



Title: InterRidge Reaches Outside the Box and Asks: What's the Story?

Authors: Robin Cooper (Future Vision)*, Colin Devey (InterRidge Chair), Katja Freitag (InterRidge Coordinator), Kristen Kusek*^ (InterRidge Writer and Education Outreach Coordinator)

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Contact us: kristenkusek@aol.com, coordinator@interridge.org

Abstract: Serious literacy gaps between scientific and nonscientific audiences often mean science knowledge races along while the press, policy-makers and the public struggle to keep pace and make sense of it all. Much of the problem is related to the lack of an effective communication pipeline between scientists and nonscientists. A good story is a springboard for effective learning, yet many great science stories go untold, or are told inaccurately. Busy scientists need to know two things: 1. a cost-effective communication pipeline does exist in the form of creative partnerships between science and media groups (inside and outside of academia), and 2. people will learn a great deal about science if science is told accurately through the vehicle of a good story.

InterRidge (IR), an international organization dedicated to exploring spreading centers at the bottom of the ocean, recently teamed up with an educational media group (Future Vision: Educational Media Group) and other science organizations in a cost-effective plan to develop innovative print and video media products for formal and informal audiences. Funding is still pending. The idea is to join groups that traditionally do not work together – scientists, writers, educators, video producers, graduate students – in a common mission: to develop an educational video package including six half-hour programs that tell the compelling stories of ridge science. As the birthplace of new Earth crust, deep ocean spreading centers are replete with compelling, cross-disciplinary stories to be told.

The goal is to execute a timely, standards-based program – available at no cost to teachers. The videos, aimed at the middle school level, will be useable by diverse groups including higher grades and informal science communities (e.g., aquaria, science centers). Innovative supporting materials will be included. Videos will feature teachers performing hands-on activities as part of a format that was pilot-tested in collaboration with a recently released IMAX film (Volcanoes of the Deep Sea).

* In attendance at AGU

^ AGU presenter

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