ICTs & cultural heritage institutions: Benefits for citizens

Gillian Oliver, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Outline

- Benefits and successes
- A cautionary tale
- Learnings

Benefits

- Sharing of information
- Broader community/public education
- Social capital
- Inclusivity – citizens included in decision-making/development of new knowledge
- Responsiveness to governmental aims

(adapted from Conrad and Hilchey, 2011, p. 282)

Impressive success stories

- Plenty of them!
  - Creation of a ‘human computational network’ to scan satellite images to locate the lost tomb of Genghis Khan http://natgeotv.com/uk/lost-tomb-of-genghis-khan/videos/citizen-scientists
  - What’s the score at the Bodleian http://www.whats-the-score.org asks for volunteers to help describe their digitised sheet music collection

A Cautionary Tale

- Susceptibility to sabotage – e.g. “of the 200 balloon sightings received by the MIT team in DARPA’s Network Challenge, just 30 to 40 were accurate. Some of the fake reports were utterly convincing, including expertly photoshopped photos” https://medium.com/backchannel/how-a-lone-hacker-shredded-the-myth-of-crowdsourcing-d9d0534f1731
- in crowdsourcing competitions malicious behavior is the norm, not the anomaly (Naroditskiy et al, 2013) http://arxiv.org/abs/1304.3548
- Malicious behaviour in subsequent DARPA challenge – lone hacker, but crowd unable to self correct (Stefanovitch et al, 2014)http://link.springer.com/article/10.1140/epjds/s13688-014-0013-1/fulltext.html

- Success stories reported, hear little or nothing about problems
- Anecdotal evidence only.

Cultural heritage sector experiences

Barriers to participation

- “A few interviewees were interested to upload data in a quick, user-friendly, transparent way, but only where the volunteers were acknowledged and could see their contributions” (Johanson et al. 2013)
- Concerns that contributions are anonymous, no feedback or acknowledgement provided (Ellis and Waterton, 2004; Lawrence and Turnhout, 2005)

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?

- Although we may think, and report in terms of “the crowd” (the bigger the better?)
- The crowd is made up of individuals, likely to have different motivators

Remember we are dealing with individuals

Motivations

- Potential variety of motivations of participants
- Motivations may change over time
- Motivational types:
  - Egoism (goal is to increase own welfare)
  - Altruism (increase welfare of others)
  - Collectivism (increase welfare of own group)
  - Principalism (upholding e.g. justice, equality)

(Rotman et al., 2012)

Objectives

- Clarify institutional/project objectives
- Be aware of potential for mismatch with motivations of participants
- Monitor for signs of disjuncture

Draw on the experiences of others

- Guidelines, protocols developed for working with volunteers
- Participatory research protocols, ethics, guidelines
- Community informatics discipline – emphasis on partnership

Conclusion

- Remember the individual
- Approach from a partnership perspective – treat participants with respect
- Be aware of possible unwanted consequences of incentives/competition
- Be prepared to exchange experiences of what hasn’t worked
- Be alert for the unexpected

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QUESTIONS, COMMENTS?

Gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz