get through. Dedicated communications staff should manage these relationships.
- Test different messages with different audiences to identify our most effective strategies.