



EMA

Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association

EMA Magazine Team

Annual Report 2007-2008

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. TEAM MEMBERS AND RECRUITMENT	4
3. ACTIVITIES.....	4
3.1. PUBLICATION OF FIRST EDITION	5
3.2. COLLECTION AND SELECTION OF ARTICLES	5
3.3. LIAISING ON EDITING AND LAYOUT	5
3.4. OTHER INFORMATION ACTIVITIES.....	5
3.5. FIRST EMA PHOTO COMPETITION.....	6
3.6. PHOTO EXHIBITION AT 2008 GA	6
3.7. EVALUATION OF FIRST EDITION	7
3.8. SELLING ADS	7
4. EVALUATION	7
4.1. EXTERNAL EVALUATION: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE.....	7
4.2. INTERNAL EVALUATION: TEAM DISCUSSIONS.....	8
5. BUDGET AND COSTS.....	9
6. CONCLUSIONS.....	9
7. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
7.1. BUDGET.....	10
7.2. INFORMATION ACTIVITIES	10
7.3. CONTENT.....	10
7.4. EDITING.....	11
7.5. LAYOUT	11
7.6. PHOTO COMPETITION.....	11
7.7. SELLING ADS.....	11
7.8. EVALUATION.....	11
7.9. WORK PROCESS/ TEAMWORK	12



1. Introduction

The past term has been characterized by lots and lots of activity within and around the EMA Magazine Team. Our biggest achievement is the publication of the first edition of 'Emanate', the new EMA member magazine. Further, we have successfully presented a photo competition and invited EMA members to evaluate 'Emanate' in an online questionnaire.

This report provides a detailed account of this year's achievements and, further, a number of recommendations for next term, based on our experiences up till now.

On behalf of the EMA Magazine Team,

Rikke Skovgaard Andersen
Team Coordinator

Have your article or photo printed in Emanate!

In February 2009 the second edition of 'Emanate', the magazine for EMA members, will hit the mailboxes of students and alumni. Emanate is a yearly publication featuring plenty of contributions from students and alumni - and you're invited to send in your article or photo!

The EMA magazine will publish a call for articles shortly after the GA on www.em-a.eu. We will also announce the theme of the upcoming edition and a second photo competition for EMA members. Deadline for articles and photos will be 1st of November 2008.

Join the EMA Magazine Team!

Does the Magazine Team sound like something for you?

According to the EMA Statute interested students and alumni can join the Magazine Team at the yearly General Assembly. There are no requirements to CV or professional background, but the team's work is likely to be most interesting for EMA members with an interest in communication or magazine production.

For further information on the EMA General Assembly we refer to www.em-a.eu



2. Team Members and Recruitment

The EMA Magazine Team has been working since elected at the Erasmus Mundus Student Seminar and EMA General Assembly in October 2007. At this event the team expanded significantly – from 2 to 9 team members. Current team members are listed in table 1. At one of the GA's parallel team sessions EMMC delegates joined the team and Rikke Skovgaard Andersen (Denmark, EM Journalism) was elected as Team Coordinator and member of the EMA Steering Committee. From June 2006 – October 2007 Rikke served in the provisional EMA Launch Committee, also working on the EMA Magazine, and the election as Member of the (permanent) Steering Committee is best understood as a continuation of her previous work.

A short remark on the participation of team members seems in place. During last term (June 2006-November 2008) the team experienced problems with low participation. This led to the following conclusion in last year's team report: "... it is necessary to stress the responsibilities connected with a 'place' in the team when recruiting." At the 2008 GA expectations to team members were a lot more clearly communicated; even quantified in number of working hours pr. month. This approach proved successful: At this year's GA we are counting 9 active members.

Table 1.

