

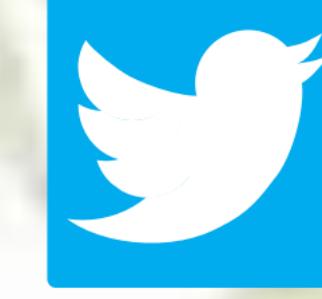
Evolving Outreach: How Environmental Communication and Outreach Must Change with its Audience

PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT



Jackelyn Briseño Arceo, Program on the Environment, University of Washington

Site Supervisor: Jenny Heins, Sustainable Ballard: RainWise



@BrisenoArceo

Faculty Advisor: Stanley Asah, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, University of Washington



Results

- Stormwater runoff is the #1 cause of water pollution in urban areas, contaminating seafood and drinking water, and causing habitat loss and biodiversity loss.
- Programs across the country provides cheap/free private green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) like rain gardens and cisterns (Fig 1) to homeowners as solutions for slowing down and filtering pollutants out of urban stormwater runoff.
- Creating appealing environmental messaging is important in gaining participants in the program and installing more GSI.



Figure 1: An example of GSI: a rain garden retaining stormwater after a large storm.

Research Questions

- What are the opportunities and barriers for GSI incentive programs in community outreach?
- Which motivators are most successful in garnering support for GSI installations?

Internship and Methods

- Canvassed Seattle neighborhoods as a RainWise Outreach intern.
- Conducted a content analysis of 4 GSI incentive program's outreach material: brochures and mailers (Fig 2).
- Interviewed GSI outreach teams in WA. state (Fig 4)
- Analysis of RainWise Facebook follower likes and engagements to determine audience content preference (Fig 3)

Figure 2 (Above): Pictures used in brochures and mailers from Whatcom County's Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP).

Average Number of Likes per Facebook Post Type

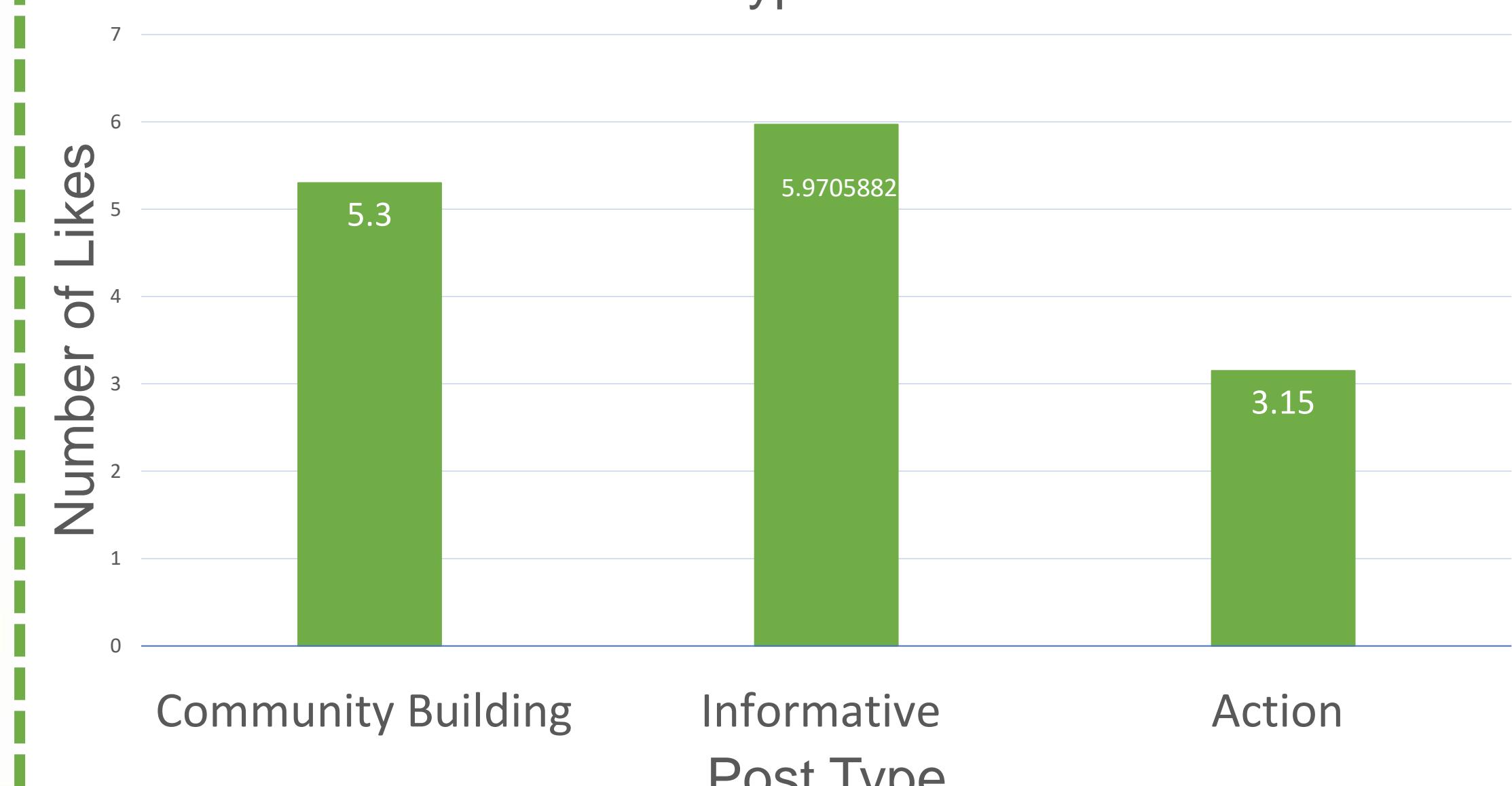


Figure 3: (Above) A bar graph showing which RainWise Facebook posts types are most liked by followers. This reinforces the points about social proof and community building mentioned in interviews.

Results

Results Cont.

Opportunities

Social Proof –
"People are more likely to show interest if...their neighbor has an installation."

Community Building- One organization connected with people at neighborhood "Night Out" parties



Barriers

Funding- "[Redacted] will not be funding us in the future...we're unsure about the future of the program."

Lack of Funding: "Its just me [on the outreach team]...research is a pending task on my list."

Figure 4: (Above) Significant quotes from some of my interviewees that demonstrate common themes that were brought up more than once.

Significance

- We now know that environmental communication cannot remain static and that a number of appeals can be used to garner support based on the age of the program and the audience it serves.
- Social acceptance and community building around environmental programs and movements will help normalize sustainability of all kinds to help solve climate change

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