



COLLEGE OF
INFORMATION
STUDIES

Tales of the Field: *Citizen Science Edition*

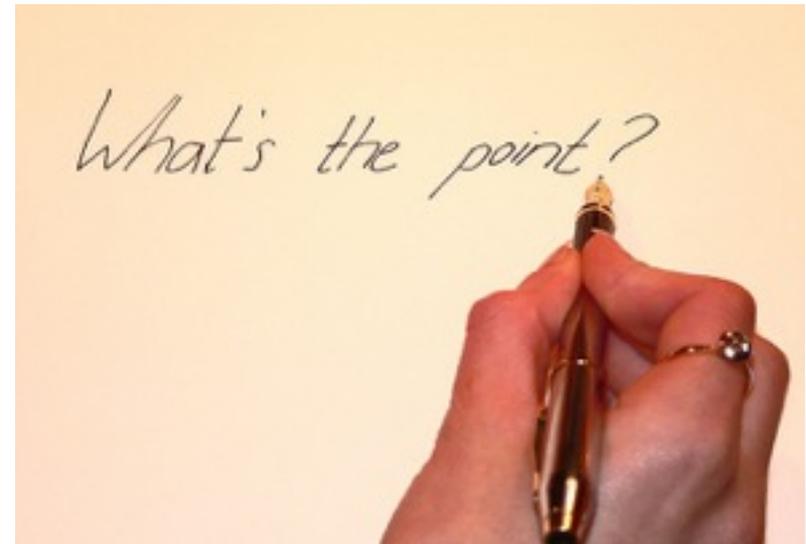
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Take-Aways

- Design is important
- Quality is crucial
- Everything is social
- Nothing is free



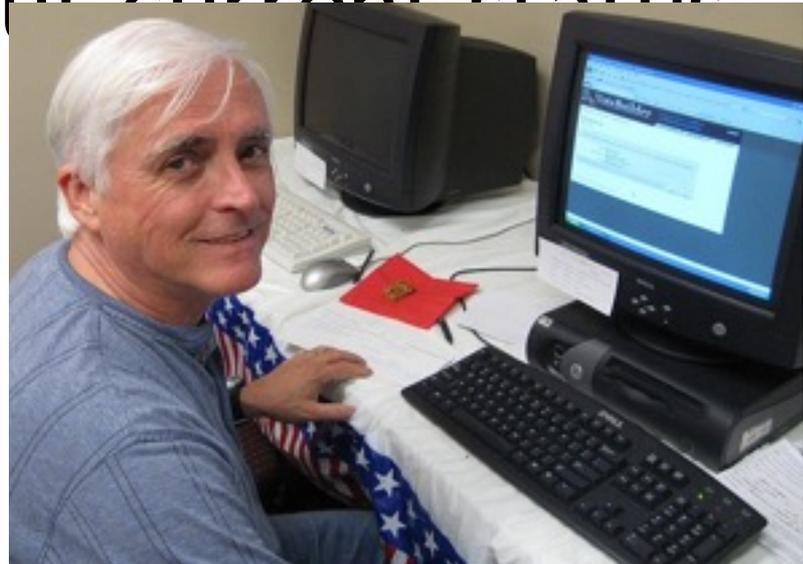
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/skipnclick/2945026921/>

Design is Important: Easy

- Interfaces, uploads, exports, APIs
- Plain-language policies & processes
- Transparency about current status