Name	Country	EMMC
Rikke Skovgaard Andersen (team coordinator)	Denmark	European Journalism
Jasmine Kang	India	Strategic Project Management
Mario Pardo Segovia	Spain	Women's and Gender Studies
Luca Zanaica	Italy	Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology
Zachary Rothstein	US	Economy, State and Society
Michael Eshiemokhai	Nigeria	Dynamics of Health and Welfare
Valentina Villoria	Venezuela	Coastal Management
Gregor Lichtfuss	Germany	International Health
Angela Johnston	Canada	European Journalism

3. Activities

A large part of the Magazine Team's work takes place online, via e-mails, Skype and instant messaging. However, team members have taken part in a number of meetings. Please note that full team representation at the meetings listed in table 2 has not been possible due to budget restrictions. Selection of meeting participants for the Liason Group meeting (March 3-4) was facilitated by the Team Coordinator. Selection criteria were travel costs and diversity of disciplines and nationalities.

Table 2.

Student Seminar and General Assembly 2007 Participants: All	October 11-12, Brussels (BE)
EMA Liason Group Meeting Participants: Rikke, Michael, Mario, Zachary, Gregor	March 3-4, Brussels (BE)
EMA Steering Committee Meeting Participants: Rikke	April 19-20, Lund (SE)

Next to meetings and coordination the team has dedicated its time to:

3.1. Publication of First Edition

Without doubt the most significant activity for this term has been the publication of the first edition of the EMA magazine; 'Emanate'. From October 2007 to February 2008 the team has been in intense preparations for the publication of the first issue.

3.2. Collection and Selection of Articles

In early fall 2007 the Magazine Team published a call for articles. The team decided on 'Between Cultures' as an appropriate theme for the first edition – and following a call was written and published on the EMA website. On the recommendation of ICUnet it was decided that the Team Coordinator should serve as point of contact for contributors. The Team Coordinator received 14 articles previous to the deadline on the 30th of November. All articles were carefully reviewed by team members – in a structured process, using the team wiki as our tool of communication – and submitted to ICUnet and the graphical agency.

3.3. Liaising on Editing and Layout

Encouraged by the Magazine Team an external editor and graphical agency (based in Passau, Germany) were contracted to facilitate the magazine. With ICUnet as a 'middleman' the Magazine Team has provided frequent feedback for external contractors and approved the final edition and layout. These exchanges took place in December and January 2008.

3.4. Other Information Activities

For a large part the Magazine Team, and in particular the Magazine Coordinator, has performed as 'point of contact' for EMA members interested in Emanate. This includes writing several articles for the EMA website, maintaining a Facebook group and, generally, answering requests and corresponding with students and alumni.

Team members have played a very important role in spreading the word about calls for content and, finally, the publication of Emanate to students and alumni in their respective programmes.

It should be noted that a significant challenge with respect to information has been to encourage EMA members to update their addresses in the online database; in order to receive a print copy of Emanate EMA members need to provide us with a correct postal address. Therefore, two e-mail reminders were sent to the EMA community and all magazine contributors were contacted and

encouraged to update their personal details. 1845 magazines were sent out by ICUnet, of which 81 were returned by April 15, 2008 (4,4%).

3.5. First EMA Photo Competition

During the 2007 GA's team meeting the idea to include a photo competition into the magazine was born. The rationale behind that was to increase interest into the work of the Magazine Team and the magazine itself as efficient as possible.

A photo competition seemed to be an easy and powerful tool to encourage participation and curiosity towards the so far unknown magazine. The spread of digital cameras, taking huge numbers of photos and emailing them around presumably was a common everyday activity within the community and thus regarded as the way of contribution with the lowest barrier.

At the same time we thought to create sustainable interest over the following year, in making the final vote open to the community. Every registered EM-A member had one vote on the EM-A's website to declare his favorite. The one with the highest absolute number of votes was to win the competition.

To make the most use of the competition and keep interest high, the idea was further developed to use the 2008 GA as the stage for a short photo competition award ceremony, with the aim of raising awareness for the next photo competition and the next magazine. To use the potential momentum of the competition we also combined the vote with a short evaluative questionnaire.

