

Communications in Swedish Astronomy

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At the last astronomy NK meeting 13th January 2021 I was asked to further investigate the issue of communications in Swedish astronomy and possibly come up with recommendations. Following this I, Dan Kiselman and Robert Cumming had a meeting 21st April where we clarified some points, below I give my understanding of the present status and some concluding thoughts.

(A) PRESENT STATUS - below are listed some current communications channels in Swedish astronomy.

1. Nordboard – Open (or moderated?) email list containing astronomy institute exploders + individual subscription – covering departments and individuals from Scandinavia, which addresses are on list not clear. Administered by Eva Julander at Lund (eva@astro.lu.se). To join exploder as individual or to check/update an department exploder address contact Eva. So far 7 emails this year covering Astronomdagar, NOT Call for Proposals, SRS virtual meeting, PhD and Postdoc position at Chalmers. Biggest problem not knowing who/what is on list, does it reach most astronomers people in Sweden? Problem keeping department exploders up to date (the wrong address for Chalmers exploder for 2+ years). What Nordic institutes or people outside Sweden are on list? Possible problem of knowing of existence of list for new people coming to Sweden and/or knowing its purpose as well as membership. Probably not compatible with EU GDPR rules.
2. AstronomerSE sign up mail -list via webpage at <https://www.astronomiska.se/astronomerse/> for professional astronomers. Owned and run by SAS – has an active link where you can register but a statement has been added after 21st April that this information channel is inactive. Importantly this webpage contains a link to the AstronomerSE Facebook page (which is active see below) giving a place to click if you wish to join if you are not a member (if I click this link I go direct to the Facebook page I guess because I am a member – I assume if you are not a member you will be prompted to apply for access after which our application is evaluated by one of the three administrators and then you get access).
3. AstronomerSE. Owned by SAS (with logo at top)- Facebook pages <https://www.facebook.com/groups/125223804315239/> Currently has 144 members - Under 'om' it says; 'This is the Facebook group for mailing list AstronomerSE, which is all about news and gossip for and by astronomers in Sweden. Detta är Facebook-versionen av mejllistan AstronomerSE, som handlar om nyheter och skvaller av och för astronomiforskare i Sverige. Note this implies that membership of mail list AstronomerSE and Facebook page AstronomerSE are same but in fact are separate.

This is a private Facebook page so must apply to be a member and to see and post content. A current member can by pressing button 'Bjud in' invite someone from their friends list then they receive a notification in Facebook and a link to apply. **Note any member of Facebook group can post content** but only administrators can remove content. Presently page has three Administrators (Katrine Ros, Joakim Weigert and Robert Cumming) it is these administrators who I believe also approve requests to join?. Page contains mixture of

general announcements (like Astronomdagar, i.e. last post 19th May) some news about who has got grants etc and more general discussion (equality issues) and some more general gossip. How do new astronomers in Sweden get to know that this Facebook page exists, should it be better advertised?

4. OSO sends out a newsletter twice a year. This gives news about OSO's activities, radio astronomy and proposal deadlines, Newsletter also contains instructions on how to subscribe to specific mail lists for instance about ALMA news or SKA/LOFAR news. Presently sent to Department exploders (to be GDPR compliant we at OSO have checked with owners of these exploders that we don't mind us sending this newsletter to them).

(B) THOUGHTS

Above is what we have but what do we want? Possibly (a) Some easy way to reach all astronomers in Sweden with announcements about meetings etc. (b) Some more informal channel for discussion. Arguably point (b) covered by AstronomerSE Facebook page but perhaps needs to be more widely advertised to ensure equal democratic access to all?

For point (a) not sure there is universal agreement that it should even be easy to have a single address to reach most Swedish astronomers (it could be abused). If we do want to have such a easy access point and we don't mind also other Nordic subscribers getting messages could try to revamp Nordboard by periodically checking that all the main Swedish astronomy department exploders are up to date and providing information on whom it reaches. Alternatively could think about setting up a similar 'exploder address of department exploders' which was like Nordboard but Swedish only and would only have department exploders not individual subscriptions. Would need a Swedish university to agree to host this exploder and this is hard given that such an entity would not be GDPR compliant.

Perhaps what we have now is the best we can practically do? if one wants to get the word out say about Astronomdagar best advice is sent to Nordboard, Facebook AstronomerSE *and ask NK members to forward email to their internal department exploders.*