Citizen Science: Use your smart phone to help scientists

Curious Cat Science and Engineering Blog

10 Ways You Can Use Your Smartphone to Advance Science [1] by Matt Soniak
Scientists have started to use the abilities and prevalence of smartphones to their advantage, creating apps specifically for their studies and crowdsourcing observation and data collection. When almost everyone has an Internet connection, a camera, and a GPS unit right in their phone, almost anyone can gather, organize, and submit data to help move a study along.
…
The Indicator Bats Program (iBats) [2], a joint project of the Zoological Society of Londonâ□□s Institute of Zoology and The Bat Conservation Trust, got its start with a couple of researchers working in Transylvania (of course) in 2006. The idea of the project is to identify and monitor bat populations around the world by the ultrasonic echo-location calls they use to navigate and find prey.
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The goal of Project NOAH (Networked Organisms and Habitats) [3] is pretty ambitious: â□□build the go-to platform for documenting all the worldâ□□s organisms.â□□ Their app has two modes. â□□Spottingsâ□□ lets you take photos of plants and animals you see, categorize and describe them and then submit the data for viewing on NOAHâ□□s website and use by researchers for population and distribution studies.
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Invasive plants and animals can crowd out natives, compete with them for food sources and alter the fire ecology of an ecosystem, disrupting its natural balance. Researchers and programmers from UCLA, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the University of Georgia have teamed up to create the Whatâ□□s Invasive citizen science program [4] and smartphone app. Volunteers can use the app to look up lists of the top invasive species in their area, created by National Park Service rangers and biologists. If they spot a plant or animal from the list, they submit a geo-tagged observation, with optional picture and text notes, so that scientists can locate, identify, study try to remove the species.

Great stuff.

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Links:
[1] http://www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/133598
[2] http://www.ibats.org.uk/

[3] http://www.projectnoah.org/
[4] http://www.whatsinvasive.com/