

2021 06 14 Libraries and Citizen Science

Questions from the moderator Barbara Lison

Is citizen science a new wine in an old bottle?

- EH: The approach is not new. The first evidence of the link between citizen science and libraries dates back to the 19th century. However, new opportunities are emerging today, for example through modern technology and as a result of science communication, which dismantles barriers between science and the public and at the same time increases interest in research.
- IH: Yes and no. There is a long tradition in certain fields (Bird & bee counting), but now the participation of citizens in science is broadened. It is not just data collection, but it can also involve data analysis (see various levels of participation mentioned in the presentation). It is also closely linked to the concept of open science, which is a relatively new development.

How to involve children in citizen science?

- EH: This is often a question of "packaging". You can teach children historical handwritings, such as Sütterlin, as a "secret language" and make transcriptions with them or send them on an adventure and find birds/ mosquitos etc (e.g. for Muggenradar / Mückenatlas). In addition, close cooperation with schools are usefull - for example with Citizen Science projects that are aligned with the curriculum.
- IH: In Delft we have the Science Centre, a centre for science education for primary and secondary school children, with a focus on technology & society. Children can participate in several citizen science project here.

Questions and remarks from the chat

<https://ecsa.citizen-science.net/>

Is there a list of public libraries working with citizen science in Europe?

- EH: I am not aware that there is a list of only citizen science projects in public libraries. However, there might be some examples among the SDG projects: <https://www.biblio2030.de/beispielsammlung/> (in German) and EBLIDA lists some best practice examples under each Goal <http://www.eblida.org/activities/the-eblida-matrix.html>
- IH: Not that I know of, but I can refer to the National Library of The Netherlands.

What is FAIR Hardware?

- IH: Making building schemes for hardware (ventilators, centrifuges etc) fair, accessible, interoperable, reusable.

Do library users expect projects like this at their library? Are new people who are not yet library users attracted?

- EH: When I worked in a public library, we had requests from users who would like to pass on their knowledge to others - so the acquisition of knowledge and the publication of one's own research is definitely an issue that people see more in libraries than, for example, in museums. I guess they would not actively search for a citizen science project in a library, but do not seem to be surprised when the library is engaged in such activities. Especially for very local projects, libraries can use their position as local hubs and it feels rather natural that they organize those projects, then a "citywide" institution like a museum. I think that some non-users get a new image of libraries: We provide everything you need to pursue your own research questions and not just novels...
- IH: Difficult to say; I think especially in the heritage tradition (metadating historical material or transcribing manuscripts) they do expect this. Geo-referencing might be new.

I am interested, as well, if there are public libraries working with citizen science projects. The second question is about the categories of citizens involved in these projects. Do they apply as volunteers to libraries? Thank you

- EH: The participants are not necessarily already in the library, whether as users or volunteers. However, I think it is easier to motivate them to join in. The topic / research question is essential for finding the "right" group. In our transcription workshop we have rather older generations, the Panke project aims on school students. The broader the topic and the easier the participation (think about technical barriers!), the more diverse the field of participants.

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The NGO NIDA-net is interested, particularly from the perspective of impact assessment of citizen science in science literacy.

@all: Please have a look to our 'Review' of the 51th BibChatDe "Citizen Science in Bibliotheken" last Monday <https://www.bibchat.de/citizen-science-in-bibliotheken-rueckblick-auf-den-51-bibchatde/>

We feel citizen involvement and participation is vital, most especially at this time when science literacy and appreciation of science may be even more important. An excellent and interesting discussion.

- EH: I absolutely agree!

Thank you, here's an example from Uppsala university that we had a couple of years ago: <https://www.ub.uu.se/about-the-library/courses-and-events/calendar-details/?eventId=38352>.