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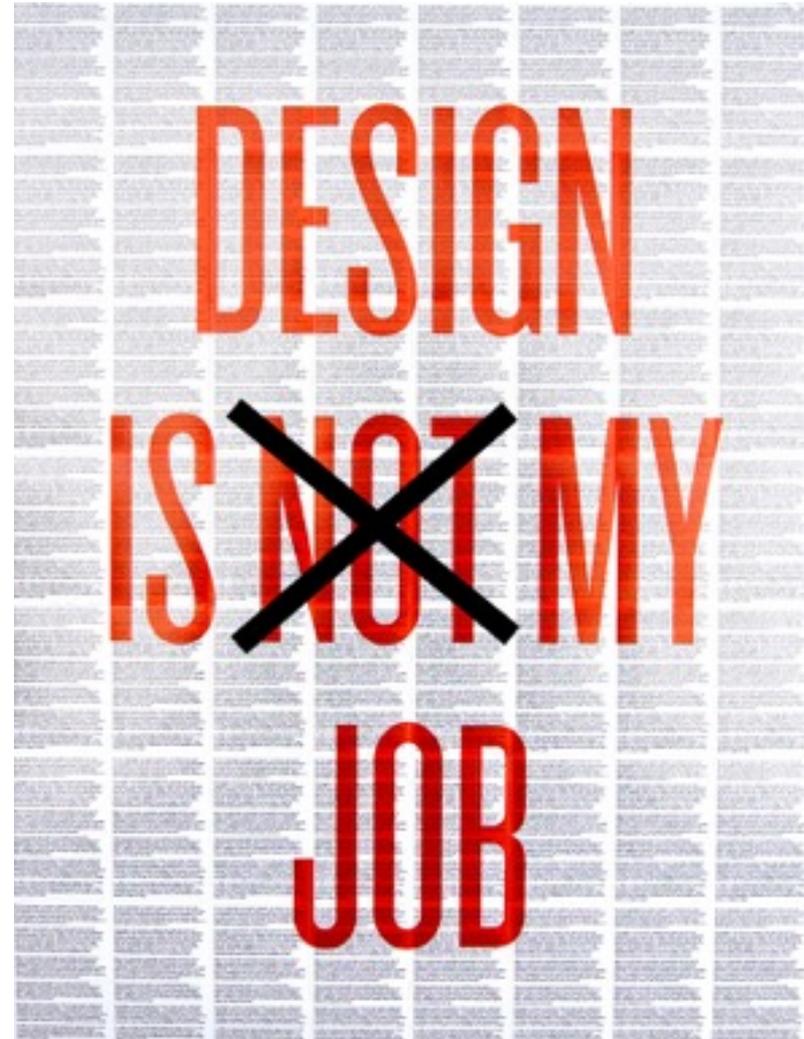
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/crownjewel82/2892965663/>

Design is Important: Easy

“We were really disappointed... but it led to these discussions about, okay, well what can we do? ... We started having these talks about, **what are we actually asking them to do?** We're asking them to do a **bunch of difficult tasks...**”

Design is Important: Flexible

- People do... unexpected things
- Be ready to work with what you get
- Be ready to make (big) adjustments



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/andymangold/4335799638/>

Design is Important: Flexible

“It’s sort of crazy, what can happen. I’m **still surprised by the growth** that's happening. That we could effectively have another 20,000 people signing up this year, **because we’re changing models this year, so we did no promotion.**”

Quality is Crucial: Stewardship

- Accept all data & learn how to use it
- Think through errors in advance
- Filter, review, and ensure provenance
- Invest in data management



Quality is Crucial: Stewardship

People go to so much trouble to collect this information... [they ask] how do I know you vette records adequately, and **why should I bother participating unless you do?** Once they can see that, that is a tipping point.

Everything is Social: Reassurance

- Tell them they're doing it right
- Tell them what they're doing matters
- Show them how you're using data



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/smiteme/2379630899/>

Everything is Social: Reassurance

“Innumerable people respond...
‘I've been so depressed about bees
and conservation, **I feel so good
that I can do something to help**’
... The older people **lack
computer literacy** but...giving
them some **empowerment really,
really resonates.**”

Everything is Social: Respect

- Give people control & ownership of their own data
- Ensure privacy safeguards



Everything is Social: Respect

“This data that I take care of is among **the most loved data anywhere**. People have spent just millions of hours of accumulating it. It's really irreplaceable. And **they're passionate about it**...People are doing this because they love it.”

Nothing is Free: Reciprocity

- Provide ways to visualize, explore, & compare data
- Provide multiple forms of recognition
- Provide ways to be heard



Nothing is Free: Reciprocity

“It **satisfies a sort of selfish desire** for them. They're using it mostly because **they like what it's doing for them**. It's not, ‘I like contributing data.’ ...

What can you provide to people that gives them the benefit that they want?”

Nothing is Free: Sustainability

- Expect & plan for participant churn
- Create avenues for individual & community growth
- Plan for the end before it's in sight



Nothing is Free: Sustainability

“[Projects with] that balanced perspective of science plus education...have a wider **variety of funding sources**... And that brings up sustainability, if you're just relying on grants, **how long is the project going to last when the grants go away?**”

Thanks!

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Photo: Trish Mace