Interview study: Mobile phones and technology in conservation community relations

Invitation letter for potential participants • Spring 2021

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Overview / Goals

We are conducting a study to learn about different ways that wildlife conservancies, marine parks, and other environmental institutions around the world use mobile phones and technology in their interactions with local communities.

We hope to interview community-facing staff from different types of environmental institutions around the world to learn about the variety of ways that they use mobile phones in their jobs. This will hopefully offer insights for conservation strategies and community development, and ideas for future technology improvements that benefit conservancy staff and local communities.

For example, this study follows our earlier work with Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Laikipia, Kenya, exploring basic phone technologies like SMS hotlines and USSD apps to improve community engagement. We hope to get ideas from how other environmental institutions currently use mobile phones, and brainstorm about technology projects that might be helpful for community relations in other places.

Short video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRryk_xUMkk

10-page publication: https://mattziegler.net/papers/Ol-Pejeta-Phones-COMPASS2020.pdf

Participation

We are recruiting participants who regularly interact with local community members, while working at environmental institutions like wildlife conservancies, marine protected areas, government environmental departments, or NGO's active in community-based conservation.

We expect each interview to take around 90 minutes, using Zoom or another software that the participant prefers.

Participants will each be compensated $10 USD for their time. (Due to the complexities of international money transfers, we will work with each participant to find an acceptable way to make the compensation payment, which could include mobile top-ups or gift cards.)

We intend to publish our findings in a scientific journal, and all participants will be sent a draft of the publication for review and have at least 2 weeks to optionally give feedback or suggest revisions, to make sure we represent their views accurately and fairly. Each participant will then receive a copy of the final document.

Interview topics

The interview topics will cover:
- The participants' work
- Interactions with local community members
- Roles of mobile phones in community relations
- Current communication challenges
- Shifts in community relations due to covid-19
- Technology ideas for community engagement

Privacy

Each participant will have the option to participate anonymously without using their name, or optionally to have their name included in the acknowledgements section of the final publication.

The results will generally be reported for the group of participants as a whole, without identifying which participant gave each response, quote, or story.

Participants will all be given a draft copy of the final report, and have at least 2 weeks to request any redactions or give feedback.

Contact

If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact Matt Ziegler:
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