

Microvolunteering

An Introduction



help
from
home

Change
the world in
just your pyjamas

Microvolunteering

Microvolunteering is a relatively new term to describe a form of volunteering that has been with us for ages, but since the internet age has taken on a new meaning.

Consider the act of holding the door open for a mother pushing a pram - that's microvolunteering because you spent a few minutes of your own time helping her out. It's also just plain courteous to do it as well! Nowadays, that mother pushing the pram could be somebody half way across the globe and you could be helping her out via click to donate websites, micro loans or a knitted article of clothing. No matter how you help her, there are initiatives out there that provide opportunities that will take no more than 30 minutes to accomplish.

What is Microvolunteering?

A quick scout around the web reveals many definitions, but 2 of them seem to be taking more prominence than the rest. These are:

- >> 'easy, quick, low commitment actions that benefit a worthy cause'
- >> 'convenient, bite-sized, crowdsourced, and network-managed'

“...easy, quick, low commitment actions that benefit worthy causes...”

The first definition will be the one this Introduction will be focussing on, mainly because it's easier to understand!

The actions might be a task that could be accomplished as a whole unit from start to finish by one person within 30 minutes or it might be an action that could be broken down into its component parts where an individual is just one of many people performing the same task to achieve an end result. Some tasks actually take just 10 seconds to complete!

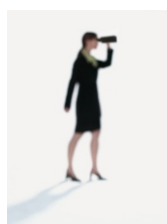


Microvolunteering encompasses many forms of volunteering like online volunteering, craftwork and campaigning. It is usually associated

with actions that can be completed remote from the organisation managing the opportunity. It can be accomplished in various environments too numerous to mention here, but include:

- >>> at home, perhaps in your pyjamas!
- >>> in school during a prescribed class lesson
- >>> on the bus
- >>> via a smartphone or the internet
- >>> in workplaces during people's lunch breaks
- >>> on holiday

Microvolunteering Activities



There's plenty of actions out there that benefit a worthy cause that can be completed in under 30 minutes. You just have to look for them!

OK, to save you time and energy, here's a few below:

- >>> donate hair to disadvantaged children suffering from long term medical hair loss
- >>> use the spare processing power of your pc to fight cancer or predict climate change
- >>> play online games where a donation at no cost to you, will be donated to charity
- >>> micro-loan £10, to social / ethical projects and then get paid back to reloan again
- >>> write a letter to a seriously ill child and put a smile on their face
- >>> contribute to abolishing slavery by signing an online petition
- >>> help astronomers classify galaxies with your pc
- >>> knit, crochet or sew items of clothing for the elderly or needy people
- >>> participate in plant, bird or insect counts for bio-diversity research projects
- >>> put up free posters that engage people to think about peace and not war

Useful Stuff

Over 800 microvolunteering actions documented so far, with over 10 times that amount projected to be discovered!

Mike Bright, Help From Home founder

Microvolunteering Beneficiaries

Microvolunteering is essentially no different to traditional volunteering when it comes to the worthy causes it benefits. It's just the delivery method that's different. Here's a few examples:

- >> elderly people, sick people, drug users, alcoholics, visually impaired, lonely people, the homeless, refugees, people with learning difficulties, prisoners, those living in poverty, people who are bullied
- >> animal welfare, pet abuse, habitat conservation, global warming, those affected by natural disasters, uncontrolled deforestation, recycling to conserve world resources
- >> slavery, fair trade, genocide, civil rights, humanitarian issues, human rights



The Pros

Can be conducted anywhere, at any time.

Control of environment = safer

Most micro-actions are non-committal.

Dip in and dip out = less barriers than traditional volunteering to participate

Empowers people to realise they can make a difference on their own terms

More flexibility = more control regards impact achieved

Can be conducted while watching tv, on the bus or in your pyjamas.

No more meetup commitments = volunteering goes wherever you go

Huge diversity of actions that traditional volunteering tasks just simply do not cover.

More actions = more good

Enables more disabled and housebound people to feel they are contributing to society.

More involvement = more self worth

People can be pooled from the whole world to help out, rather than just a local or national area.

More people = more good

Micro-actions are easy and simple to accomplish. Might encourage people to explore even more actions.

More curiosity = more people discovering ways they can help

Usually no requirement for a CRB (criminal record bureau) check.

One less hurdle to cross = greater participation rate

Practically all microvolunteering tasks require the minimal of training. Read the rules and go.

Simpler actions = no more excuses not to volunteer!

Useful Stuff



Playing the Free Rice micro volunteering game not only improves your diction but also donates free rice - lots of it!

<http://www.freerice.com/>

Impact In Evidence

What evidence is there that people can make meaningful contributions in such short bursts of time and how do they make a difference to others? Listed below are various facts and figures from various initiative's Web sites or blogs:

- >> **Kibblekat** (online charity donating quiz), up to October 2010: donated 286,876,650 pieces or 280 tons of kibble (cat and dog food to animal shelters)
- >> **Everyclick** (charity donating search engine), up to October 2010: UK£1,424,142 (US\$1,643,190) raised for charity
- >> **Hunger Site** (click-to-donate), June 1999 to October 2010: 328 million visitors clicked to give 25,000 metric tons of food or 447 million cups of food
- >> **Folding@Home** (volunteer your spare pc power), up to October 2010: 400,000 active machines, received computational results from over 4.51 million devices, 75 peer reviewed scientific research papers published
- >> **The Extraordinaries** (smartphone app), up to May 2010: micro-volunteers have completed over 300,000 tasks for more than 200 organisations
- >> **Project Linus** (creating handmade blankets and afghans), up to June 2010: 3,465,151 handmade items delivered to good causes
- >> **The Petition Site** (petition portal), up to October 2010: 70,041 petitions created with 46,538,035 signatures added via 14,354,492 members
- >> **Distributed Proofreaders** (converting public domain books into e-books), up to September 2010: 18,792 books converted
- >> **CO2Saver** (energy saving software), up to October 2010: 1,595,228 lbs of emission / greenhouse gases saved from being released into the atmosphere



In Closing Then



So to summarise, microvolunteering is easy to participate in, takes just a few seconds or minutes to complete and can be tailored to suit your own lifestyle. It's designed for people of all ages, abilities (or disabilities) and for quite a few of the opportunities out there, can be conducted from almost anywhere in the world.

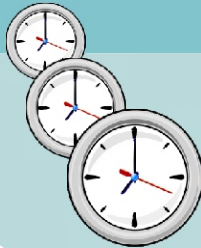
All in all then, if you really want to be a super hero and change the world via microvolunteering you'll need an outfit that shows off your new persona - no wearing of pants on the outside of your tights for this one - just a trusty pair of pyjamas will do here! Go forth and microvolunteer!

Miscellaneous

This Introduction has been compiled by 'Help From Home', a leading promoter of microvolunteering actions. Help From Home has been running since December 2008 and promotes microvolunteering via:

- >> primarily home based opportunities via its 'Change the World in Just Your Pyjamas' project.
- >> office workers, through its 'Lunch Break', 'One Hour Taster' and 'Two Hour Go For Good' Volunteering schemes.
- >> residents of care homes via its meaningful activity programme suggestions and
- >> 'Do Good' cards that virally encourage others to participate in 'do good' actions.

Useful Stuff



Microvolunteering activities are designed to take between 10 seconds to 30 minutes to complete! Yes, you read that right, just 10 seconds!

Thanks for reading this Introduction. Hope it was useful.

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home



<http://www.helpfromhome.org/>

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