

Abstract Submitted
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Messages about the Messengers: Reception and Review of “Astronomy’s New Messengers,” The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory’s Interactive Public Exhibition¹ BROOKE RANKINS, MARCO CAVAGLIÀ, University of Mississippi, LIGO -EPO TEAM — The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) is an endeavor to directly confirm the existence of gravitational waves, funded by the National Science Foundation. As a publicly funded research project, it is both within its directive and within its best interest to educate and inform the public at large of its efforts. The Education and Public Outreach (EPO) group within LIGO, under the direction of Marco Cavaglià, has developed an interactive exhibit to educate, explain and showcase LIGO to the general public. The exhibit, entitled “Astronomy’s New Messengers,” debuted at the World Science Festival in New York City, and includes features to explain gravitational waves and their possible sources, an interferometer, the space-time fabric model, and the difficulties in identifying a gravitational wave. The exhibit visitors were asked to complete a survey about their experience at “Astronomy’s New Messengers,” and the presentation will report the survey results, and explore the full exhibit’s reception by the general public.

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