

# Changes in the "Urania - Postępy Astronomii" astronomical magazine

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"Urania - Postępy Astronomii" is one of the oldest popular science magazines about astronomy in the world. During 2012-2013 it undergone revolutionary changes into a modern magazine suitable for 21st century market of popular science press, at the same time maintaining a high level of popularization. The main changes included: diversity of content, full colour for all pages, changing website into modern internet portal, using social media, ambitious project of a digital archive of all issues from 1922 to 2011, web store to provide easier access for everyone, and projects aimed at schools and school libraries.

## 1 Brief history of Urania

"Urania - Postępy Astronomii", or shorter "Urania", is one of the oldest popular science magazines about astronomy in the world. As it was suggested by several participants of the Communicating Astronomy with the Public international conference held in Warsaw (CAP 2013), it might be the oldest one from those issued nowadays. If anyone knows an older journal - please contact with us.

The beginning of "Urania" dates back to the year of 1922. At that time the magazine was entitled "Uranja", according to the Polish spelling at that time. In 1936 the title changed into "Urania", due to the reform of the Polish orthography. During the years of 1940-1945 the circulation of the magazine was suspended due to the World War II. The first issue after the war was published in 1946.

Meanwhile, "Postępy Astronomii" started as a separate magazine in 1953. A difficult financial situation was the reason of merging "Urania" with "Postępy Astronomii" into "Urania - Postępy Astronomii" in 1998. The numbering and tradition of "Urania" was preserved. Publishers of the new version of the magazine are jointly Polish Astronomical Society and Polish Astronomy Amateurs Society.

In 1997 a website of "Postępy Astronomii" was opened and it was one of the first astronomical websites in the Polish internet. The portal acts now as the website of "Urania - Postępy Astronomii".

## 2 Changes in Urania during 2012-2013

The year 2012 was revolutionary for the journal, both in the technical context, and in terms of the content. The issue 1/2012 was the first one to be printed in full colour at all pages. Before, only the magazine cover and the spread were full colour, and most pages were black and white.

We have carried out a complex questionnaire among the readers to meet their expectations. That helped us during the transformation of the magazine. At the current stage, there is a bigger differentiation of topics, a differentiation of the level of texts (some are easy, some are more difficult). We have decreased the amount of relations from conferences and scientific events. We cannot exclude them in totality, as it is important to document such activities, but they are shorter and written in a way that they are more interesting to a reader.

The website was transformed from the HTML static page into a modern astronomical portal with the CMS system. The portal obtained also a new, simpler address: [www.uraniamagazine.pl](http://www.uraniamagazine.pl). We also updated and modernized the Facebook profile for Urania ([www.facebook.com/UraniaPA](https://www.facebook.com/UraniaPA)) and other social media pages (like Twitter, Nasza Klasa).

In earlier years, it was not so easy to find and buy Urania, as it was available only in subscription and in several planetariums. Now, our distribution network has highly increased. An important step was also the launch of a web store. Now, our readers can easily subscribe the magazine using modern ways of electronic commerce and internet payments.

The statistical data for 'Urania' in 2011 year were: 48 pages + 8 colour pages for a single issue and the circulation of 1700 copies. The situation in 2013 was: 60/64 colour pages for a single issue and the circulation of 2500/3000 copies. The circulation further increased in 2014.

### 3 Digital archive of Urania

Some of old Urania issues have been scanned in previous years, but this work was not completed. Editorial office decided to start an ambitious project of scanning all issues of "Urania", "Postępy Astronomii" and "Urania - Postępy Astronomii" since 1922 and to publish a complete archive with free online access for everyone. The digital archive will contain all issues except for those which are still in sale.

Scanning has been done in cooperation with the library of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, which owns in its warehouse almost all published issues of "Urania" and has big experience in digitization of the press<sup>1</sup>.

Master scans were obtained as TIFF files with 300 dpi resolution. From master scans the output PDF and DjVu files were created, and automated OCR text recognition was applied.

The address of Urania Digital Archive is <http://www.uraniamagazine.pl/archiwum>. Copies of DjVu files are also available in the digital library Kujawsko-Pomorska Biblioteka Cyfrowa (KPBC - <http://kpsc.umk.pl/publication/69759>). The backup copies of all scan files were sent to the national digital data archive Krajowy Magazyn Danych (KMD).

At the time of the Polish Astronomical Society conference, issues from 1922-1929 were available on-line. Issues from the following years have been successively uploaded online and as of August 2014 the archive contains the years of 1922-1959 available to download for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup>We express also gratitude to Justyna Gołębowska for scanning the issue No. 3/1937, and to the library of the University of California, Berkeley for scanning the issue No. 2/1932

#### 4 Urania for schools

In 2012-2013 we carried out a project of supporting school libraries. These institutions have received free of charge sets of all available archival issues of "Urania" and "Postępy Astronomii" from 1991-2011, only the postage cost was paid by schools. The project was very successful, almost 300 schools and educational institutions participated in it.

A new project for schools started in 2014 and will be continued in 2015. It is named "Sponsored subscription of Urania for schools". Schools and their libraries can subscribe Urania for the half price. The other half is paid by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. This is useful for many teachers and students of physics, astronomy, geography, mathematics and for students who prepare for astronomy contests, as in every issue there is a page dedicated to this contest with exemplary exercises and their full solutions prepared by finalists of previous contests.

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