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New opportunities in public outreach

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Some recent science missions have committed to a policy of the rapid release of uncalibrated images onto the internet from instruments onboard spacecraft exploring the solar system. The Mars Exploration Rovers, Cassini-Huygens and New Horizon missions have all committed to this practice. The author has observed the emergence of a group of spaceflight enthusiast that is the primary consumer of these images. A large volume of rapidly produced and often beautiful or dramatic mosaics and other products has thus been published into the public domain and occasionally featured on popular websites, magazine publications and television programs. These activities provide a new bridging point for engagement between space science and the general public.