

Getting in touch with the Young Hydrologic Society

First public meeting of the Young Hydrologic Society
Splinter room meeting at EGU General Assembly 2013, Vienna
SPM 1.17, Thu, 11 April 17:30 - 19:00 / Room Y7

correspondence to: w.r.berghuijs@tudelft.nl

Convenor:

Wouter Berghuijs w.r.berghuijs@tudelft.nl

Co-convenors:

Maarten Smoorenburg: smoorenburg@ifu.baug.ethz.ch
Shaun Harrigan: shaun.harrigan@nuim.ie
Tim van Emmerik: t.h.m.vanemmerik@tudelft.nl
Hannes Müller: mueller@iww.uni-hannover.de
Jürnjakob Dugge: juernjakob.dugge@uni-tuebingen.de

Summary

Thursday 11 April 2013 17:30 - 19:00 the Young Hydrologic Society organized their first public meeting to (a) introduce the society, (b) establish the goals of the society, and (c) motivate young hydrologists to get involved. The Young Hydrologic Society was introduced by briefly presenting how it was started and what the current state of affairs is, followed by a proposal of what the initiators think should be the main goals of the initiative. In the interactive discussion that followed, the audience was invited to share their opinion on the most important goals of the society and how to most effectively achieve them. The discussion on short term goals indicated a strong preference for improving networking opportunities, and providing a platform for sharing information between young hydrologists.

Introduction

Aim of the meeting:

- Introduce the Young Hydrologic Society
- Get feedback from other young hydrologists on the initiative and the implementation of the current online platform.
- Establish the short term goals of the Young Hydrologic Society (YHS)
- Motivate peers to get involved

Attendance

In total 37 young people attended the meeting. Not everybody attended the entire meeting as it was scheduled at the same time as that day's poster sessions and it was followed by the Darcy Medal Lecture. The audience consisted mostly of PhD students, but there were also 9 Master students, a couple of postdocs and some people who had just finished their PhD. People were from many different institutes and countries, mostly based in Europe. The attendees consisted for about 50% (18 attendees) of female students. Most of the attendees did not know any of the organizing team, which indicates they had really come out of interest for the initiative. However, most master students in the room were from Delft, where the initiative was started.

EGU HS division president Gerrit de Rooij attended the session for about 40 minutes, presumably as long as his full calendar allowed. From the organizing team Wouter, Maarten, Shaun and Tim were present. Hannes and Jürnjakob helped to prepare the meeting however could not visit the EGU general assembly.

Introducing the society

Wouter started with a short presentation on how the initiative started in the summer of 2012 and how the organizing team was formed. He then presented the team's vision on short term and long term goals and what they have worked on over the last months and what the initiative can already provide. The main points are highlighted below:

What is the Young Hydrologic Society

- *Young Hydrologic Society is an initiative to stimulate the interaction and active participation of young hydrologists within the hydrologic community.*

What do we consider a "young hydrologist"

- *Anybody that thinks that he or she can benefit and/or contribute from/to the initiative that focuses on the hydrologic scientific community.*

Proposed short term goals:

- *Connect young hydrologists early in their career*
- *Organize events to bring together young hydrologists*
- *Provide information for young hydrologists*

Proposed long term goals:

- *Create awareness of research topics within hydrology and related sciences*
- *Attract sponsors and funding for young hydrologists to attend and participate in conferences, workshops etc.*
- *Reform hydrology towards more involvement of younger scientists.*

Current online products:

- *website:* www.younghs.com
- *LinkedIn group:* ["Young Hydrologic Society"](#)

Discussion

First, an introductory round was made where every attendee introduced himself by mentioning his name and current occupation. In the second part of the meeting Shaun led the discussion whereby we got feedbacks on a top-down array of topics, going from the broad initiative to the details of how hydrological information may be shared. The discussions started enthusiastically, but were sometimes a bit less structured as points would be raised that we wanted to discuss later etc.

The key inputs and conclusions are listed per topic:

Goals

- The main interest of the attendees was to connect to others and share information about hydrology related social matters (jobs, workshops, summer schools etc.).
- "There is more organized for than by young hydrologists, YHS should try to get involved in organizing these activities"
- Another idea was to try to connect the national young scientist platforms which are active in at least Germany and the UK. As this is not possible in many other countries, this idea was regarded as a call to motivate those existing platforms to connect to us by contacting their members to become active on our platform as well.
- Gerrit de Rooij commented that we should be careful not to only develop our network horizontally, but also vertically, whereby students can easily get into contact with post-docs and professors and vice-versa. This concern was shared among the attendees.

We (the (co) conveners remarked that we surely want this, but think that we first need the broad (horizontal) base, such that the seniors have more incentive to post their jobs/projects/ideas on the platform. We have to focus. Besides, we should make the distinction between the core-science were we indeed want as much vertical connections for inputs etcetera and the social network side of the science where we think there is much gained from connecting the young people. Nobody disagreed to that.

Conclusion: *We should focus on this social side first and keep it simple and do it well, including as many disciplines of the science as possible. The second thing “channelling questions and info about the hard science” is nice, but we should not underestimate how much work such a thing is.*

Virtual Networking (The Web)

People are reluctant to connect all work related content via Facebook, but there is also some reluctance to sign up to yet another social media platform as LinkedIn (only about 60% are already on LI). It seems however, that many are also not too much interested in the alternatives. The alternatives that we heard during and after the session:

1. Academia.edu: *unknown or not used by most*
2. ResearchGate: *unknown or not used by most*
3. Google groups: *only mentioned, not discussed*
4. Website with RSS feeds: *considered a suitable option*
5. Normal mailing-list concept: *considered a suitable option*

The main concern of the people is receiving an overload of information that does not interest them (meaning they will start regarding the whole email-digest as spam) and that even if we are not overloading the subscribers with information, they do overwork themselves by having yet another input channel on yet another platform (e.g., LI).

It seems all are interesting on sharing ‘social’ matters on the platform, for example about meeting at a conference, jobs, funding, workshops, summer schools etc.

Conclusion: *Networking via the web should focus on sharing news on a already consisting and used platform. For now we will stick to our LinkedIn group and website.*

Face to face networking

- People are interested in having some organized events for meeting each other. It seems best to have such a thing before a conference start, for example at the EGU Sunday icebreaker reception (just get a corner where we can stand and find each other).
- Other ideas include: excursions or speed-dating session to meet peers or seniors. It remains unclear in how far people are interested in specific courses/workshops during the EGU, or organizing something themselves for a small subgroup of young hydrologists (e.g. a lunch for the young hydrologists that have presented things in a specific session). One attendee mentioned a PhD day in Germany where PhD present their ongoing work and thus also the problems they face. It was also mentioned that a workshop on presenting you failures met too little response, presumably because people are not interested in admitting their problems.

Repository function of website:

This discussion was not finished but it seemed that on the one hand people are really interested in a bit more pooling of relevant links and best practices, while on the other hand some people being very realistic about the huge workload that might be hard to distribute over a lot of people.

Conclusion: *Because the discussion was not finished, it is important to get more feedback on the repository function of the website, for example through an online discussion or survey.*