

The Compass: Earth Science Journal of Sigma Gamma Epsilon

Volume 84 | Issue 4

Article 5

1-31-2013

Has The Compass, as an E-journal, Been Successful?

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Recommended Citation

Davis, Larry E. (2012) "Has The Compass, as an E-journal, Been Successful?," *The Compass: Earth Science Journal of Sigma Gamma Epsilon*: Vol. 84: Iss. 4, Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/compass/vol84/iss4/5>

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“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”
— **Winston Churchill**

Has *The Compass*, as an E-journal, Been Successful?

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As I stated in my first *Compass* editorial, *The Compass: A Shifting Paradigm*, transforming *The Compass* from a paper journal to an e-journal was a new milestone in the history of Sigma Gamma Epsilon, which raises the question, ‘has the shift been successful?’ In many respects, the question is impossible to answer without information regarding past readership. However, according the annual report from the DigitalCommon/CSB/SJU platform, which hosts *The Compass*, there have been 3,125 full-text downloads of *Compass* articles. It will be good to compare the 2012 data, to the 2013 data. If the number of downloads for 2013 increase, then I think it is safe to say, ‘we’re on the right track’, but in terms of ‘success’, maybe it is worth following the advice of General Colin Powell:

“There are no secrets to success: don’t waste time looking for them. Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty to those for whom you work, and persistence.”

I think the greatest challenge is letting people know that a new issue has been released. It certainly helps that *Compass* articles show up on a Google search. When I typed ‘ruby’s inn thrust fault’ into the Google search engine, *The Compass* article *Extent and Mechanism of Footwall Shear Adjacent to the Ruby’s Inn Thrust Fault, Southern Utah*, v. 84(1) was the third item to appear, whereas when I typed ‘mary anning’ into the Google search engine, *Mary Anning: Princess of Palaeontology and Geological Lioness*, v. 84(1) was the fifty-ninth item to appear. Of course, it depends on how specific you are when doing a Google search. For instance, when I typed ‘Mary Anning: Princess of Palaeontology and Geological Lioness’ into the Google search engine, *The Compass* article was the first item to appear. The main point is that as an e-journal, articles in *The Compass* have a much greater potential for viewing than in the past.

When you view the Digital Commons website for *The Compass* and click on ‘Most Popular Papers’ the following are listed:

1. Is Geology a Real Science?
2. Mary Anning: Princess of Palaeontology and Geological Lioness
3. An Assessment of the Relationship between Air Mass Frequency and Extreme Drought in the Midwest United States

4. Mineralogical Composition of Diabase and Altered Dolostone from the St. Francois Mountains near Annapolis, Missouri, USA
5. Tools of the Geology Trade and Their Origin
6. Sigma Gamma Epsilon Undergraduate Research Poster Session
7. U.S. Presidents and their Geological Thinking
8. Dinosaur Tracks and Trackways in the Escalante Member of the Entrada Formation (Middle Jurassic), Twentymile Wash, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Utah
9. Heavy Metal Chemistry of Sediments in Caves of the Springfield Plateau, Missouri-Arkansas-Oklahoma: A Link to Subterranean Biodiversity
10. Another Geoscience Department 'Bites the Dust'

On the other hand, according to the most recent Digital Commons printout of the ten (10) most popular as of 31 January 2013, the following are listed according to full text-download: have been (number of full-text downloads in parentheses):

1. Mary Anning: Princess of Palaeontology and Geological Lioness (412)
2. Is Geology a Real Science? (347)
3. Mineralogical Composition of Diabase and Altered Dolostone from the St. Francios Mountains near Annapolis, Missouri, USA (288)
4. Tools of the Geology Trade and Their Origin (281)
5. An Assessment of the Relationship between Air Mass Frequency and Extreme Drought in the Midwest United States ((216)
6. Algal Stromatolites in the Willow River Member of the Lower Ordovician Shakopee Formation near Chatfield, Minnesota, USA (183)
7. U.S. Presidents and their Geological Thinking (175)
8. Extent and Mechanism of Footwall Shear Adjacent to the Ruby's Inn Thrust Fault, Southern Utah (157)
9. Major Milestones in the Development of Sigma Gamma Epsilon's Core Traditions (141)
10. Another Geoscience Department 'Bites the Dust' (136)

In December 2012, the Digital Commons reported that two of *The Compass* articles were among the top 10 geoscience articles hosted on the DC-platform. The two articles were:

1. Mary Anning: Princess of Palaeontology and Geological Lioness
2. Is Geology a Real Science?

According to the Sigma Gamma Epsilon delegates from the 2012 Bi-annual Convention held this past November in conjunction with the 2012 Geological Society of America annual meeting in Charlotte, NC, changing *The Compass* to an e-journal has been successful. Two major concerns were expressed: (1) increasing the visibility of *The Compass* to the members of Sigma Gamma Epsilon and (2) changing the pagination to be continuous for each volume, rather

than starting a page one for each issue of the volume. The latter will be incorporated with volume 85 (2013). I am open to suggestions from the readership and members of Sigma Gamma Epsilon for suggestions to increasing visibility. Please do not hesitate to contact me at ldavis@csbsju.edu for any suggestions and ideas for improving, not only readership, but the journal as a whole.

I look forward to hearing from the readers and your suggestions on how to improve *The Compass* in its new format, and how to better serve the Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon. To all of you, I hope that you have a successful and rewarding 2013.

“Write what should not be forgotten.”

— **Isabel Allende**

“A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: 1. What am I trying to say? 2. What words will express it? 3. What image or idiom will make it clearer? 4. Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?”

— **George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language***