

Citizen science a give and take?

A lifecycle view on data collection and sharing

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Citizen Science a new opportunity for research

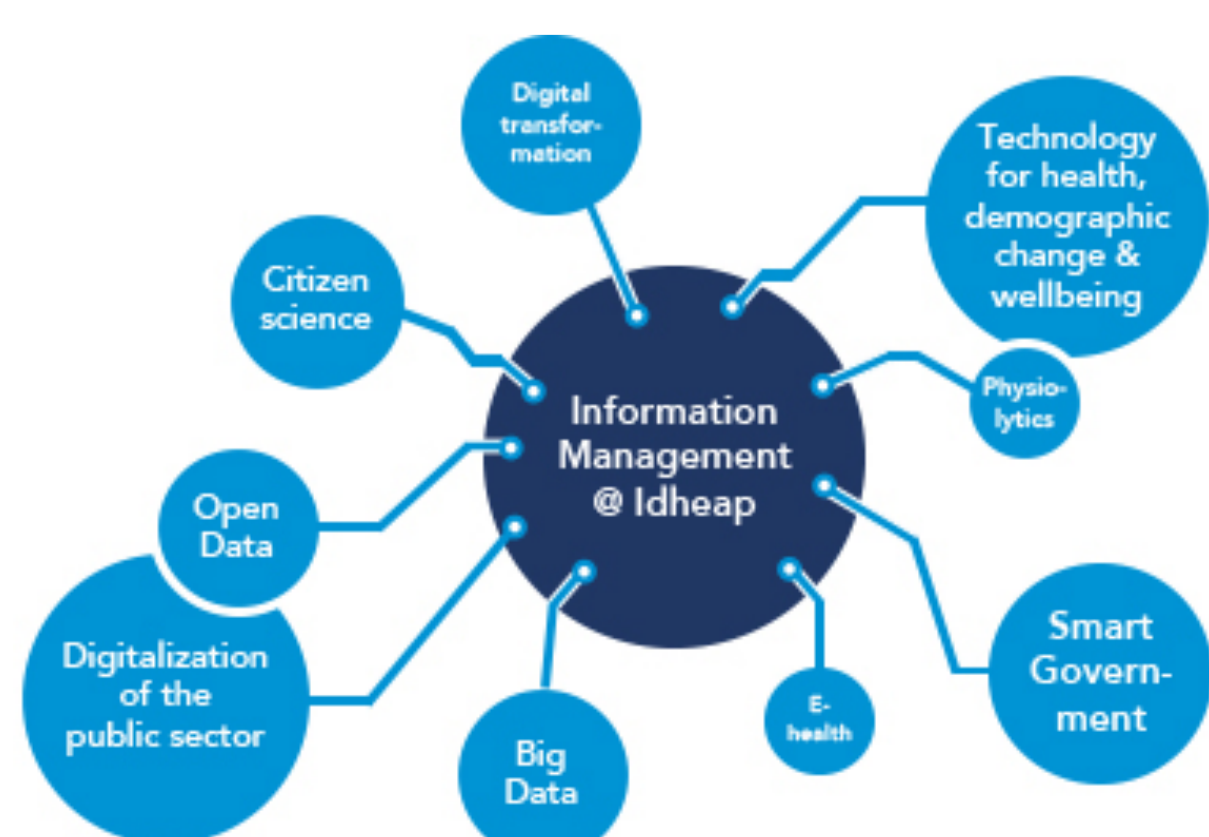
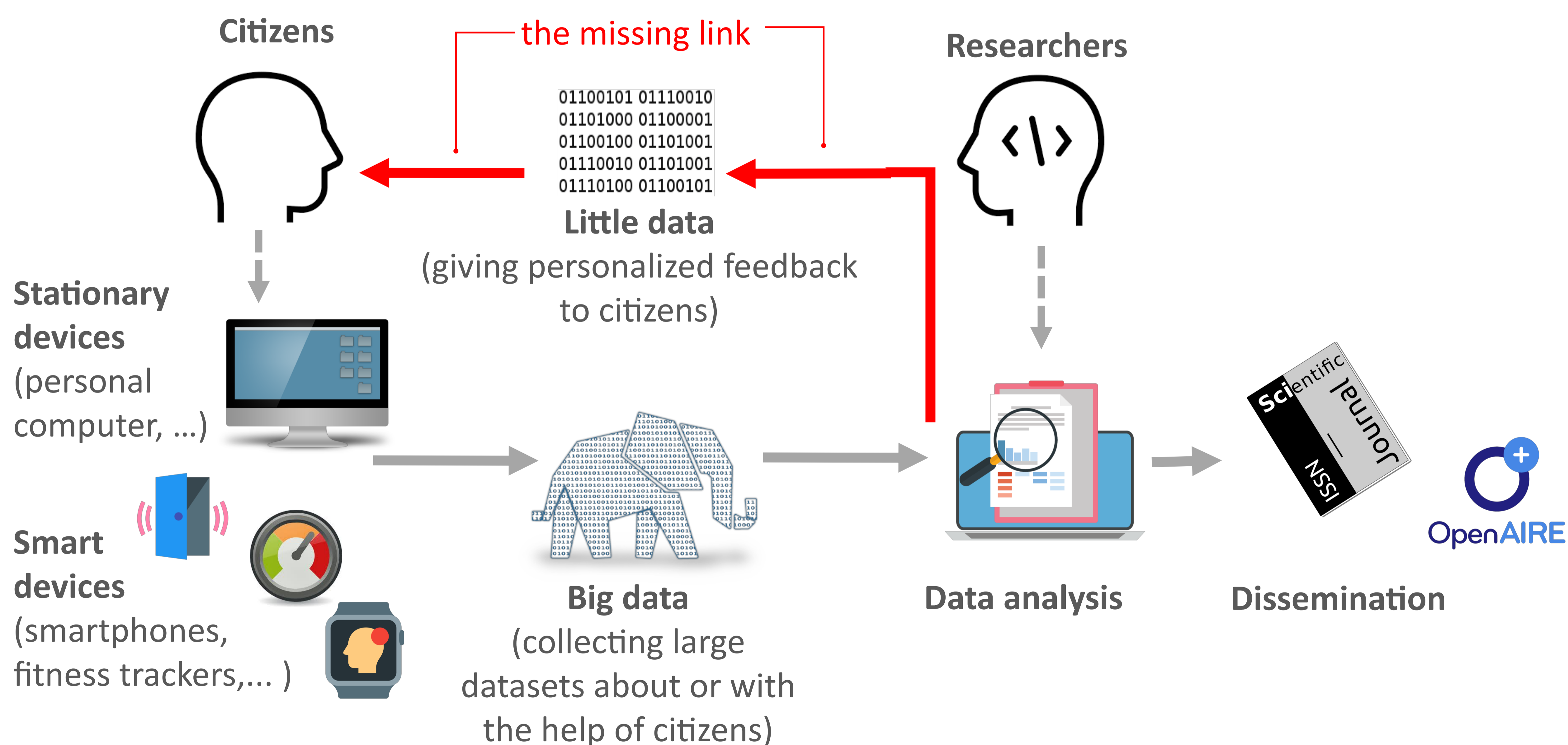
Research projects and initiatives, in which citizens participate in data collection, generating content, or other tasks, are gaining momentum. May it be in medicine, where volunteers help researchers to align multiple sequences of DNA or in ecology, where community-based environmental monitoring is used for determining the distribution and abundance of native and invasive species, *Citizen Science* is becoming a powerful method for researchers to conduct studies and engage with society.

The challenge

Researchers walk a fine line between accelerating their research and exploiting citizens “for the sake of scientific progress”. Citizens volunteering in projects rarely get anything tangible back in return. In lucky cases the collected data ends up in open data repositories or in an appendix of a scientific publication. In times where people get instant feedback and acknowledgement (e.g. likes, re-tweets), is it enough to simply appeal to a (possible yet not always realized) greater public good from a scientific project? Will this really motivate citizens to collect and share data in the long-run?

A change of perspective is needed

Pondering about ways how to give citizens something in return for their time and data is crucial to keep Citizen Science alive in the long-run. Adding a *Little data* perspective to a project, instead of focusing on Big data only, could help to prevent a future slow-down of the data flow.



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References:
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