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What should we give back to our participants? A literature review on citizen scientists' preferences for accessibility of scientific output

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Introduction

- The importance of giving feedback to citizen science participants is widely accepted
- The "Ten principles of citizen science" defined by ECSA also underline the importance of communicating project findings and acknowledging participants
- However, almost no academic paper has specifically investigated this topic into more detail
- Our literature review is an important starting point for research in this direction

"It's not about spending time or money. It's more about the constant feedback to the volunteers that what we're doing is useful and being used." (Rotman et al. 2012: 221)

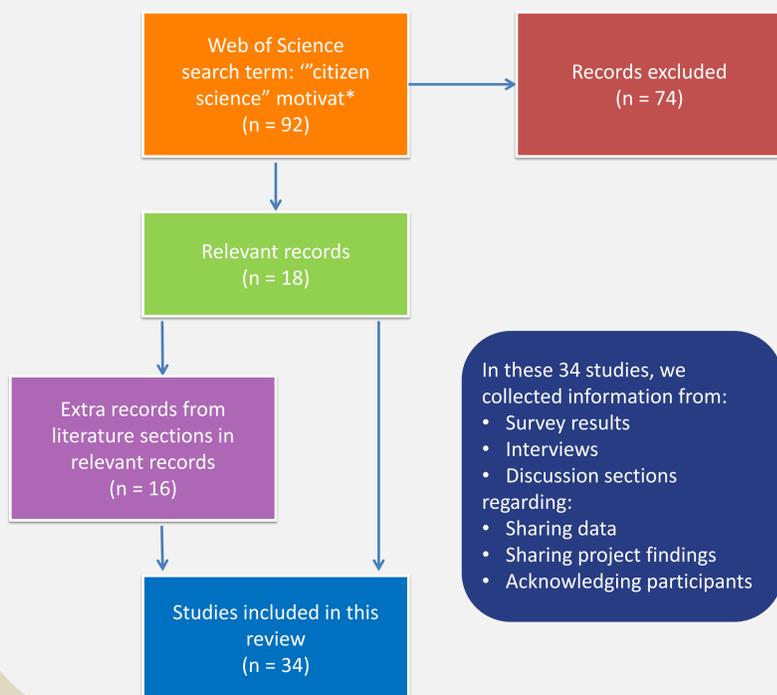
"Just a name and this X and that Y was contributed by this or that person. Something simple... is like a big thing for a normal person, ..., that way we encourage all to do it more ..."

(Rotman et al. 2014: 116)

"There was no feedback and it made me feel as though what I was doing wasn't even for real."

(Baruch, May and Yu 2016: 927)

Method



"People won't come back if there isn't that loop of credibility and things that they can see that are being accomplished as a result of the data that they are collecting." (Rotman et al. 2012: 223)

Results

Participants find sharing data important, examples:

- Ferster et al. (2013): most participants agreed that "Data collected by volunteers should be shared with the volunteers who collected them"
- Ganzevoort et al. (2017): 48.7% of the participants felt that the data from their citizen science project are public good
- Budhathoki and Haythornthwaite (2012): participants on average agreed that their data should be available for free with a score of 6.45 (out of 7)

Participants find sharing project results important, examples:

- Ganzevoort et al. (2017): 69.1% of the participants were interested in getting insight into how others use their data
- Alender (2016): more than 90% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel good when data and/or results are shared with me"
- Baruch, May and Yu (2016): a lack of clarity on how participants' data are used is mentioned by participants as a reason to stop contributing to the project

Participants want to be acknowledged in publications, examples:

- Alender (2016): approximately 40% of the participants found "Name recognition in a scientific publication" meaningful
- Rotman et al. (2012): participants reported that it is important to acknowledge participants when their data are used by scientists for publications

Discussion

- The literature review stresses the importance of communicating project outcomes to participants
- This is in line with the ECSA guidelines and general consensus among project coordinators
- However, our review also illustrates a need for further research on this topic: **no research has been done on how to communicate project outcomes best**
- Future research should study different methods for doing so in order to maximize the impact of citizen science projects