Lightning talk

Dismantling unhelpful binaries in citizen science: 5 research insights in 5 minutes

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Support from
Melbourne Water
Conversation starter

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researchers vs volunteers

aka *expert vs amateur*

e.g. CitSci conferences
researchers & volunteers

insights

(Monitoring growling grass frogs)

“I'm doing it because I care and because I've got a personal interest in photography and to find these animals. So, that was in my own time. I submitted that information as a volunteer.”

Project organizer MWFC-16
alternatives? work-in-progress

#1. don’t assume differences in expertise & motivations

#2. provide pathways for volunteers who want to do qualitatively more
dabblers vs super contributors

e.g. participation inequality literature
insights

"ideal participants"

difference is qualitative, not quantitative
alternatives?  
work-in-progress

e.g. define and communicate different types of ‘ideal participant’: how can they meaningfully help
individual vs group activities

e.g. apps assume individual user / collector
“I love bird watching with people (...) With frogs, you really need to have yourself and the recorder and silence, except for the frogs.”

Volunteer MWFC-03
"That's probably the rewarding bit: sharing what we've discovered or learned (in the Friends of group)."

Volunteer MWFC-09
alt
ernatives?
work-in-progress

#1. tech platforms allow data points created by a collective

#2. promote sociality even if data collection is individual
nature connection vs disconnection

e.g. programs seeks to "connect people with nature"
"All my life I’ve been a bird watcher."
Volunteer MWFC-08

“I’ve planted millions of trees, in my personal and professional life.”
Staff MWFC-10
alternatives?
work-in-progress

E.g. reframe as "enhance" nature connection to acknowledge histories
digital vs traditional

aka *new vs old*

e.g. ‘next-gen citizen science’
“What digitalization? The transition to emails and digital recorders, or from that to the app?”

Staff MWFC-16
insights

“The app contributes to having more volunteers, but how engaged and at what cost?”

Staff MWFC-15
alternatives?

work-in-progress

#1. don’t assume digital & new is better, or enough to increase participation

#2. mitigate negative consequences of digital changes in volunteers
Binaries are for robots.
Let’s continue the conversation

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