We advertised the competition via the EM-A's website and newsletter with a deadline roughly about a month later (by December 1, 2007). In that month we received 32 entries out of which the team selected the six to be included into the competition (average out of every magazine team member handing in one personal rating). These six photos were printed in the magazine. At the same time the mag was sent out (end of February 2008), the six photos were also published on the EM-A's website for the community to vote for the best entry.

The end of the poll was April 15, 2008, until when the photo competition was continuously advertised by individual team members, newsletter to the community, the EM-A's website and personal awareness raising activities within courses. By April 15, 2008, 77 votes were cast with the majority of people voting for Michelle Mendoza's entry (44% over 19% and less by other entries). The winner was notified by the Team Coordinator shortly after the poll, and the official result announced on the EMA website.

3.6. Photo Exhibition at 2008 GA

To further capitalize on the competition we thought a ceremony in plenary and an exhibition during the 2008 GA would be ideal tools to increase magazine-awareness in the community. 10 entries from the competition (6 finalists and 4 additional photos) were selected and will be put up as an exhibition over the whole period of the GA event, accompanied by informative posters and flyers about the EMA magazine. The Magazine Team also plans a short intervention during the plenary session, to draw attention to the winning photo and encourage contributions to the magazine.

3.7. Evaluation of First Edition

At the team meeting at the 2007 GA it became clear that the Magazine Team wanted to prioritize evaluation of the first edition of *Emanate*: if the EMA Magazine is to become a success, we would need constructive feedback from students and alumni. We decided to commit to two types of evaluation: External and internal. The external evaluation consisted in an online questionnaire, in connection with the photo competition poll. The internal part was a discussion among team members themselves: on the team wiki and at a personal meeting (Liason Group Meeting, March 3-4, Brussels). The section 'Evaluation' will elaborate more on the context and outcomes of these two evaluation exercises.

3.8. Selling Ads

One of the recommendations made in last year's report was to look into selling ads into companies and organizations who are interested to reach EMA members. During this year we have come several steps closer to our goal:

- The team has appointed a team member who is responsible for 'kick-starting' the ad sales
- The team is currently drafting a presentation letter (aimed at prospective advertisers), a price list and a list of companies/organizations which we would like to approach
- The team is clearly committed to soliciting ads for the February 2009 issue. This is a test run to see whether they will be profitable and worth the extra effort

4. Evaluation

The Magazine Team has chosen to give evaluation of the first *Emanate* edition high priority. Since we were introducing a completely new publication, without much structured information about the tastes of readers, we decided that an evaluation would be the key to a successful publication in the long run.

We decided to do two 'rounds' of evaluations: An external evaluation among all EMA members and an internal evaluation among team members only. The first would give us an impression of how the first edition had been received by its target audience. The advantage of the latter was that it gave the Magazine Team a chance to evaluate its work processes and internal structures.

4.1. External Evaluation: Online Questionnaire

In the light of generally very weak response rates we were looking for a cost-effective way to collect at least some ideas on our work from the community. We thought that combining the vote for the photo competition with a concise questionnaire on *Emanate* may pose an attractive opportunity. We feared we could not surpass the feedback rate created by the momentum of the photo competition with a separate call for evaluation of the magazine (if generating any interest in an evaluation at all).

Next to the choice of the best photo, a 17 question evaluative form made up the web-based voting system for the photo competition, operated by ICUnet. The 17 questions were developed by the Magazine team to cover a general perception of the magazine as well as technical issues like having it received by the postal mail.

A word of caution in the beginning: while analyzing the feedback one should never forget to view it in the context of total numbers of the magazine and the highly biased convenient sample we used

here. Biases certainly included: internet-usage -possibilities and -behavior, general knowledge of/ interest in EMA, interest in the photo competition and many more. The sampling process alone renders it unlikely we may have gotten a representative sample here and the evaluation has to be seen as being of exploratory nature.

1845 magazines were sent out by ICUnet, of which 81 were returned by April 15, 2008 (4,4%). At the same time we received 77 replies on EM-A's web site (roughly 4 % feedback rate).

