

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

A newsletter for the nation's coastal management and research reserve programs.

In This Issue

COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

Overcoming Procrastination

COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

NASA's Eyes

FROM US TO YOU

Outreach Tool Spotlight—
Coastal County Snapshots

Upcoming Social Media Campaigns

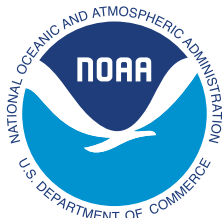
Lake Level Viewer

Fast Facts—Great Lakes

IF YOU WANT TO BE A WRITER,
YOU MUST DO TWO THINGS
ABOVE ALL OTHERS: READ A
LOT AND WRITE A LOT.

– Stephen King

March 2025, Issue 71



COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

I'm feeling a little stressed these days. How about you?

We all cope differently. I've been rewatching *Dexter*, a twelve-year-old, eight-season TV series focused on a police blood-spatter expert who is a serial killer on the side. I don't know why this particular escapism brings me peace, but it does.

Being stressed also causes me to procrastinate. The little and not-so-little tasks needed to move me through the day can seem overwhelming, making me want to do absolutely nothing (other than watch *Dexter*, of course). But this approach leads nowhere.

The 5 Second Rule, a technique from popular author and motivational speaker, Mel Robbins, has been helpful and is surprisingly simple and effective. Here goes.

When struggling with motivation, utter a countdown (5-4-3-2-1) and move. Just get going. Don't think, don't ponder—just take the first step.

- 5-4-3-2-1 Get up when the alarm rings.
- 5-4-3-2-1 Make that phone call you've been delaying.
- 5-4-3-2-1 Put your shoes on, and go for that walk.
- 5-4-3-2-1 Open the blank Word document, and get started.
- 5-4-3-2-1 Open (and answer!) those emails filling up your inbox.

According to Robbins, "The moment you have an instinct to act, you have to physically move within five seconds, or your brain will talk you out of it. Just start counting backward—5-4-3-2-1 and move. Take action before hesitation moves in."

More great advice from the author: "Thinking about your problems will never solve them. Waiting around to feel like doing something means you'll never do it . . . You have to make little moves forward, all day, every day, especially when you don't feel like it."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The Communication Connection

Amen, sister. Since this is a communication-based newsletter, let's bring this theory to a communication-based task: creating a one-pager for a project or initiative.

When project teams call a meeting with the communications department, they often come armed with several documents that explain their concept or their needs. Creating these documents has helped the team think through all aspects of the initiative, which is great.

But for the person charged with drafting the communication vehicle (that would be you and me), this amount of detail isn't particularly beneficial, especially in the beginning. Getting lost in the details means we can't see the forest (the overall messaging) for the trees (details).

Instead of reading the tomes, my first step is to ask the content team to explain, in five minutes or less, their project as if they are talking to their intended target audience. I take notes and ask questions. Immediately after that meeting, I craft the first draft of the communication document. If I need additional details, I may skim the documents provided by the team, or I might just fabricate the missing pieces, knowing the content owners will correct me along the way.

How, you may ask, does this approach use the 5 Second Rule? At its heart, the 5 Second Rule is about not overthinking your issue and, instead, taking the small, immediate steps needed to reach your goal. Here's how the 5 Second Rule applies to making a communication-focused document:

- People generally do a good job of self-editing when casually talking about an effort, while the opposite can be true in a more formal situation, such as a speech. By having the content team provide a five-minute summary, we've stopped the paralysis (and procrastination) that can result from too much information. We've clarified the messaging and stopped the tendency to overthink the content.
- In optimum conditions, I will work on the first draft right away, usually within an hour of the

meeting, because in addition to the speaker's words, how the information is presented is equally important. Capturing the essence of what the team has told you is easier if you jump in immediately, while working from notes read a couple of days later is much harder. Overthinking it and postponing the initial writing doesn't do anyone any favors.

- By quickly returning the first draft, usually within 24 hours, we set a tone that often results in faster turnaround times for each step of the project. Getting jobs in and out of the system as quickly as possible tends to stop procrastination and overthinking and helps the team stay true to the messaging ideals presented in the beginning. Otherwise, it's amazing how quickly ideas, words, and enthusiasm can grow stale. Better to capture the initial lightning right away, produce something, and move on. For me, and I imagine there are a lot of you like this out there, my first ideas and inclinations are my best. I may want to fine tune the prose a week later, but rarely do I ever come back with a major rewrite.

Without realizing it, I have been following the 5 Second Rule my entire professional life: Don't overthink it. Get to the heart of the matter, and communicate it. Strike while the iron is hot. Keep moving, since taking on a task sooner rather than later is almost always best. "Just do it," right?!

I'm not quite ready to use the Five Second Rule to turn off *Dexter*. At least not yet. But I'm getting there.

Note: The quotes in this story came from Mel Robbin's most recent bestseller, *The Let Them Theory*.

Donna McCaskill
Communications Manager
NOAA's Office for Coastal Management
Donna.McCaskill@noaa.gov



COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Featured products: NASA's Eyes

Source: science.nasa.gov/e/eyes

What it is: An immersive suite of three-dimensional “visualization applications”—all accessible through one NASA webpage—that allows users to explore our planet, solar system, and universe, and some of the missions NASA has taken to understand them. Some of the many interactive applications include “Eyes on the Solar System,” which can fast forward or rewind time and follows over 150 NASA missions, and “Mars 2020 EDL,” which offers users the chance to land the *Perseverance* rover on Mars.



