Surveying the citizen science landscape

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# Surveying the citizen science landscape

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## Abstract

Citizen science has seen enormous growth in recent years, in part due to the influence of the Internet, and a corresponding growth in interest. However, the few stand-out examples that have received attention from media and researchers are not representative of the diversity of the field as a whole, and therefore may not be the best models for those seeking to study or start a citizen science project. In this work, we present the results of a survey of citizen science project leaders, identifying sub-groups of project types according to a variety of features related to project design and management, including funding sources, goals, participant activities, data quality processes, and social interaction. These combined features highlight the diversity of citizen science, providing an overview of the breadth of the phenomenon and laying a foundation for comparison between citizen science projects and to other online communities.

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## Introduction

Citizen science — research projects engaging the public as contributors to science in fields like astronomy, ecology, and even genomics — has grown in popularity and received a lot of media attention lately. However, much of the attention has focused on a few projects that do not necessarily provide the most appropriate models for those seeking to study or start a citizen science project. This paper provides an empirical foundation for characterizing the diverse phenomenon that is citizen science and describes a breadth of citizen science practice that is much richer than is generally recognized.

Public awareness of citizen science today is generally limited to a few projects. In this, the state