Out of the 77 replies, not even half (44%) stated to have received the magazine by the time of their participation in the evaluation. (This is prone to underestimation as participation was possible before the magazine could have had arrived (in countries with weak postal infrastructure even very long before). Based on our 77 samples we can generally say in a very concise way, the magazine is on the right tracks:

- The vast majority very much welcomes a paper-based magazine written by students and alumni, informing the reader beyond the borders of their own course and discipline by a mixture of scientific and general-interest articles around a dedicated theme together with a photo competition and is looking forward to the next issue.
- The first issue of Emanate succeeded in having an appealing layout, cover page and theme of "Between Cultures".
- Possible significant improvement areas seem to be more attributable to contributor related issues, as the readers seem to wish for more interesting or captivating easy-to read stories, including some humor. The small number of articles sent to the magazine for the first edition somehow limited the possibilities of the team to work on that and the attraction of good content remains a key issue (see recommendations).
- 25 names and email addresses of potential contributors were recorded during the evaluation.

4.2. Internal Evaluation: Team Discussions

At the meeting of the Liason Group the Magazine team devoted some time to an internal evaluation of the first edition of Emanate. Among the most important points brought forward were:

Content

- Generally, the team was satisfied with the structure and content of the first issue
- The team agreed that it would add value to the magazine to review content more critically for the future
- Lastly, the team discussed the possibility of including more content categories in future editions

Layout

Again, the team was overall satisfied except from a few errors:

- Having a mix of two greeting notes, several photos and a table of content on only two pages is a bit too 'messy' and leaves a bad impression with the reader
- Too much blank space due to lack of photos and illustrations
- It is a nice idea to extract key quotes from the articles and use them in the layout. This should be done to a larger extent in the future

Work Process/ Teamwork

- In spite of geographical challenges and lack of ‘real life’ meetings the team agreed that they have had a positive and constructive collaboration

Compared to last term the team members have been a lot more actively involved in magazine work and internal communication has improved significantly (regular e-mailing, contact via Skype and extensive information-sharing on team wiki)

5. Budget and Costs

All the above mentioned activities have overall had very reasonable costs; Eur. 13,820 for publication and sending (table 3). However, the Magazine Team has overstepped the budget foreseen in fall 2007 with Eur. 3,500. This is mainly due to layout and printing being more expensive than first foreseen and was approved by the EMA Steering Committee in fall 2007.

Table 3 (20-5-2007).

Type of Costs	As foreseen (tender)	As implemented
Conceptualisation	1.500	1.500,00
Editing		818,12
Translation	820	
Layout/Typesetting/Printing	2.000	6.180,00
Postal sending to members	6.000	3.116,81
Postal sending to NS		21,70
Copies sent back		17,60
Photo Competition		100,00
Photo Exhibition		465,77
Online Poll Extension		1.600,00
Add. Budget allocated by SC	3.500	
TOTAL	13.820	13.820,00

6. Conclusions

2007-2008 has indeed been a busy year for the Magazine Team – and our many efforts have paid off:

- The team has successfully recruited a large number of new, active members
- Judging from the feedback from EMA members and other readers we have published and distributed a high-quality magazine
- We have launched a successful photo competition: Not only did we receive a lot of photos from EMA members, but students and alumni also visited the EMA website to vote for the winner
- We have thoroughly evaluated the first edition and our own work process: An online questionnaire acquainted us with the impressions readers had of the first edition. Further, the team has spend time reflecting upon its routines which will help us improve our teamwork and effectiveness for next term
- The above mentioned achievements have been reached within a very reasonable budget

7. Recommendations

The conclusions of previous section lead the current Magazine Team to make the following recommendations for the future:

7. 1. Budget

The Magazine Team proposes the following budget for next term:

Layout, printing: Eur. 7,500 (36 pages)

Text editing: Eur. 1,500

Postal sending: Eur. 8,000 (3,500 copies)

Photo exhibition and other activities at GA 2009: Eur. 500

Income from ads: estimated Eur. 1,500 (3 pages)

Total budget (excl. ICUnet personnel costs): approx. 16,000 Eur.

