

Developing a Landing Page for Scientists on InformalScience.org

Presenter:

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Introduction: The CAISE BI+ISE Initiative

The Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE) provides connectivity and resources for those designing, implementing and evaluating informal science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning activities. For the past several years, CAISE has been exploring ways to connect informal STEM education institutions, programs and projects with the outreach and communication efforts of research scientists. Specifically, CAISE has been focusing on how to inform and support the broader impacts efforts of National Science Foundation-funded research projects. These efforts have been undertaken as part of a CAISE Broader Impacts + Informal Science Education (BI+ISE) initiative, with researchers and education/public outreach directors as a key CAISE audience.

InformalScience.org: An Online Repository for the ISE Field

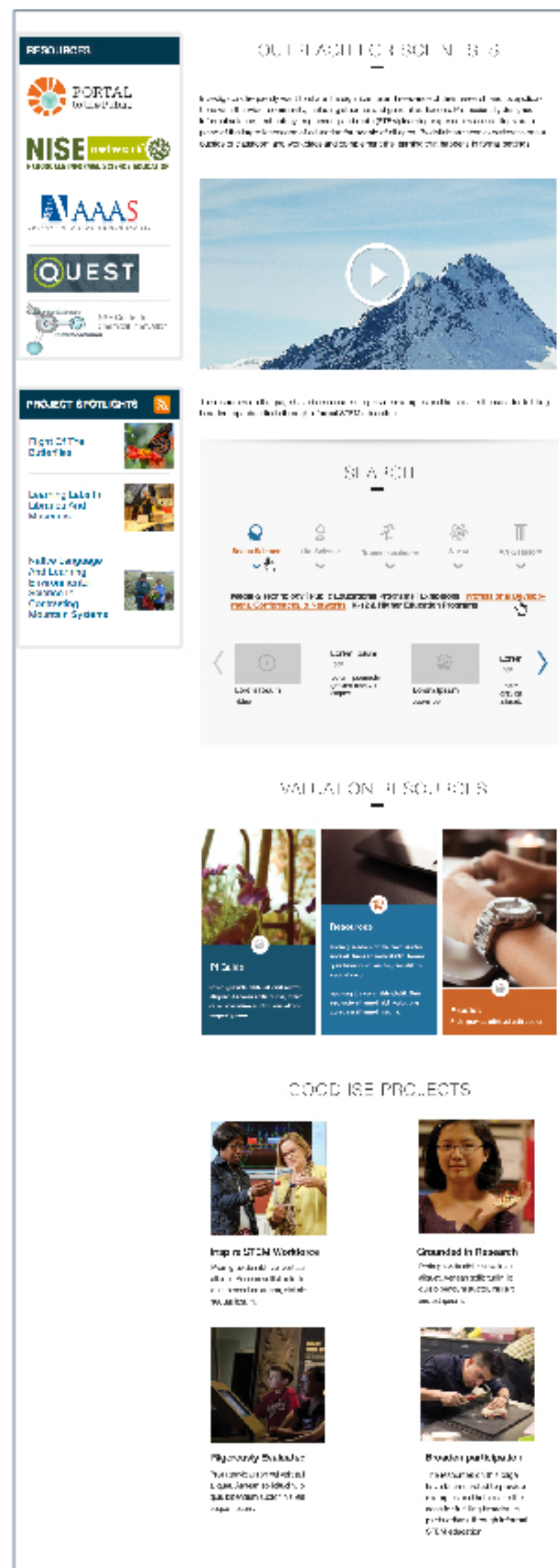
In June 2013, CAISE launched the new InformalScience.org website which serves as a searchable repository for informal science education (ISE) resources. InformalScience.org provides users with access to project descriptions, evaluation reports and instruments, learning research and reference materials, and instructional materials and activities. There are currently about 8,300 resources available in the repository, collected and curated by CAISE in collaboration with a dozen other professional ISE projects and websites.

The BI+ISE Convening

In November 2013, CAISE convened a group of informal STEM learning professionals, education and public outreach specialists, and NSF Program Officers to discuss how CAISE could best support broader impacts efforts through informal science education strategies and collaborations. The convening was informed by a report prepared by staff at Oregon State University's Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning on scientist perceptions and understandings of broader impacts efforts, and how those efforts might leverage ISE.

Participants at the convening focused on three main areas: 1) how the InformalScience.org metadata standard can better reflect/support the scientist/outreach audience, 2) collection development policies and activities that CAISE might undertake to address the needs of these audiences, and 3) strategies for reaching these audiences, through marketing campaigns and/or other targeted communications.

One outcome of the convening was the design of a new "landing page" for scientists and their education/public outreach/science communication colleagues. The page will have exemplars of ISE projects, resources for planning and evaluating new projects (including identifying potential ISE partners), and a searchable set of resources organized by scientific discipline that site users can use to quickly access and more easily navigate the repository.



A scientist who has participated in a Portal to the Public science communication workshop interacts with young museum visitor.

Developing the Landing Page

Throughout the winter and spring of 2014, CAISE staff developed and led a process of web design and curation of resources for the page. CAISE initiative leaders identified existing components of the site to be highlighted on the landing page, and CAISE cataloged and curated examples to be added to the online repository.

CAISE also organized a working group of content experts in this area who provided new examples of projects, published research, evaluation reports, instructional materials and activities, and other resources to be added to the repository and highlighted on the landing page.

Next Steps: How to Get Involved

Over the next few months, CAISE will be adding new resources to the landing page search function. We are also working with our evaluators at Inverness Research to test usability of the site, and will be making changes based on that user feedback.

To make this site more useful over time, we need more examples of projects and resources. Please join InformalScience.org to contribute.



Wild Research includes a range of elements to create communities of inquiry on zoo grounds.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to: the BI+ISE working group, attendees at the 2013 convening, CAISE leadership (Co-PIs John Falk at Oregon State University and Sue Ellen McCann at KQED Public Media, and Senior Advisor Nalini Nadkarni at University of Utah), Julie Risien (Oregon State University), and our web development contractors at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley. Thank you also to NSF Program Officers Al DeSena and Dennis Schatz (Advancing Informal STEM Learning [AISL], Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings) and Katharine Covert (Chemical Centers for Innovation [CCI], Division of Chemistry) for their ongoing support.

Funding Acknowledgement

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation (Award nos. DRL-06389881 / DRL-1212803. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