Experience Curiosity

This web interactive re-creates specific days of the Curiosity rover's mission, including drilling on Sol 908, and the creation of the famous “selfie” from Sol 868. You can also click and drag on the robotic arm, antenna, and mast to make them move, or learn about each instrument on the rover.

Why we like it: Many marketing industry publications and blogs deemed 2024 the year of immersive communications. Everyone seemed to delve into virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and interactive experiences—some with more success than others. We can't think of a better place in which to be fully immersed than our planet and the space it inhabits, guided by the tools and technology that have made some of the world's most groundbreaking, life-altering discoveries.

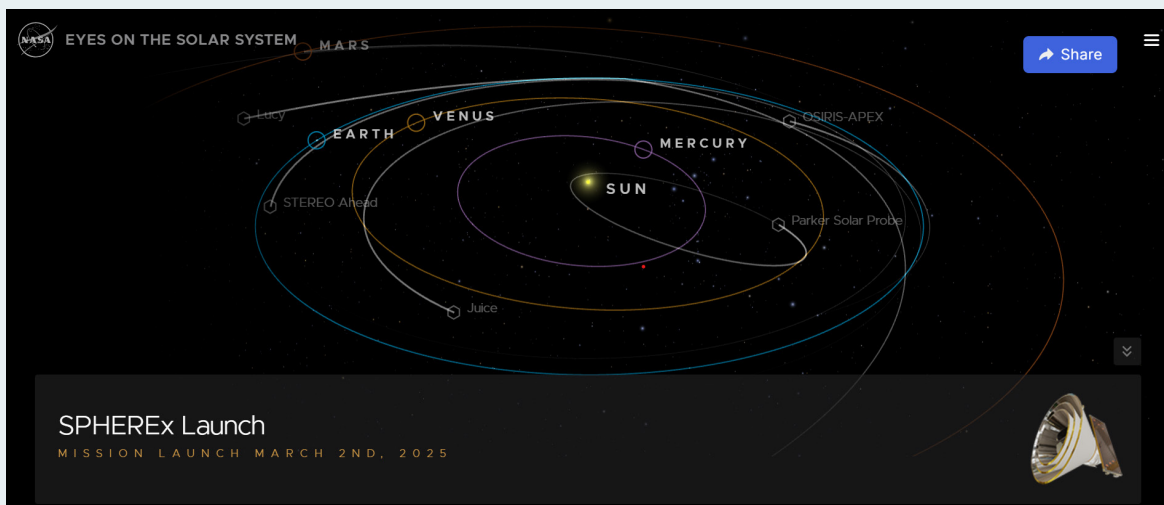
A screenshot of the 'Eyes on Asteroids' interface. At the top, it says 'EYES ON ASTEROIDS' in white text on a dark background. Below is a 3D simulation of a solar system with a bright star and several rocky bodies. A blue arrow points to one of the asteroids.

Eyes on Asteroids

Track over 30,000 asteroids that are near Earth's orbit, see the next 5 closest approaches to Earth, and learn about current and historic NASA asteroid and comet missions in this real-time 3D simulation of the solar system.

Try out the interactive “scrolly-telling” that lets you learn about how we define a close approach or how we determine if an asteroid or comet is categorized as a “Potentially Hazardous Object.” Or ride along with NASA missions as we make historical discoveries about asteroids and comets, such as the first time we landed on an asteroid, or impacted a comet. See the DART mission impact with a binary asteroid system, and much more. Eyes on Asteroids lets you track all the latest discoveries.

Track the closest Asteroids →



FROM US TO YOU

OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT— COASTAL COUNTY SNAPSHOTS

Clear, easy-to-digest information on a county's socioeconomics, flood hazards, and resilience can go a long way when trying to tell your community's story. This user-friendly, online tool allows you to generate county-specific charts and graphs that can be shared with your audience—including in outreach materials—saving time and increasing efficiency while offering insights into your coastal county. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/snapshots.html.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Follow us on X, Facebook, and Instagram, and tag along with these themes:

- March 3 to 7: Great Lakes Week
- March 6: Great Lakes Day
- March 22: World Water Day, International Seal Day
- March 23: World Meteorological Day
- March 26: Manatee Appreciation Day

LAKE LEVEL VIEWER

Communicating the potential effects of lake level rise can be extremely tricky—many community members and leaders don't even realize what a wide-ranging issue it is. This tool creates visuals that not only capture lake level changes but demonstrates potential shoreline impacts, the correlating socioeconomic effects, and the overall effect of a rising lake level on a Great Lakes community. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/llv.html.

FAST FACTS—GREAT LAKES

This is one of the many graphics and facts available for your use in presentations and handouts. Grab this one at coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/great-lakes.html. If you have an idea for a new group of fast facts or illustrations, please let us know.



Coastal Communicators is published by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management.

To subscribe to this newsletter, visit coast.noaa.gov/contactform.

Send questions or suggestions to coastal.info@noaa.gov.

View past issues at coast.noaa.gov/gallery/newsletter.html.

Editor: *Pamela Jacobs* | Communications Director: *Donna McCaskill* | Graphic Designer: *Daniella Fishburne*
coast.noaa.gov | facebook.com/NOAADigitalCoast | twitter.com/NOAADigCoast | instagram.com/NOAADigitalCoast

Improving communication skills, one newsletter at a time.