TITLE:  
ICT-enabled Amateur Weather Networks - motivations and barriers for citizen participation

DESCRIPTION:  
This is a short workshop, with a total duration of 1.5 hrs.  
In the face of diverse climate change implications such as floods and droughts, continuous and widespread observations of the environment are of crucial importance to equip authorities and citizens in at-risk locations with essential information as they have to deal with more frequent and/or more intense flood risk hazards. Yet there are two major problems with the traditional means of observing the environment using Remote Sensing (RS) and in-situ observations; firstly, the low resolution and density of the data acquired using these methods and, secondly, the passive role that they perceive for citizens in terms of understanding their environment. The importance and potential of involving citizens in gathering data about the environment and also higher levels of participation in environmental governance and decision making are on the increase. In parallel, the diffusion of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) that are interactive and easy to use have provided new horizons for facing climate change and the threatening hazards resulting from that. These two trends have given birth to ‘Citizen Observatories’ that are contemporary, innovative and community-based form of environmental monitoring. Nevertheless, the success of citizen observatories hinges on the continued involvement of citizens as central actors of these initiatives. Developing strategies to (further) engage citizens requires an in-depth understanding of the behavioral determinants that encourage or impede individuals to collect and share environment-related data.  
An example of ICT-mediated citizen observatories is online amateur weather networks. These initiatives that were initially formed spontaneously and based on the impulse of individuals are attracting more and more members. Recent empirical research carried out in the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Italy has elicited the main drivers and barriers for citizen participation in sharing their personally collected weather data via online weather networks. The main objectives of the workshop are to share these findings and contrast them with the participants own experience in an interactive setting and to turn these insights into action for improved citizen engagement strategies.  
The workshop will start with an introduction of some of the major existing Amateur Weather Networks to familiarize the participants with the evolution of these platforms, their current status and their future potential. Next, the main drivers and barriers for citizen participation in sharing personally collected weather data via online weather networks identified by the research are discussed in the light of the participants’ own experiences and expectations. Finally, we will discuss how we can strengthen engagement strategies to (further) involve citizens to collect and share environment-related data.

ATTENDANCE:  
Any attendee is welcome. The workshop is of particular interest for those with a keen interest in citizen science, citizen observatories and the role of ICTs in environmental management and governance. Please sign up via the EnviroInfo & ICT4S registration system.

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