

Researchers names: Jacqueline Lorber Kasunic and Kate Sweetapple

NTRO category: Website

Venue: www.adrift-project.com and Australian National Maritime Museum

Research Statement:

The Adrift website is an online citizen science project that enables non-experts to explore the life of microscopic marine microbes. It argues for the development of intuitive online visualisation tools that enable participants, without technical or scientific training, to access, analyse and collect ocean data. The website presents new ways for participants to contribute to scientific research and increase their awareness of ocean processes through visualisation.

While the growth in data visualisation software and online platforms has provided non-experts with the ability to be involved in scientific inquiry, the highly specialised nature of scientific visual language still prevents wider participation and deeper understanding of complex problems. This research addresses this gap, by creating scientific visualisations that are accessible and meaningful to broader audiences. It draws on the theory of 'graphesis', which argues for designerly approaches to the communication of quantitative data by describing how information is structured through graphical formats. (Drucker 2014) Science communicators Rodriguez Estrada and Davis acknowledge the necessity of visual communication designers to "help science communicators develop better visual materials with which to communicate." (2015: 147)

The website was funded by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science through a competitive grant process (\$AU267,000) which was part of a national agenda for Inspiring Australia - Science Engagement Program. It was the top-ranking proposal. The website has been part of two curated exhibitions (Emily Jateff - Ocean Science Curator) at the Australian National Maritime Museum in 2019 and 2020.

References

Rodríguez Estrada, F.C and Davis, L.S (2014) 'Improving Visual Communication of Science Through the Incorporation of Graphic Design Theories and Practices Into Science Communication,' *Journal of Science Communication*, 37(1), 140-148.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547014562914>

Drucker, Johanna (2014) *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*, Harvard University Press