Repeating the online photo poll and questionnaire will have no (or very low) costs: polling and questionnaire functions are available on our website and adding content is very inexpensive. Costs for postal sending are expected to increase due to the next batch of Erasmus Mundus students joining the EMA. Editing is likely to increase if more time will be spend on corresponding with authors (for approval of changes).

7.2. Information activities

- Again, major efforts have to go into the recruitment of contributors and the generation of high-quality, entertaining content.
- The calls for content should be improved: there is a need for a more clear statement of which type of content we are looking for, especially in relation to thematic contribution. The theme should guide prospective contributors, not confuse them.
- The qualities of the articles and photos could be enriched in future editions by sending out calls for contribution early. This will, for example, enable people to prepare rich articles worthy of a magazine of this magnitude.
- The Facebook group has proved a very effective tool to reach and update prospective contributors
- The 25 potential contributors found via the online questionnaire need to be contacted and kept updated regularly on the proceedings of EMAnate 09.

7.3. Content

- Overall, the content of first edition was satisfactory and well received by the target audience
- If the improvements suggestion under 'information activities' prove to be effective the Magazine Team will receive more content for future editions. This will demand a more critical review of content for the future.
- To (also) include a 'non-thematic' section in future editions. Sometimes EMA members have experiences to share which do not necessarily fall under the chosen theme.
- For next edition we can introduce a 'tit bits corner' for jokes or poetry contributions from EMA members.
- To start a 'blog section' where we select and cite interesting entries from blogs submitted to the EMA website (the community section).
- Include a 'course coordinator' interview as a permanent section from next edition and onwards. This would help put specific courses in the spotlight and foster understanding of the challenges that university administrators face.

- Include an interview with an alumnus as a permanent section. This would, again, put the spotlight on specific courses and inform readers of what the career possibilities are for Erasmus Mundus graduates.

7.4. Editing

- Using the expertise of an external, professional editor was a successful experience and significantly improved the quality of content
- A few contributors have brought to the attention of the Magazine Team that the editing had slightly changed the meaning of their article. For next edition contributors should be contacted and presented with the edited versions previous to print.

7.5. Layout

- Generally, the quality and number of illustrations to be improved. One suggestion is to invest in 'generic' photos from an online photo agency
- We recommend using more quotes to create variation in the layout
- The team proposes to replace green with another colour for the next edition. Each should edition should then have two 'basic' colours: one 'static' (light blue – the colour of the EMA logo) and one which varies.

7.6. Photo competition

- The photo competition proved to be a useful and versatile tool for the Magazine
- If interest in a photo competition was fading, this could be replaced by other interactive elements following the same principles (eg quizzes, writing-, movie making-, joke-competitions)
- Technical specifications have to be set before the lunch of the competition (esp. Minimal resolution / size)
- Voting for the selection of the six photos entering were plainly subjective; Voting criteria should be decided on before the mag team votes, or better, even before the competition is opened. The timeframe for submitting entries should be longer than one month

7.7. Selling Ads

- To solicit ads for the February 2008 issues as a test if a venture into selling advertising is really worth the extra time and efforts
- To coordinate with the Jobs Team and Promotion Team on soliciting ads and target companies keen on recruiting from EMA alumni

7.8. Evaluation

- A comprehensive evaluation continues to be a hard goal to achieve, but may also not be really necessary. For the time being we certainly recommend continuing the combination of an evaluation and interactive element of Emanate, which is easy to do and at least offers some insight.

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- The next evaluation should include a follow-up on the delivery of the first edition, as well as a direct comparison section to the first edition, which will be a simple measure of improvement.
 - The evaluation of the magazine, or the development of an evaluation method may be an interesting honours/ master thesis topic and course supervisors of social science courses might be approached regarding this.

7.9. Work Process/ Teamwork

- To continuously improve the internal communication of the team; not only between the Team Coordinator and team members, but also from team member to team members
- Increased delegation of work tasks and projects to individual team members

