



DATASHIFT

CHIMP & SEE **CROWDSOURCED** **MICROTASKING** **PLATFORM**

CASE STUDY

INITIATIVE NAME:
CHIMP & SEE

ONLINE PRESENCE:
WWW.CHIMPANDSEE.ORG

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE:
AFRICA

A citizen science project, Chimp & See seeks to study the lives of chimpanzees in order to better understand new ideas about human origins. It aims to document these populations to encourage conservation and protection measures. Chimp & See is a crowdsourced, microtasking platform that reaches out to people from around the world to help them study over 7,000 hours of footage collected from across Africa. After creating an account on Chimp & See, volunteers scan videos, annotating species and their behaviour, and even help in identifying (and “naming”) chimps.

When scientists study the human species, they often look to the closest living relative – the chimpanzee. The behaviour patterns of these chimps “can tell us quite a bit about how the earliest hominid lived and evolved”.¹ Wanting to better understand this connection, this new Chimp & See project aims to better document chimp behaviour, relationships and environments to extrapolate new ideas about human origins. This documentation of wildlife and biodiversity will inform conservation and other advocacy initiatives to protect the chimps’ habitat.

A junior scientist and project manager for the Pan African Programme: The Cultured Chimpanzee,² Mimi Arandjelovic explains that, “in addition to knowing which videos contain chimpanzees for further analyses on chimpanzee behaviour and tool use, the results will also tell us about the chimpanzee predator density at each site (leopards), the density of certain prey animals (monkeys), the human pressure at each site and the density of species that are food competitors with chimpanzees (elephants, pigs, monkeys and more)”.³ This information and documentation improves records of biodiversity and species ranges and helps in identifying indicator species, or sensitive species that act as early warnings.⁴

In a collaborative effort from the people at the Pan African Programme,⁵ Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology,⁶ Zooniverse,⁷ along with tens of supporting organisations,⁸ the citizen science project Chimp & See was launched on April 22nd, 2015 in celebration of Earth Day.⁹

1 <http://www.chimpandsee.org/#/about>

2 <http://www.chimpandsee.org/#/about/team>

3 Lisa Feldkamp, “You Can Help Chimps by Watching Videos”, June 23, 2015, accessed December 9, 2015, <http://blog.nature.org/science/2015/06/23/citizen-science-chimps-see-zooniverse-mammals-camera-traps/>

4 Ibid.

5 As described on the Chimp & See site, the Pan African Programme: The Cultured Chimpanzee (PanAf), based out of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, aims to understand the ecological and evolutionary parameters that have contributed to behavioural and cultural diversity in chimpanzees. For this, the programme has been collecting systematic ecological, social, demographic and behavioural data on 40 chimpanzee populations spread out over their whole natural range.

6 The Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology unites scientists with various backgrounds (natural sciences and humanities) whose aim is to investigate the history of humankind from an interdisciplinary perspective with the help of comparative analyses of genes, cultures, cognitive abilities, languages and social systems of past and present human populations as well as those of primates closely related to human beings.

7 According to the Chimp & See site, the Zooniverse and the suite of projects it contains is produced, maintained and developed by the Citizen Science Alliance. The member institutions of the CSA work with many academic and other partners around the world to produce projects that use the efforts and ability of volunteers to help scientists and researchers deal with the flood of data that confronts them.

8 <http://www.chimpandsee.org/#/about/organizations>

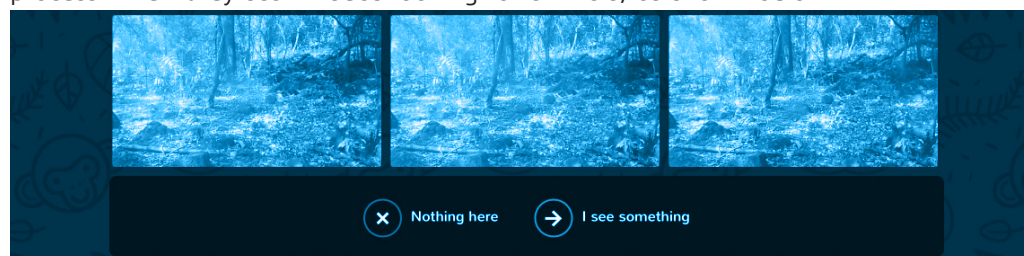
9 <http://daily.zooniverse.org/2015/04/23/new-project-chimp-see/>

To prepare for the project, the team collected nearly 7,000 hours of footage from camera traps in 15 countries in Africa. The footage documents various chimpanzee habitats. Given that the sheer amount of video content is too massive for one organisation to analyse, the team decided to turn to the crowd for support, breaking down this daunting project into more manageable “micro tasks”. The platform is powered by the micro-tasking technology Pybossa.¹⁰

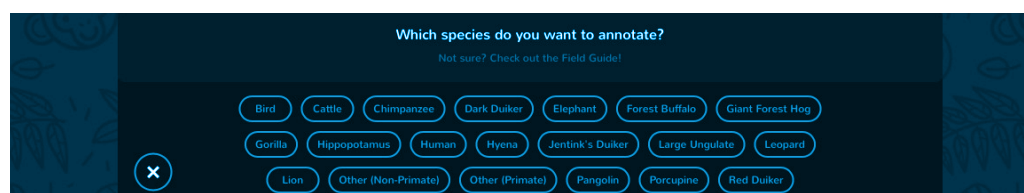
The Chimp & See platform appeals to volunteer “citizen scientists” to interpret the video footage. These volunteers scan snippets of the videos to identify the types of species and the activities realised. The observations documented help researchers narrow down on videos that contain chimps displaying behaviours similar to those of early humans so they can study these videos in more detail.¹¹

BECOMING A CHIMP & SEE VOLUNTEER

A volunteer citizen scientist - or user of the platform - can begin marking videos and chimp behaviour in a few quick steps with Chimp & See. The user takes a three-minute tutorial that brings them through the Chimp & See platform and process. Then they scan videos looking for animals, as shown below.



If the user sees an animal, they begin to annotate. They click the buttons to mark the species, the species behaviour and (only for chimps) their age and sex.



As multiple people will watch and mark each video, it is important that each user gives their best guess. If they need help in identifying the species, there is a field guide button that provides them with photos and information for the different animals.

¹⁰ Learn more about the popular crowd-sourcing, micro-tasking platform on <http://pybossa.com/>

¹¹ Lisa Feldkamp, “You Can Help Chimps by Watching Videos”, June 23, 2015, accessed December 9, 2015, <http://blog.nature.org/science/2015/06/23/citizen-science-chimps-see-zooniverse-mammals-camera-traps/>

As a special incentive, the user can help out even more by identifying individual chimps. If they are the first one to spot this chimp, then they have the honour of giving the chimp a “name”.¹² Moreover, users have the support of fellow volunteer citizen scientists, chatting to them on Chimp & See’s Talk site¹³ and the community-led Blog.¹⁴

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12 <http://www.chimpandsee.org/#/about>

13 Find the Talk site here: <http://talk.chimpandsee.org/>

14 Find the Blog here: <http://chimpandsee.blogspot.de/>

DataShift is a multi-stakeholder, demand-driven initiative that builds the capacity and confidence of civil society to produce and use citizen-generated data to monitor sustainable development progress, demand accountability and campaign for transformative change. Ultimately, our vision is a world where people-powered accountability drives progress on sustainable development.

DataShift is an initiative of **CIVICUS**, in partnership with **the engine room** and **Wingu**. For more information, visit www.thedatashift.org or contact datashift@civicus.org.

