SHOULD I POST THIS?: HOW IMAGES TELL A STORY AND CAPTURE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.
Maddy Eppel*, @MaddyeUW, Program on the Environment, University of Washington
Site Supervisor: Kristin Canning, Rainforest Rescue Australia
Faculty Advisor: Deb Hagen-Lukens, Entrepreneurship Lecturer, University of Washington

Organizations use social media as an inexpensive way to reach global viewers. The use of social media is meaningless if it does not capture the audience and effectively communicate a story. The aim of this study is to learn what makes online campaigns successful by observing the types of images that connect with an environmental organization’s audience the most. I interned for 6 months as a social media and business admin intern and learned what the organization’s core message and goal were. My team prioritized updating the organization’s online presence including the website, Instagram and Facebook. Our motivation was to increase the audience’s understanding of the core message as well as build up the level of trust in the organization to make people feel more inclined to get involved or donate. I focussed on the Instagram updates and ran an experiment to see what content the audience resonated with the most. I posted a series of photos under the three categories of (1) landscapes (2) people and (3) animals and measured the number of impressions they received using Instagram analytics. I found that the number of impressions differed from the number of likes making likes an unreliable way of tracking engagement and viewer interest. I also found that trust in an organization is the primary determinant of viewer support. Together, these results are useful when crafting online campaigns for organizations.