

**GUIDE TO**

**CITIZEN  
SCIENCE**



# 01 | Citizen Science

## Interview Partners

Tobias Reckling, Cultural Heritage 2.0, University of Vienna

Dr. Florian Heigl, Co-Founder and Co-Coordinator of the Citizen Science Plattform Österreich forscht and Citizen Science Network Austria

## | The interview

*Florian, you founded the Citizen Science Platform in 2017 together with Daniel Dörler. What fascinates you so much about Citizen Science that you spend so much time on this topic?*

We founded the platform *Österreich forscht* in our free time during our PhD in 2014. Back then we launched our own first citizen science projects and were fascinated how motivated citizen scientists contributed to our project and how open and supportive the Austrian citizen science community is. During the last years we learned a lot from the different disciplines involved in citizen science.

*In our project Cultural Heritage 2.0 we worked with so called “future scenarios” for cultural heritage institutions. One of these scenarios foresaw a much more intensive participation of the public in Cultural Heritage institutions. Citizen Science is already a quite established way of letting the public participate in the (scientific) creation process. By focusing on a specific CS project like your project Roadkill: could you walk us through the process of setting up and managing a CS project? What are important challenges for such CS projects?*

It is not possible to give a general answer here, because it depends very much on the individual project. For example, our project Roadkill, which was started as a student project without funding. That's very unusual and I wouldn't make that a general recommendation. Before you set up a project, you must think about whether the question is suitable for citizen science at all, or whether a conventional method would be better suited or more efficient. This is because citizen science is very time-consuming, especially in terms of communication, but also in terms of community management. In addition, you should think carefully about which target group you need to answer the research question and how you can reach this target group.

*Now we are especially interested in the technical side of things. Apps or websites are often used for CS projects. Are there already any international standards? Are there already established tools/resources one can use? Or is each website or app programmed individual?*

No standards are in place, but there are several big apps or platforms you can use for data collection, like SPOTTERON or iNaturalist. For analyzing pictures or videos, the platform Zooniverse became very popular. When planning a project, we recommend searching for similar projects, where you possibly can use the tools and don't have to program something new, which is very expensive or time consuming.

*Now not only technical issues are something to overcome, legal and ethical aspects have also become something which has to be considered, e.g., regarding rights of data etc. If a group of students or researchers would want to start such a project, where could they find help?*

I would recommend having a look at our Austrian citizen science platform *Österreich forscht* ([www.citizen-science.at](http://www.citizen-science.at)) where you can find a lot of resources and guidelines which support you in planning a citizen science project. We even have a mentoring network especially for these requests.

# 01



**INTERVIEW**