

I have always found the area of astronomy intriguing. When I was in 2nd grade I discovered the NASA website, and on my 7th birthday I got a telescope. So, when the NHD theme came out, I immediately turned to every diplomatic event or debate I could find in the astronomical world. I ultimately chose the debate concerning whether Pluto was a planet and the diplomacy that resulted from it.

In choosing this topic I also took into consideration the amount of information available, and so, I was not surprised to find an excessive amount of information while conducting my research. As I sifted through the information I selectively picked only information that was relevant, and supported my main historical argument, or that provided additional but needed background information. I balanced out my research between many different sources, such as opinion articles in *The Washington Post*, New Mexico's legislature declaring Pluto a planet, and a display at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. I also explored many websites by NASA such as CalTech, and their Solar System Exploration, as well as databases such as NASA's Photojournal, and their Planetary Data System. I also found research papers from various scientists specializing in many different fields of astrological sciences. One of which was written by Jean-Luc Margot and titled, *A Quantitative Criterion for Defining Planets*. This proposes a metric that extends the third criteria that defines planets, by specifying what was seen as vague in the diplomatic resolution.

I presented my project in the form of a website using NHDWeb Central. I began by organizing my content in a way that flowed from one topic to the next, and adjusting the alignment and organization in the website to fit the information. As I wanted to add to the theme of space, I used different hues of navy blue and teal. I also used different fonts to separate the text from quotes.

As science and technology has evolved over the years, it brought the scientific community back to see Pluto through a new light. With increased knowledge and discoveries, the debate concerning whether or not Pluto was a planet escalated. This led to the diplomatic

creation of a new classification system for solar system bodies. This resolution, as the result of the debate, allowed my project to fall under the NHD theme of "Debate and Diplomacy."

Although this resolution accounted for a significant amount of retribution from the academic field, and public alike, it left a lasting impact on the way we view and define our solar system, and resolved the debate.