



Virtual Volunteer Opportunities That Make Great Service-Learning Projects

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While there are many opportunities to volunteer our time and efforts within our communities, often we are faced with challenges such as transportation or time constraints that prevent our participation. Don't lose heart! Virtual volunteer opportunities are just a click away. Below are four websites to projects that not only need volunteers, but also contribute to the betterment of our world as a whole and can be used as service-learning within our classes.

1. Assist researchers with answering interesting questions about our world at Zooniverse (zooniverse.org).

Zooniverse is the biggest and most widely-used platform for volunteer-powered research. Work as individuals, teams, or classes to contribute to any of a large number of ongoing people-powered research projects in many disciplines and topics across the sciences and humanities. Aid in new discoveries or contribute to open-source sets of analyzed data. Anyone can contribute to the real academic research and the human understanding of the world, history, space, and more regardless of education or training at their own pace from their own computer. Take a look through the vast selection of projects and get started volunteering today!

2. Proofread e-books for Project Gutenberg (Gutenberg.org).

Project Gutenberg finds and electronically transcribes books that were published prior to 1927 and have expired copyrights to fulfill their mission of "preserving the literary history of the world in a freely available form for everyone to use." Because electronic transcriptions are not always accurate, the project enlists volunteers to complete a three-round proofreading process to compare images of the original text to the transcribed passages resulting eventually in an accurate e-book available in the Project Gutenberg archive. Many volunteers work on a book at the same time, verifying and correcting the work. Interested volunteers can register for free and preview a walkthrough of the process prior to beginning to proofread. There is no required commitment. Project Gutenberg simply asks that volunteers do their best and spend as much or as little time as they have available to donate.

3. Track bird populations with The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird (ebird.org/home).

Join hundreds of thousands of volunteers around the world watching birds and recording sightings to help scientists and conservationists understand what birds are where, working to understand the population-level movements and needs of many species on a global scale. Not only can volunteers record the bird sighting, but pictures and sound recordings can be uploaded as well.

4. Help Harvard researchers learn the best ways to break down stereotypes by taking tests with Project Implicit (implicit.harvard.edu).



Project Implicit is an international collaboration among researchers interested in our implicit thoughts and feelings that are outside of our conscious awareness and control and how these thoughts and feelings create hidden biases regarding diversity and inclusion. The website provides a variety of Implicit Association Tests on various topics that simply ask questions about our understandings and attitudes. From the results they learn more about the differences between people and groups. These tests allow volunteers to provide information about values and beliefs privately from their computers that contributes to the wider research about cultural, gender-based, and racial biases.

These are just a few of the many virtual volunteer opportunities that can be easily used within the classroom for service learning as long as lessons regarding the project and purpose are provided prior to the experience and student reflections are submitted as graded assignments following the participation. Search “volunteer online” for even more virtual volunteer projects!

[Volunteer Tennessee](#) is a 25 member bipartisan board appointed by the Governor to encourage volunteerism and community service. Volunteer Tennessee pursues its mission through administration of AmeriCorps grants, training and collaborations and coalitions with public and private organizations interested in volunteerism and service. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).