

# Engaging with multiple audiences in research group websites: the interplay between genres and languages

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Ecologies of genres and ecologies of languages: the dynamics of local, transnational and international scientific communication

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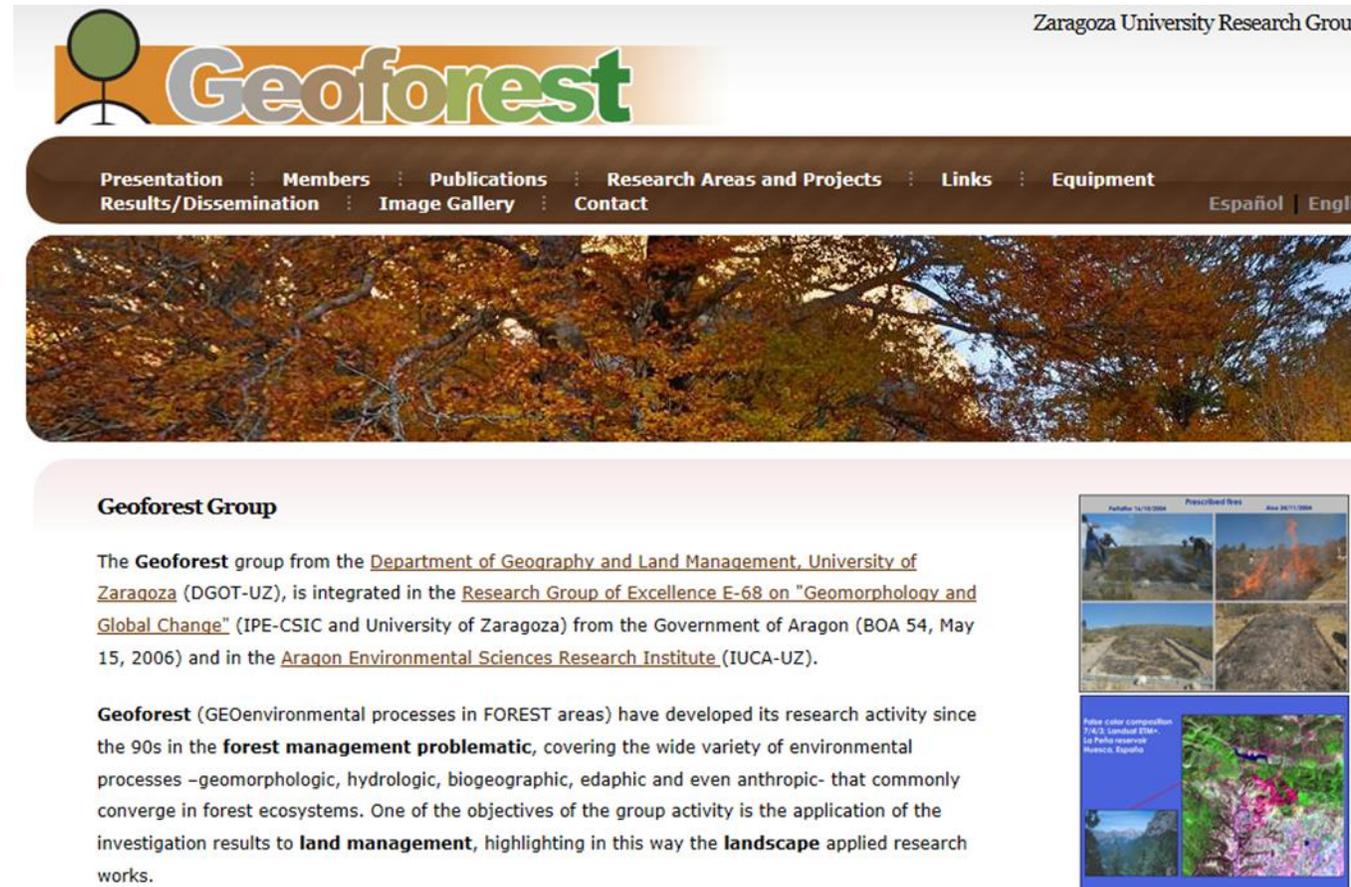
# Research group websites

## Research groups use their websites to:

- present themselves
- disseminate and publicise their scientific activity and results
- promote their research area

## Potential benefits of a research group website (Thelwall et al., 2008) :

- increased visibility for the outcomes of research
- increased networking opportunities
- increased ability to attract members for the group



Zaragoza University Research Group

**Geoforest**

Presentation :: Members :: Publications :: Research Areas and Projects :: Links :: Equipment  
Results/Dissemination :: Image Gallery :: Contact

Español | English

### Geoforest Group

The **Geoforest** group from the [Department of Geography and Land Management, University of Zaragoza](#) (DGOT-UZ), is integrated in the [Research Group of Excellence E-68 on "Geomorphology and Global Change"](#) (IPE-CSIC and University of Zaragoza) from the Government of Aragon (BOA 54, May 15, 2006) and in the [Aragon Environmental Sciences Research Institute](#) (IUCA-UZ).

