

# “Urania – Postępy Astronomii” as magazine and internet portal

Krzysztof Czart<sup>1,2</sup> and Maciej Mikołajewski<sup>1,2</sup>

1. Toruń Centre for Astronomy, Nicolaus Copernicus University  
Gagarina 11, 87–100 Toruń, Poland
2. Urania - Postępy Astronomii, Centrum Astronomii UMK, ul. Gagarina 11, 87–100 Toruń, Poland

We describe examples of the activities of the “Urania – Postępy Astronomii” magazine undertaken in 2014-2015. These tasks included the special project for schools of a “Sponsored subscription” in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, support for the Astronomy Olimpiad, further development of the internet portal, extension of the digital archive and making the archive available for smartphones and tablets in the Google Play system. “Urania” is a popular science journal devoted to astronomy and space research. It is the main Polish magazine of this kind, and one of the oldest in the world. “Urania” was awarded the Special Prize in the contest *Popularyzator Nauki 2014*, which is the main contest for science communicators in Poland.

## 1 Introduction

“Urania – Postępy Astronomii”, or “Urania” for short, is a popular science magazine about astronomy and space research. It is well known among professional astronomers as well as astronomy amateurs in Poland. “Urania” is one of the oldest of the existing popular science journals in the world. Recently, we have recovered two of the four “legendary” initial issues of “Urania” from 1920, which were described in “Urania” 5/2014 (Włodarczyk, 2014). A brief history of “Urania” and changes in the magazine in the years 2012–2013 were described by Czart (2014).

## 2 Subscription for schools

Sponsored subscriptions for schools have been a very important project carried out by “Urania”. In this initiative, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education subsidize half of the costs of subscription of the magazine for schools. The project was run in 2014–2015, but we are endeavoring to continue it in future years. About 300 schools have participated in the project so far. Schools can still apply for participation by completing in the webpage form.

## 3 Support for the Astronomy Olympiad

In almost every issue of “Urania” we include a section devoted to the Astronomy Olimpiad for schools, in which students and teachers may find solutions of tasks from previous editions of the Astronomy Olimpiad. These solutions are prepared by students (finalists of the Astronomy Olimpiad). In 2014, we sent posters about the

olimpiad with a sample issue of “Urania” to 1000 schools. This resulted in a 25% increase in the number of participants in the Astronomy Olimpiad. The range of our promotional campaign in 2015 was even larger: it included 2000 schools and we also sent a poster of another national astronomy contest for students, *Ogólnopolskie Młodzieżowe Seminarium Astronomiczne w Grudziądzu – OMSA* (National Youth Astronomy Seminar in Grudziądz).

#### **4 Popularyzator Nauki 2014 (Popularizer of Science 2014)**

The editors of “Urania” were awarded the Special Prize in the contest *Popularyzator Nauki 2014* (Popularizer of Science 2014) organized by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Polish Press Agency. This is an award for the current editors as well as for all previous editors of our magazine.

#### **5 Internet portal of Urania**

“Urania” owns also the large internet portal at [www.uraniamagazine.pl](http://www.uraniamagazine.pl), a major part of which is the news section, updated on a regular basis. It describes the newest discoveries and events in research in astronomy and space sciences. Materials from the portal are also available for readers in external resources, for example in Google News. The second type of resources available through the portal are popular science articles grouped in thematic sections. The portal also provides a discussion forum for astronomy amateurs.

The current level of traffic in the Urania portal is over 100,000 users annually. This number is steadily increasing. The portal is also visible on social media: the fanpage on Facebook has 1400 likes and the reach of single posts is from 1000 to 8000 people. The profile of “Urania” is also available on Twitter.

#### **6 Digital archive of Urania**

The complete archive of “Urania” magazine has been scanned and digitized, and in 2013–2015 we successively published subsequent issues of “Urania” and “Postępy Astronomii” online. At the moment, issues of “Urania” from 1920 to 1997 are available, as well as issues of “Postępy Astronomii” from 1953 to 1990. The archive can be accessed for free at [www.uraniamagazine.pl/archiwum](http://www.uraniamagazine.pl/archiwum).

Devices with touch screens, like smartphones and tablets, are increasingly common and popular, especially among young people. To make it easier for users of these kinds of devices to access the Urania archive, we have also uploaded our resources to Google Play, which is the central service for all devices with the Android operational system. (Android is dominant in the Polish market of smartphones and tablets.) Users of devices with other operating systems may access the archive through a web browser. For devices with iOS there is a dedicated Google Play app. Archival issues of “Urania” are free of charge and don’t have any DRM, so users can use them online, as well as download them on devices and print if necessary.

*Acknowledgements.* Various activities of “Urania” have been supported by grants from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.



Fig. 1: Various issues of "Urania" from 2015.

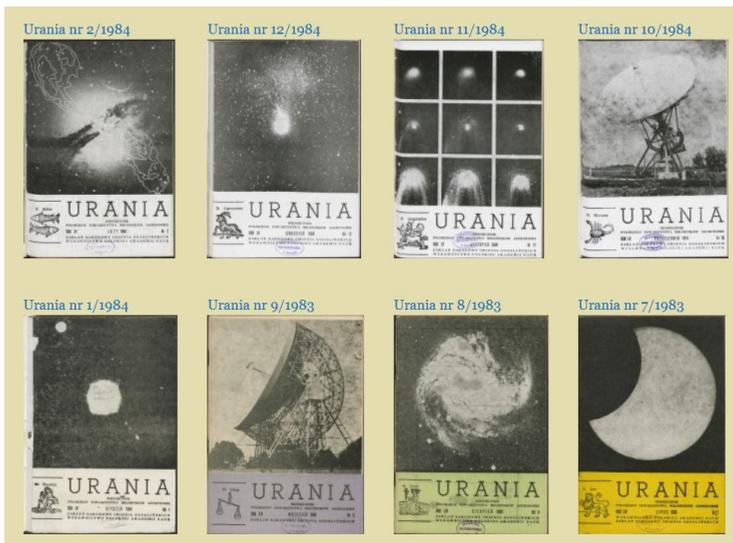


Fig. 2: Digital archive of "Urania" at [www.uraniamagazine.pl/archiwum](http://www.uraniamagazine.pl/archiwum).

## References

- Czart, M., Krzysztof; Mikołajewski, *Changes in the "Urania - Postępy Astronomii" astronomical magazine, pas conf* 1, 107C (2014)
- Włodarczyk, J., *Pierwsza Urania, Urania – Postępy Astronomii* 5, 8 (2014)