

## VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN THE AMAZON: PERSPECTIVES AND KNOWLEDGE ON RAINFOREST DEGRADATION

Session: Poster I, Breakout Room #6

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Rainforest conservation is crucial to the health of ecosystems and preserving critical habitat. Communication, education, and awareness surrounding many of these issues is done through social media and circulation of characteristic images to induce feelings and actions (i.e. rainforests burning). The aim of this study was to understand the knowledge, perspectives, emotions, and actions people may respond with when confronted with imagery of Amazon rainforest degradation. To accomplish this task, I worked with the Peruvian conservation organization Hoja Nueva to create and administer a Spanish survey for nearby Amazonian communities and an English survey for online western audiences to encompass participants of diverse backgrounds. Key issues contributing to the degradation were then identified and assigned corresponding imagery, followed by survey questions posed to evaluate the various perspectives. Findings show that humanizing environmental issues yields more empathy and that participant background had significant impact on perceived actions to take. It was also generally found that social media posts that include conservation imagery can be more effective towards accomplishing goals when accompanied with an educative summary and/or suggestion of course of action. As social media and visual aids continue being used as a communication tool when raising awareness on environmental issues, the importance of knowing audience perception and response becomes clear. This knowledge allows for more efficient engagement and targeted education by conservation organizations, which in turn can translate to increased preservation of our natural resources.