**Geoforest** (GEOenvironmental processes in FOREST areas) have developed its research activity since the 90s in the **forest management problematic**, covering the wide variety of environmental processes –geomorphologic, hydrologic, biogeographic, edaphic and even anthropic- that commonly converge in forest ecosystems. One of the objectives of the group activity is the application of the investigation results to **land management**, highlighting in this way the **landscape** applied research works.



# Purpose of research

- Content and language choice are used as **strategies for “audience design”** (Bell, 1984, 2001)
- Information in **different formats and languages** ➡ to connect with **multiple audiences**.

## Questions:

- In which languages do RGs at UZ write their websites?
- when both English and the L1 co-exist in a single website, how do these languages interact?
- How do the social characteristics of the target audience affect the choice of language and formats to disseminate information in RG websites?

# Audience design in academia

**Audience design:** speakers “design” their style (including language choice) in response to the social characteristics of their audience (Bell, 1984, 2001)

- English is the international language of academia (e.g., Ferguson, 2007; Petersen & Shaw, 2002).
- Local languages are used to disseminate findings to a lay-oriented audience (McGrath, 2014)

# Audience design and online discourse

## English

- Lingua Franca of the Internet: the default language when the audience is unknown: likely to reach a wider public (Barton and Lee, 2013; Tagg and Seargeant, 2014).
- Language to communicate with an international audience in online communication (Barton and Lee, 2013; Franceschi, 2014; Leppänen, 2009; Vettorel, 2014).

## Local language

- The desire to address a local audience promotes the use of the L1 (Durham 2003; Lee and Barton 2011; Seargeant Tagg, and Ngampramuan 2012).

# Context of study

## Data analysed

- **Websites of research groups at the UZ**
  - The websites were coded for main language: English/ Spanish/ both English and Spanish, other languages.
- More detailed analysis of 15 websites.
- **interviews with the principal investigators of the research groups**

# Interview

- 1. What is the **primary function** of your website?
- 2. What **language(s)** do you use in your website?
  - a. English
  - b. Spanish
  - c. Both (versions in the two languages)
- 3. If the language is English, why have you decided to write you website in English?
- 4. If the language is Spanish, why have you decided to write you website in Spanish?
- 5. Who do you see as the **audience** for your homepage?
  - other members of your disciplinary community
  - funding agencies
  - interested public
  - students
  - other

# Results

(i) In which languages do research groups at the University of Zaragoza write their websites?

Language	Number of websites	%
<u>Spanish</u>	65	49.24
<u>English</u>	33	25
<u>Both Spanish and English</u>	32	24.24
Other	2	1.5
	132	

# Results

(ii) when both English and the L1 co-exist in a single website, how do these languages interact?

1. Two versions of the website, one in English and the other in the L1.

Presentación :: Personal :: Publicaciones :: Líneas y proyectos de investigación :: Enlaces :: Equipamiento  
Resultados/Transferencia :: Galería de Imágenes :: Contacto Español | English

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## Presentación del grupo Geoforest

El grupo **Geoforest** del [Departamento de Geografía y Ordenación del Territorio, Universidad de Zaragoza](#) (DGOT-UZ) forma parte del [Grupo de Investigación de Excelencia E-68 en "Geomorfología y Cambio Global"](#) (IPE-CSIC y Universidad de Zaragoza) del Gobierno de Aragón (BOA 54, 15 de mayo de 2006) y del [Instituto Universitario de Investigación en Ciencias Ambientales de Aragón](#) (IUCA-UZ).

El grupo **Geoforest** (Procesos GEOambientales en Espacios FORESTales) ha trabajado desde la década de los 90 en líneas de investigación enmarcadas en la **problemática de los espacios forestales**, abarcando la diversidad de procesos ambientales -geomorfológicos, hidrológicos, biogeográficos, edáficos e incluso antrópicos- que confluyen en el ámbito forestal. La aplicación de los resultados de investigación a la **gestión del territorio** es uno de los objetivos que guía la actividad de este grupo, destacando también en esta línea los trabajos de investigación aplicada sobre **paisaje**.

