



Job Description

Research Assistant – Extreme Citizen Science Group

Grade: 6B spine point 24
Fixed term for 1 year, 0.5FTE

Department: Geography

Location: UCL Campus, London

Reports to

Prof. Muki Haklay / Dr Megan Laws & Marcos Moreu

Context

The Extreme Citizen Science: Analysis and Visualisation (ECSAnVis) is a five-year, €2.5M project funded by the [European Research Council](#), which aims to develop geographical analysis and visualisation tools that can be used, successfully, by non-literate people and any other community in culturally appropriate ways and in accordance with their needs. We currently work predominantly with indigenous communities in knowledge co-production practices to address problems and issues that are important to them, in some of the most critical environments on Earth.

The interdisciplinary Extreme Citizen Science (ExCiteS) research group is situated within the Department of Geography. The group was formed in 2011 by Prof. Muki Haklay (Department of Geography), Dr. Jerome Lewis (Department of Anthropology), and Dr. Claire Ellul (Department of Civil and Geomatic Engineering) as an interdisciplinary initiative to push the boundaries of citizen science to explore how we use and understand the world around us.

The ECSAnVis project builds on the EPSRC-funded [ExCiteS project](#) [2011-2016] which demonstrated how non-literate people and those with limited technical literacy can successfully participate in formulating research questions and collecting the data that is important to them. In a growing number of cases we negotiated challenging environmental conditions via the development and use of appropriate participatory methods (from various disciplines; e.g. participatory observation, participatory mapping etc.), hardware solutions (e.g. for charging phones in places where there is no electricity), and software, which includes:

- [Sapelli](#): a mobile data collection and sharing platform;
- [Geokey](#), a sophisticated back-end solution to support participatory mapping;
- [Community Maps](#): participatory mapping platform to visualise data collected by the users.
- [Sapelli Designer](#): an accessible web platform for creating Sapelli (.sap) projects
- [Sapelli Viewer](#): a mobile (online/offline) data visualisation and analysis platform

The group has developed a robust methodology centred on free and prior informed consent (FPIC) principles around the use of the tools.

More information can be found on <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/excites> The group's cross-cutting research on citizen science methods and technologies offer exciting opportunities for innovative research.

The Department of Geography

The Department of Geography is committed to the values of equality, diversity and inclusion and we have an active Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and networks for BME, LGBTQ, and disabled/neurodiverse staff and students. The Department recognises the importance of family-friendly working and we try, as far as possible, to organise meetings and events with staff responsibilities as parents and carers in mind. The Department currently holds an Athena Swan Bronze award and is working towards a Silver award. Above all the Department aims to be a supportive environment for both its staff and students. More information can be found here: <https://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/>

We particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates, especially women, as they are under represented within UCL at this level.

[Conditions of service for research, teaching and professional services staff](#)
[UCL staff benefits](#)

Main purpose of the job / job description

This is a fixed term, part time position (0.5FTE equal to 2.5 days/week), duration 12 months. Appointment to be taken up from May 2021 or as soon as possible.

The Research Assistant will work on the ECSAnVis project, primarily under the direct supervision of Dr Megan Laws. They will work with both the London-based UCL ExCiteS team and remotely with researchers and local assistants in Brazil, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, and the Republic of Congo. They will train and support existing and potential users of the group's tools and methods, designing and developing training materials to support the needs of the various case studies and experiments.

Duties and responsibilities

Specific duties include:

- Assimilating a detailed knowledge on the set up and use of the research group's tools and methods (including writing basic XML)
- Developing a thorough understanding of each case study, its research methods, goals and data requirements

- Designing, developing and delivering online and in-person training materials to support current and potential users of the tools and methods, including maintaining and extending existing materials and websites, such as the Sapelli.org website
- Designing, developing and delivering online/remote materials to train and support remote local assistants who will run usability tests of the tools and methods in conjunction with the ExCiteS research team
- Using GIS software to visualise existing datasets in order to aid prototype development
- Contributing to/suggesting future HCI research priorities based on experiences and observations
- Contributing to project outputs (academic publications)

As the project evolves and duties and responsibilities could change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the postholder. Job descriptions cannot be exhaustive and so the post holder will carry out duties within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager.

The post holder will actively follow and promote all UCL policies including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies.

The post holder will maintain an awareness and observation of Fire and Health and Safety Regulations.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessment method (Application/Interview)
Qualifications, experience and knowledge		
Masters or equivalent experience in digital anthropology/similar (i.e. involving both social/geographic science and digital technology)	E	A/I
Previous work or research experience in analysing data from case studies	E	A/I
Knowledge of and interest in geographic citizen science	E	A/I
Experience of using GIS software	E	A/I
Experience of training / supporting low literate or disadvantaged communities	D	A/I
Experience of designing, organising and implementing online and face-to-face training	D	A/I
Experience working in higher education in a research environment.	D	A/I
Experience developing and maintaining websites	D	A/I
Skills and abilities		
Demonstrable aptitude for and interest in high level computer languages (such as visual basic, python, java) and/or markup languages (such as XML, HTML)	E	A/I
Fluent English (written and oral)	E	A/I
Confident presentation skills, in presenting technical and conceptual subjects to a wide and varied audience.	E	A/I
High degree of numeracy	E	A/I
Understanding of technical development environments and the need for protocols such as version control	D	A/I
Personal attributes		
Enthusiasm for and interest in Extreme Citizen Science	E	I
Ability to work proactively and demonstrate a flexible approach to work	E	I