HOW KNOWING THE PURPOSE OF MAPPING IMPACTS THE MAP AND MAPPERS THEMSELVES

Research Questions

The opportunity presented through the YouthMappers network of chapters to engage university students in authentic, open humanitarian mapping raises important questions about how to guide the quality and productivity of volunteer spatial contributions while providing a valuable learning experience. It presents the unique chance to pique new mappers’ interest, satisfaction, and confidence in spatial technologies in particular, and technology in general. Moreover, connecting to the community mapping and using OpenStreetMap could spark interest in the people and places served by humanitarian mapping projects. Our study asks, what is the effect of sharing authentic contextual information about the purpose of humanitarian mapping tasks on new mappers’ performance, motivation, and empathy?

Methodology

Beginner mappers, 42 students with no prior experience, were given the same location to map on OSM, organized into 2 groups where only one group was provided information about the location and humanitarian purpose of the task.

Results

Informed mappers reported greater satisfaction, believed they mapped more edits, and thought their work was done better (but it was not)

Humanitarian mapping might be a creative way to introduce general science and technology material to new students

Informed mappers significantly changed their ideas about importance of being a global citizen and giving back after building the map

References & Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

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Full Results are published as


Main Study References


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Discussion & Conclusions

Informed mappers made a similar number but more types of error

Beware of the Do-Good Effect: beginner humanitarian mappers might believe they are doing well just because they are doing good

Uninformed mappers grew less positive about technology in general but still grew more positive about mapping

Informed mappers are significantly more likely to say technology as a whole benefits society afterwards

Knowing the purpose of technical tasks promotes reflection on affective aspects of learning

Informed mappers became less negative about their interest in how do other people feel

What must we learn next?

- Our small sample size of student population limits generalizability and the study needs to be scaled up.
- The many possible configurations of participants, themes, and sites presents a complex landscape for contextualization and the study should be replicated in new places.
- Gender differences in this study were not detected among respondents but might emerge within scaled up, replicated research.

Could humanitarian mapping become a start to teach empathy?

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