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**NEO PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION AT
KLET OBSERVATORY AND CESKE BUDEJOVICE PLANETARIUM**

Jana Ticha⁽¹⁾, Milos Tichy⁽¹⁾, Michal Kocer⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Klet Observatory, Zatkovo nabrezi 4, CZ-370 01 Ceske Budejovice
South Bohemia, Czech Republic; phone: 00420-380711242 ;*

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ABSTRACT

Increasing research results in the field of Near-Earth Objects (NEOs) as well as impact hazard investigations cause growing interest among general public and media. Moreover, people like to see and hear about catastrophes, especially if they are far enough. This interest has generated an increasing number of enquiries from members of the public. Furthermore NEO related issues have outstanding educational value and outreach potential. So thus educating the public and the media on NEO detection, impact effects, mitigation missions, impact warnings belong to the most important tasks of NEOs scientists and research institutions.

Our institution represents an unique liaison of the small professional research institution devoted especially to NEO studies (the Klet Observatory, Czech Republic) and the educational and public outreach branch (the Observatory and Planetarium Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic). It has been giving us an excellent opportunity for bringing NEO information to a wider audience. We have been obtaining a wide experience in NEO public outreach and education more than twenty years.

There is a wide spectrum of public outreach tools aimed to NEO research and hazard. As the most useful ones we consider: special on-line magazines (e-zins), educational multimedia presentations for schools at different levels in planetarium, summer excursions for wide public at the Klet Observatory on the top of the Klet mountain, public lectures, meetings and exhibitions. It seems to be very contributing and favoured by public to have opportunities for more or less informal meetings just with NEO researchers from time to time. Very important part of NEO public outreach

consists of continuous contact with journalists and media including press releases, interviews, news, periodical programs and so on.

There are many interesting and well designed websites maintained by NASA, JPL, ESA, the Planetary Society, various observatories and institutes, but naturally the big majority of them are written in English. Considering that there is still an unsatisfactory level of knowledge of English language in our country, we have decided to design a special website in Czech devoted to NEOs and based on Klet long-time observing program, its international cooperation and experience in education and public outreach programs.

Czech public service on NEOs - www.planetky.cz - was designed by the Klet Observatory on February 2001. Till 2014 November there are 326 original articles written for general public by research team members regarding minor planets, spread into six themes. This number includes 108 articles directly about Near-Earth Objects. It has been indicated (November 30, 2014) that more than 349,000 visitors has viewed more than 2,929,000 pages on web www.planetky.cz so far. On the basis of language similarities this website has also been visited by many people from Central and East European countries like Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Russia and others.

There are following services for visitors on www.planetky.cz pages: search inside articles using full-text search procedure, sorting out articles into six themes for better orientation, server statistics, external links to important NEO webpages all over the world, orbit diagrams of minor planets, electronic postcards containing asteroid images, RSS Chanel, redirecting within easy reach from Facebook and Twitter profile of the Klet Observatory, the latest news from an complementary Klet server www.komety.cz where information regarding Near-Earth comets can be found.

The main recent topics have been Chelyabinsk meteor explosion, a close approach of asteroid 2012 DA14 and small asteroid 2014 AA on an Earth impacting trajectory. Listing some main topics presented to public since 1992 we can mention comet Swift-Tuttle and its approach in 2126, several close approaches of asteroid Toutatis, 1997 XF11 affair, future close approaches of Apophis, space missions to asteroids Eros and Itokawa, 2008 TC3, its impact and meteorites found, NEOWISE results, Klet Observatory NEO discoveries and so on.

The essential goal of all mentioned NEO educational and public outreach tools is to bring relevant, clear, comprehensive and up to date information to students, educators, wide public and media.

Lessons have learned from NEO educational and public outreach done by the Klet Observatory and Ceske Budejovice Planetarium until now help us to improve our efforts.
