



University of Dundee

Citizen Science Projects (MOOC) 4.8

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Publication date:
2020

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Citation for published version (APA):

Woods, M., Coulson, S., Ajates, R., Amditis, A., Cobley, A., Domian, D., Hager, G., Ferri, M., Fraisl, D., Fritz, S., Gold, M., Karitsioti, N., Masó, J., McCallum, I., Tomei, G., Monego, M., Moorthy, I., Prat, E., Tsertou, A., ... Wehn, U. (2020). Citizen Science Projects (MOOC) 4.8: Tool in focus: Future newspaper. WeObserve.

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Tool in focus: Future Newspaper

##Why is it helpful?

There are no formulas for coming up with creative ideas, but sometimes thinking about the future can help us find new solutions for current issues. The Future Newspaper tool can assist you in thinking about what you can do now, and who else you can involve, to arrive at the future you want to see.

##Description

With so many uncertainties, creating an action plan can often feel like a daunting task. The Future Newspaper tool helps kick-start a creative process by asking participants to imagine a variety of desirable futures. Then, by working backwards from those visions, participants can articulate the conditions, resources, stakeholders and events which might help lead to those outcomes. These can then become discussion points which the community can vote on to create actions and interventions.

##Key Question

Is there a newspaper headline which reflects the desired future of your citizen science project?

##Time needed

60-90 Minutes

##Who should be included?

Facilitators, participants, external experts

##Number of people required

2 - 20 people (max recommended if the facilitator is running the session for the first time).

##Resources needed

Future Newspaper canvas (or A1 sheet of blank paper), markers, sticky notes and sticker dots

##How to prepare?

Find a space with a few tables and chairs where people can sit comfortably for two hours. Having enough room to be able to give each table a bit of space is important too. Try to limit each group/table to five people max.

Print the Future Newspaper canvas, available

[here](<https://discovery.dundee.ac.uk/en/publications/future-newspaper-tool>). Supply markers, pens, and sticky notes to each table but keep the canvas off to the side for the start of the activity.

##Steps:

1. Divide participants into groups of three to five. Give each group a Future Newspaper canvas (or A1 sheet of blank paper) and sticky notes for writing down ideas and notes. If using the A1 sheet of blank paper, sketch out the front page of a newspaper, leave space for a headline, date, body of text and an illustration or two.
2. Have each group come up with a newspaper headline which reflects a desired future of the citizen science project. It is often easier for participants to start from the landmark change they want to see in the context of their lives or the campaign they are doing. Headlines can be as realistic or outlandish as you want: however, this choice will have a direct impact on the ideas generated after.
3. Have each group consider: How do we get to that future? Using the canvas, have participants think about, discuss and plan what resources, conditions, people and events have to come together in order to reach the future they have envisioned. Record your ideas in section 4 of the template.

4. Share all the Future Newspapers, and after a brief presentation and discussion on the merits of each, a round of sticker-dot voting can help reach a consensus on which route to take.

The Future Newspaper tool was used by the Making Sense project, a description of the original tool can be found in (Citizen Sensing: A Toolkit)[<https://doi.org/10.20933/100001112>]. It was also used by the GROW Observatory. It is shared under the Creative Commons license CC BY-SA.

##Let us know your thoughts!

Have you tried this activity out? If so, please let us know how it went and what you learned. Do you have any tips for others who want to use this tool?

Please share on

[Twitter](<https://twitter.com/WeObserveEU>),

[Facebook](<https://www.facebook.com/WeObserveEU/>) and

[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/weobserve_eu/)

using the hashtag #CitizenScienceMOOC.

Resources:

Woods, M., Coulson, S., Ajates, R., Balestrini, M., Bejtullahu, S., Bocconi, S., Boerwinkel, G., Boonstra, M., Boschman, D-S., Camprodon, G., Diez, T., Fazey, I., Hemment, D., van den Horn, C., Ilazi, T., Jansen-Dings, I., Kresin, F., McQuillan, D., Nascimento, S., ... Seiz, G. (2020, Oct). Future Newspaper Tool. University of Dundee. <https://doi.org/10.20933/100001179>