

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Hands-on Space Education and Outreach (8)

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INTERPLANETARY COMMUNICATION - A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT HIDING IN AN  
EDUCATIVE AND ENTERTAINING MOBILE APPLICATION

**Abstract**

The next small steps and giant leaps are coming hopefully in this century and we are going to conquer Mars. But how well prepared are we generally? How well an average citizen can endure a long-term commitment and tension? I would like to present the conception of the *Interplanetary Communication (IPC)* mobile application. The main goal is to simulate the ambient of a 7-8 months long trip to Mars (or later to another planets) as much as we can do it in an app, but ensure an exciting entertaining experience to reach as many people as we can. So many different aspects of such a journey can be modeled in an app, from teamwork challenges through perseverance on a long-term mission to communication difficulties in interplanetary distances. Following the discipline of maximal scientific accuracy and compiling a detailed description of these accurate functions of *IPC*, it would be a highly educative tool to present and popularize space exploration. However this application aims also a different goal. Naturally it faces a great number of dropouts, as the users face inconvenient tasks. Monitoring the reasons and the time of quitting of those who eventually stop using the app before they reach their finish line (meanwhile maintaining the data protection standards) can point the most important psychological issues about an interplanetary journey. These are the issues we have to eliminate or at least mitigate in the future missions in terms of the functions and aspects presented by the application. Overall *IPC* can provide an insight to space travel difficulties in a way that everyone can feel themselves a little bit as an astronaut, and maybe they can understand more the necessity of the long astronaut selection processes by experiencing the everyday struggles in space exploration.