Lightning talk

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

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Support from

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

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dabblers vs super contributors

e.g. participation inequality literature

dabblers &
super contributors

insights

”ideal participants”

difference is qualitative, not quantitative

alternatives?

work-in-progress

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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

individual
& groups

insights

"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

individual
& groups

insights

”That's probably the rewarding bit: sharing what we've discovered or learned (in the Friends of group).”

Volunteer MWFC-09

alternatives?

work-in-progress

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

#2. promote sociality even if data collection is individual

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nature connection vs disconnection

e.g. programs seeks to ”connect people with nature"

nature connection
& disconnection

insights

"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

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digital vs traditional

aka *new vs old*

e.g. ‘next-gen citizen science’

digital &
traditional CitSci

insights

"What digitalization? The transition to emails and digital recorders, or from that to the app?"

Staff MWFC-16

digital &
traditional CitSci

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

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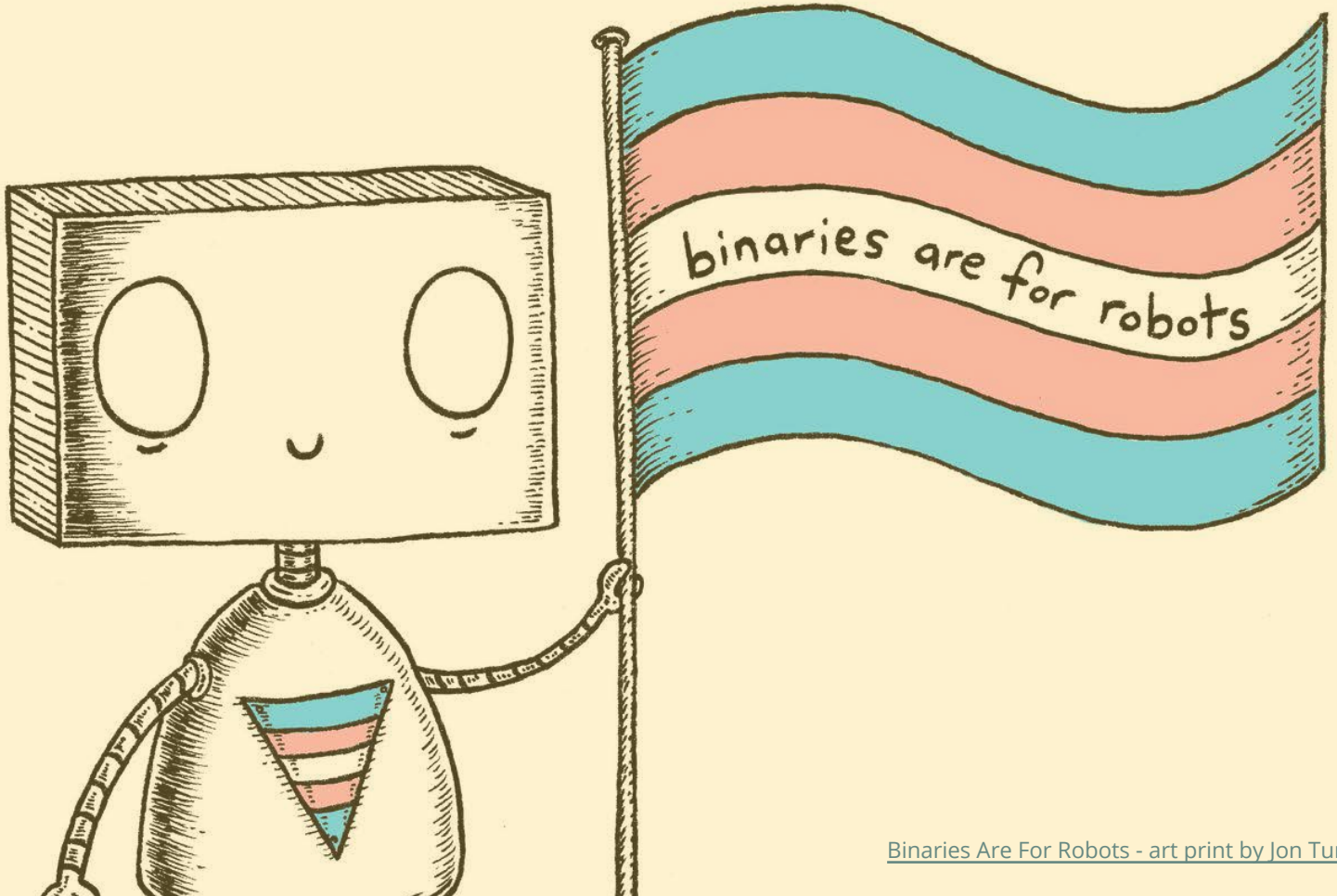
@ParticipatorySc



Binaries Are For Robots - art print by Jon Turner vía Etsy

Let’s continue the conversation

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