

Dave Lawrence
MASC 684 Multiplatform Storytelling
Multiplatform Watch: Plastics at Sea (<http://plastics.sea.edu>)
March 5, 2011

Actually, I didn't find this site. I helped put it together.

Last summer I served as science writer/editor/photographer on board the Sea Education ship SSV Corwith Cramer as it embarked on an expedition to study plastic pollution in the North Atlantic Ocean. SEA knew this would be a high-profile expedition, so made a major effort to have a journalist (me) and a filmmaker (Scott Elliott, with the assistance of a volunteer, Ben Schellpfeffer) document the expedition and post daily updates on our progress. (Well, I was to post daily updates on our progress; Scott justifiably had more forgiving deadlines.)

We kept this site simple. We had two. We had only one Internet connection (via Iridium satellite phone) with a data connection that cost \$10/minute (as I recall, anyway). None of us on the ship actually posted the material to the Web site, we e-mailed or ftp'd it to shore and our shore-based chief scientist, Kara Lavender Law, posted it for us. We had to keep things simple. All of the text I either wrote or edited. Most of the photos I took. Scott and Ben shot and edited video packages that were likewise to be uploaded each day.

We left Bermuda on June 11 and did not return until July 13. By the time the expedition was over, we had sailed more than 3,800 nautical miles, crossed the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and nearly reached longitude 40° W. I pulled two watches a day, yet filed 34 daily reports comprising 34,000 words and took more than 5,000 photographs. I have no idea how many hours of video Scott and Ben shot, nor did I manage to count how many videos they posted while at sea. (Scott is working on a documentary about the expedition.)

What we did is pretty simple, but considering the conditions we labored under, I think it is a pretty good example of multiplatform storytelling.