Nature’s calling. Does it make sense to use digital communication media for nature conservation?

Achim Laber
Mt Feldberg Nature Reserve:

Biggest and oldest nature reserve in Baden-Württemberg.
Up to 1.5 million visitors per year
Mass tourism caused serious erosion problems and damages in the 1960s and 70s.
Ranger since 1989…
Main tasks in the beginning:

- Solve erosion problems
- Observe the nature reserve
- Monitoring
- Environmental education
Nature information center at Feldberg since 2001
I'll interpret the rocks, learn the language of flood, storm and the avalanche. I'll acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near to the heart of the world as I can.
Our visitors

- intellectuals
- normal people
The Pocket-Ranger
(1. Version 2006)

- PDA
- digital nature pocket guide
- 12 videoclips
- navigation at Feldbergsteig
- For rental in the information center Feldberg
The Pocket-Ranger (1. Version)

positive
• clips

negative
• software
• hardware
• handling

Recycling of the films for the Pocket-Ranger-APP

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bB-EaUpQqdA
Hol dir die Ranger App GRATIS! www.hosentaschenranger.de

Kostenlos erhältlich im App Store

Der Feldberg-Steig
Dein Feldberg-Ranger
Hütten
The Pocket-Ranger-App

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH9mdmGTrbw
The Pocket-Ranger-APP

positive
• Hardware
• Software
• 1500 Downloads in the first 3 months
• no rental

negative
• People download it without using it.
• No possibilities of interaction.
Further benefit:

DVD in combination with a quiz as preparation for the schoolclass-program in the nature information center.
Further benefit:

The filmclips are „door-opener“ for other media like television.
Further benefit:

Using the films for information via youtube in the internet.
Further benefit:

As youtube-user you can get in contact with other youtube-users.
Solution for different audiences:
The „Talking Ranger“ Videopresentation in the exhibition of the information center.
Unexpected solutions can result in unexpected awards.
Solution for different audiences:

The main goal must be the contact between people and nature.
Solution for different audiences:

Find a language which is comprehensible for your audience.
Contact to the press

- A good updated mailing list
- Periodic information about news
- A nice pictures is as important as a short text
- Further information on the homepage
Contact to sponsors

- First contact: telephone
- Projekt description (possible in paper but also digital)
- Description short and innovative, lots of pictures, less text
• Use the knowledge of young colleagues.
• Try yourself to understand new technologies. We all are busy but most of us have a bit time left. Where there's a will, there's a way.
Conclusion

- The content is more important than the medium
- But a new medium brings new possibilities

The invention of the letterpress

The same media in different qualities.
Conclusion

Digital Media? Yes! But:

- As a niche
- Together with classical ways of environmental education
- Humour helps
Information

1. needs relationships to the experiences of our visitors,
2. must be a form of discovery,
3. should not be instruction but a challenge to use your own brain.
THE END