LIBRARIES AS CITIZEN SCIENCE INITIATORS AND HUBS:

The case of National and University Library in Zagreb

Sanja Jurković[1]
[1] National and University Library in Zagreb, sjurkovic@nsk.hr

PUBMET2026

INTRODUCTION

Citizen science in Croatia has evolved from isolated initiatives into a more structured movement in which libraries increasingly act as intermediaries between researchers and the public. The National and University Library in Zagreb (NSK) illustrates how a library can function both as an initiator and as a hub for citizen science, drawing on its public trust, educational mission, and institutional infrastructure.

THE RISE OF CS IN NSK

NSK recognized the potential of citizen science early and took an important step forward through its participation in the international CeOS_SE project, which positioned the Library as one of the regional leaders in open and citizen science. A further foundation was laid through NSK's collaboration with public libraries and high schools, which strengthened its role in education, access, and community engagement.

Bees, Life, People



High school students engaged as citizen scientists to identify, evaluate, and curate open-access web content about bees for permanent preservation in the Croatian Web Archive (HAW).

HAWathon

A national crowdsourcing competition that empowers high school students to collect and preserve ephemeral local digital heritage within the Croatian Web Archive (HAW), enabling students to gather in just 15 minutes what would normally take librarians five full working days.



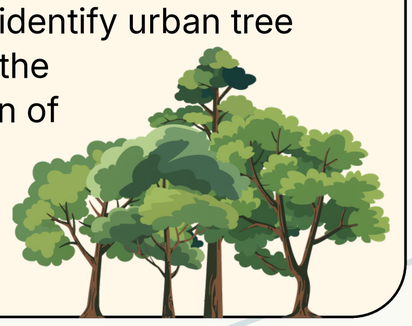
Self-Help and Well-Being in the Academic Online Environment

University students mapped open-access literature on self-help and bibliotherapy from the Hrčak portal, generating a dataset that directly informed a peer-reviewed scientific publication.



Dendroteka

Students and dendrology experts used digitized historical postcards and the iNaturalist app to identify urban tree species and map the historical evolution of Zagreb's urban greenery on an interactive portal.



BioBlitz and Libraries

A nationwide environmental initiative uniting over 60 Croatian libraries to engage local communities in biodiversity data collection using iNaturalist while linking field observations to library resources.



Musical Intelligence in the Service of National Heritage

As the first citizen science project in Croatia centered on musical heritage, young music students analyzed and categorized uncataloged sound recordings from composer Silvio Foretić's legacy using interactive tools. Their crowdsourced audio analysis enabled the expert musicology team to successfully identify and catalog 90% of the mystery audio sample.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Through international projects like CeOS_SE and national initiatives like BioBlitz, the National and University Library in Zagreb (NSK) has successfully established itself as a national hub for citizen science in Croatia. By bridging academic research, digital heritage preservation, and public engagement, NSK demonstrates how libraries can leverage their existing infrastructures to build a sustainable ecosystem for open science. These diverse projects highlight the transformative role of libraries as trusted intermediaries that connect scientific communities with society.