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Project Title

Technical Communicators within Environmental Organizations: An Analysis on the Impacts of Their Role in the Success of Environmental Efforts

Proposal

This project investigates the role and impact of technical communicators within two environmental organizations: Leave No Trace and The Nature Conservancy. It analyses their efforts and impacts on the global community to produce successful advocacy, outreach, and inclusivity for environmental justice. The project aims to engage with current technical communicators within both organizations and reflect the success of their environmental efforts by presenting data and material from their social media platforms, online representations, local and global events, and interviews from current technical communicators.

Background

Environmental justice has become a significant topic of debate. Pinpointing successful environmental efforts is crucial to its continued success. Many organizations focus entirely on advocating for environmental causes, and two such organizations have gained a reputation that puts them in the forefront of the work: Leave No Trace and The Nature Conservancy. To see environmental impacts globally or even nationally, it is necessary for purposeful action and connection to take place. The role of technical communicators within environmental organizations then becomes more important than ever in shaping environmental action.

Technical communicators act as mediators within organizations. For environmental agencies, they represent the company and work as advocates for environmental change. They use appropriate language, formatting, and participatory design to help organizations stand out and be successful in their efforts.

In the recent past, many barriers have been present that prohibited the effective communication of environmental efforts. A lack of social media and online outlets prevented widespread promotion of environmental tactics and advocacy work. With the construct of such an online presence, communication efforts can reach farther and garner more attention from audiences or

organizations that wish to participate in environmental change. If change is going to happen, finding productive ways to educate and provide outreach, especially through means of connection and empathy, will be paramount. The role of technical communicators within these environmental contexts leads to appropriate and beneficial environmental action. With the emergence of the internet and social media platforms, writing has taken on a new form that allows users and readers to connect with material they search for or that has importance to them. Technical communicators can act as the middleman to connect these users with important action steps for environmental change, whether that be through communicating with other professionals or someone with a new, casual interest in environmental justice.

Many scholars have already begun looking into the social construct of environmental communication as it relates to environmental justice and sustainability efforts (Edwards 2023). They have demonstrated a clear need for technical communicators to address environmental injustices through effectively communicating between environmental organizations and outside parties. The theoretical framework that makes up this study would emphasize sociocultural traditions to represent success in environmental efforts through technical communications.

Methodology

This analysis would employ multiple methods to look at the role of technical communicators within the organizations Leave No Trace and The Nature Conservancy and determine their success in environmental efforts such as advocacy, outreach, and inclusivity for environmental justice. It would address theoretical perspectives of environmental communication through research of scholarly articles and interviews with current technical communicators working in these two environmental organizations. It would utilize information and communication technology (ICT), namely integrated assessment models, to address areas of success (Pereira 1999). This research would help to establish the theoretical framework for effective communication leading to successful environmental efforts.

The study would also collect data and material from the organization's social media platforms, online representations, and local and global events to present evidence of success of the organizations' visions for environmental action. Because these organizations rely heavily on connection to represent global environmental efforts, it is essential for them to utilize online platforms to reach their audiences. Collecting data from this online presence will be necessary to determine success. The data gathered will be translated and analyzed to uncover successful efforts of communication as they relate to the technical communicators who expressly worked with the promotional material. The project would consider the precautionary principle as a framework of orientation as it applies to data dissemination through both organizations (Som 2009). The entire analysis will reflect efforts made by both organizations within the last 5 years and scholarly articles with relevant information to the study.

Timeline:

Starting May 2024 and going through August 2024 during the summer C semester

-Work with Leave No Trace to conduct interviews with their technical communicators and gather data from their current online platforms and from past local and global events from the last 5 years.

-Work with The Nature Conservancy to conduct interviews with their technical communicators and gather data from their current online platforms and from past local and global events from the last 5 years.

-Analyze interviews, data, and scholarly articles within the theoretical framework to highlight key areas of successful environmental effort.

-Organize analysis to draw a clear conclusion of success.

Expected Outcome

After completing this analysis, the research and data will be compiled into an undergraduate research article to share with staff and community members through the Showcase of Undergraduate Research at the University of Central Florida in the Spring of 2025 during Student Research Week. It will also be published in the Undergraduate Research Journal. The analysis would be easily accessible for anyone looking to further pursue interests or information in technical communication and environmental justice.

The results of this analysis project will provide clear examples of how organizations like Leave No Trace and The Nature Conservancy are paving the way through the utilization of technical communications for successful environmental efforts through their work in social media, online representations, and live events. By taking the time to interview technical communicators and observing their contributions, the analysis would be able to provide data that represented outcomes and strategies for effective advocacy, outreach, and inclusivity for environmental justice. Ultimately, this project's purpose is to showcase the importance and significance of technical communications relating to successful environmental endeavors. It is an essential analysis that offers insight into how society, and students alike, must demonstrate adaptability to make progress toward reversing and calling attention to the destruction and degradation in our environment. Studying the online data will provide new information and awareness of successful designs, blueprints, and interactions of technical communicators within these two organizations as they work to educate and inform the global population on the necessities of purposeful action toward environmental issues. This would greatly enhance the work of other technical communicators participating in similar organizations, or even organizations that simply wish to be more environmentally ethic and aware. It would also benefit UCF students looking to pursue careers in technical communications or those who have a significant online presence and speak out for the environment.

Literature Review

Ambrose, G. "Exploring Collaboration Dynamics and Representation in Environmental Justice Councils." Public Administration (2023). Print.

Edwards, DW, B Gelms, and R Shivener. "Infrastructural Storytelling: A Methodological Approach for Narrating Environmental (in)Justice in Technical and Professional Communication." Technical Communication Quarterly 32.3 (2023): 242-53. Print.

Hartlieb, S, and B Jones. "Humanising Business through Ethical Labelling: Progress and Paradoxes in the Uk." Journal of Business Ethics 88.3 (2009): 583-600. Print.

Lennerfors, TT, P Fors, and J van Rooijen. "Ict and Environmental Sustainability in a Changing Society the View of Ecological World Systems Theory." Information Technology & People 28.4 (2015): 758-74. Print.

Pereira, AG, C Gough, and B De Marchi. "Computers, Citizens and Climate Change: The Art of Communicating Technical Issues." International Journal of Environment and Pollution 11.3 (1999): 266-89. Print.

Restrepo-Mieth, A, et al. "Community-Based Participatory Climate Action." Global Sustainability 6 (2023). Print.

Som, C, LM Hilty, and AR Köhler. "The Precautionary Principle as a Framework for a Sustainable Information Society." Journal of Business Ethics 85 (2009): 493-505. Print.

Preliminary Work and Experience

Extensive research has already been established that outlines the goals, visions, and missions of the organizations Leave No Trace and The Nature Conservancy. Online resources have been scouted and summarized and preliminary data has been observed.

Mariah Martin, a student at University of Central Florida, has a current bachelor's degree in public health from the University of South Florida with a concentration in global health. She is finishing up her last year of college, pursuing her second bachelor's degree as a technical communicator. She will then pursue her master's degree in technical communication from UCF in the Fall of 2025. She is currently enrolled in Global Literature and Environmental Justice and has done thorough research on the foundations that literature and communication provide to environmental efforts. She has experience communicating complex information to multiple audiences as well as experience coordinating appropriate communications with large, varying groups of people through her work as a Program Specialist.

This project will require IRB approval.

Budget

Print Costs: $300 for collecting data and making prints and photocopies of necessary articles and online information.

Communication Costs: $53.32 (13.33x4 months) for hosting online meetings via zoom and storing relevant data.

Total Amount: $353.32

Fund Amount $360.00