Esta actividad se ha desarrollado utilizando **diferentes escalas espaciales y**

## Presentación de ERTAlab

El **Laboratorio de Espectro-Radiometría y Teledetección Ambiental de la Universidad de Zaragoza (ERTAlab)** integra el equipamiento científico que, en relación con la actividad del grupo **Geoforest**, se ha ido adquiriendo con el apoyo financiero de diversos proyectos de investigación de los **Planes Nacionales de I+D+I**, del **Gobierno de Aragón** y, muy especialmente, del **Subprograma de proyectos de infraestructura científico-tecnológica cofinanciados con FEDER** (Convocatoria 2010, UNZA10-4E-488).

Infraestructura cofinanciada



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This activity has been developed at **different temporal and spatial scales**, requiring the application of a **wide range of tools and techniques** and combining the use of remote sensing imageries empirically based on experimental field work, regional modeling, cover change analysis, upscaling... **in GIS environments** or the advances in certain **specialized techniques** as the use of field radiometry, high-resolution satellite imagery and other advanced LIDAR systems.



# Results

**(ii) when both English and the L1 co-exist in a single website, how do these languages interact?**

2. Information is mostly written in Spanish, but there is a translation into English  
e.g. [Provesos](#)

3. The website is mainly written in a language, with links to documents in other languages

[Aragosaurus](#)

[Cristales Líquidos y Polímeros \(CLP\).](#)

[Magna](#)

# Results

**(iii) How do the social characteristics of the target audience affect the choice of language and formats to disseminate information in research group websites?**

The websites have a variety of intended audiences:

- scholarly community: other researchers and research groups
- prospective students
- funding agencies
- other stakeholders: local practitioners, policy makers, companies
- journalists
- members of the group itself: intranet

These audiences influence content and language

# Websites written only in English

## **Audience:**

- research community, both local and international
- prospective international students

**Content:** description of their research lines and their publications.



# Websites written only in English

## **English is the language of science. Necessary to communicate internationally**

- English is their “working language”: the language spoken by their disciplinary community.
- the language used to write papers and to interact with colleagues (e-mails)
- language used in the laboratory (foreign students)
- it is easier to use technical English than technical Spanish

*I think there are people who make an effort to translate the website into English. We would have to make an effort to translate it into Spanish. Actually, we have everything in English. Our projects are international and the description of our lines are in English. Therefore, doing it in English does not require any effort, doing it in Spanish does require an effort.*

# Websites written only in English

- **Economy of time and human resources.**

Writing the website also in Spanish would involve double work.

- **Not necessary: the intended audience can understand English**

*All those who may be interested in the content on the page understand English.  
Understanding English is almost a requirement to work in science.*

- **Making students aware that they have to use English when communicating with the disciplinary community**

*We do the seminars in English, because when we have to go to conferences, we have to use English, so it is also a way of getting them used to using only English for professional communication.*

# Websites written only in Spanish

- **Audience:** lay audience; national disciplinary community
- **Content:** videos, links to disseminating websites, non-expert texts

**Aragosaurus:** <http://www.aragosaurus.com/>

## Calidad y Tecnología de la Carne

*We are convinced that our work has to be useful, it should help someone to fatten their calves more efficiently, mature the meat better, learn about chemical composition or find out that the composition of sheep's milk affects the composition of the meat of the lamb, for example. If we want it to be useful for a non-expert audience, it must be in Spanish and the language must be easy to understand.*

- **Why only in Spanish?:** lack of resources

# Websites written in English and Spanish

- The content was intended for a diversified audience, e.g.

## **Mediterranean diet and atherosclerosis.**

- ✓ Spanish: lay audience; impact in South America.
- ✓ English: impact in China and India.

## **Geoforest.** (GEOenvironmental processes in FOREST areas)

- ✓ Spanish: research on issues that have local and national interest. Local audience: local forest managers.
- ✓ English: innovative technologies and methods; international community.

# Conclusions

## **In which languages do research groups at the University of Zaragoza write their websites?**

- 49.24% of the websites in English (25% only in English/ 24.24% both in English and Spanish)
- 49.24% of the websites are written only in Spanish.

## **When both English and the L1 co-exist in a single website, how do these languages interact?;**

- Two versions: websites both in English and Spanish
- Information is mostly written in Spanish, but there is a translation into English
- The website is mainly written in a language, with links to documents in other languages

## **How do the social characteristics of the audience affect the choice of language and formats to disseminate information in research group websites?**

- English → international audience; disciplinary audience
- Spanish → local audience: interested public
- Both versions → diversified audience

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[genresandlanguages.org](http://genresandlanguages.org)

