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DIVER



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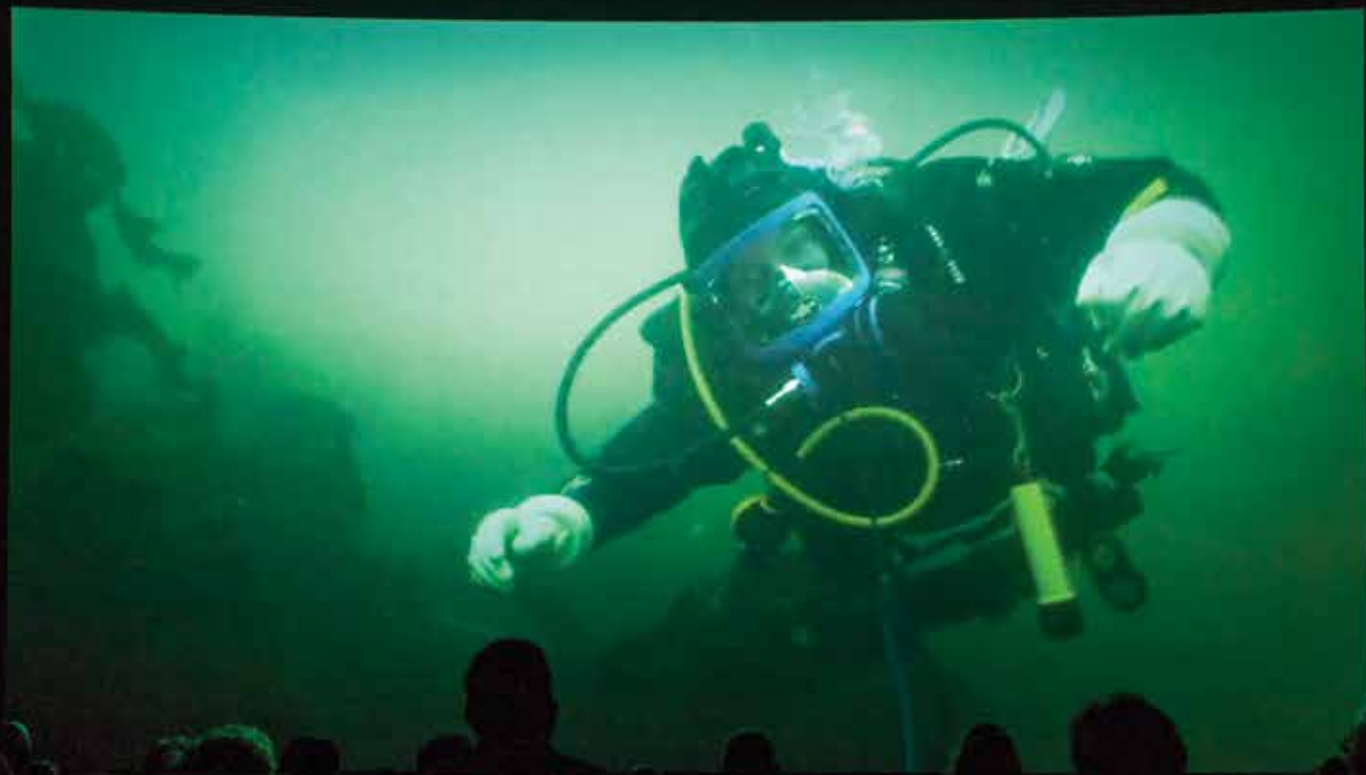
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Fish Eye Project

BY SARAH POLLARD

The Fish Eye Project is a non-profit organization based in Victoria, BC that connects communities to the world's oceans by way of interactive live dives. In 2013, diver Mike Irvine launched Fish Eye with co-founder and ocean educator Maeva Gauthier. The two saw an untapped opportunity to promote ocean literacy by leveraging live-streaming technologies and a unique form of 'edutainment'.

"We started out with just a Go Pro and a tube-ray television," Irvine laughs. From there, Aqua Lung supplied dive gear and supported testing of a first full-face intercom mask. A team of marine educators, dive enthusiasts and dedicated volunteers joined in to help relay live dive events to schools and the public. With links to curriculum, students can now pose questions and chat in real time with divers exploring off Vancouver Island's wonder-rich coastline. To date, Fish Eye has engaged more than 35 countries, hundreds of classrooms and thousands of viewers. Without virtual access, many of the organization's followers around the world would never have the chance to peek beneath the waves—some have never seen an ocean.

In April 2015, Irvine put his marine engagement principles to the test. He opted to defend his Master's thesis from 15 feet below the surface of the Salish Sea. Through videoconferencing, he communicated with his land-based academic supervisors in BC and Alberta, and offered a

simultaneous public webcast; the approach made sense, since his research focused on the use of underwater web cameras and their potential role in education. In retrospect, it was a risky proposition: unpredictable conditions, last-minute tech glitches (requiring a few frenetic hacks) and overwhelming media interest from the likes of the CBC, Huffington Post Canada and Discovery Channel. In the end, more than 8,000 viewers in 15 countries tuned in. The successful live underwater defence—believed to be the first of its kind in the world—helped to put the Fish Eye Project on the map.

Passion keeps the Fish Eye crew curious and on a caffeine-fuelled mission to foster the next generation of marine stewards. A core belief in the value of oceans drives the team. It's carved a path to the most exciting milestone yet: taking live interactive dives to the ultimate big screen, IMAX. The team's crowd-funded participation at the 2015 Giant Screen Cinema Association Conference in San Francisco and a recent full test of the technology with an audience at IMAX Victoria, confirmed global interest in the large-format presentation. Where full-length production moves ahead (anticipated for fall 2016), audiences will get an unprecedented window on our oceans: the ability to see, hear and communicate with divers in real time from dive sites around the world. The technology has the potential to revolutionize the cinematic experience, transforming audiences from passive observers to vital participants. Stay tuned. []