Identifying Socio-Technical Means to Support Small Loosely Coupled Groups of Volunteers

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The many faces of volunteering

sports event

disaster relief

election campaigns

green activism

citizen science

greener neighborhood

social kitchen

Research mainly focuses on...

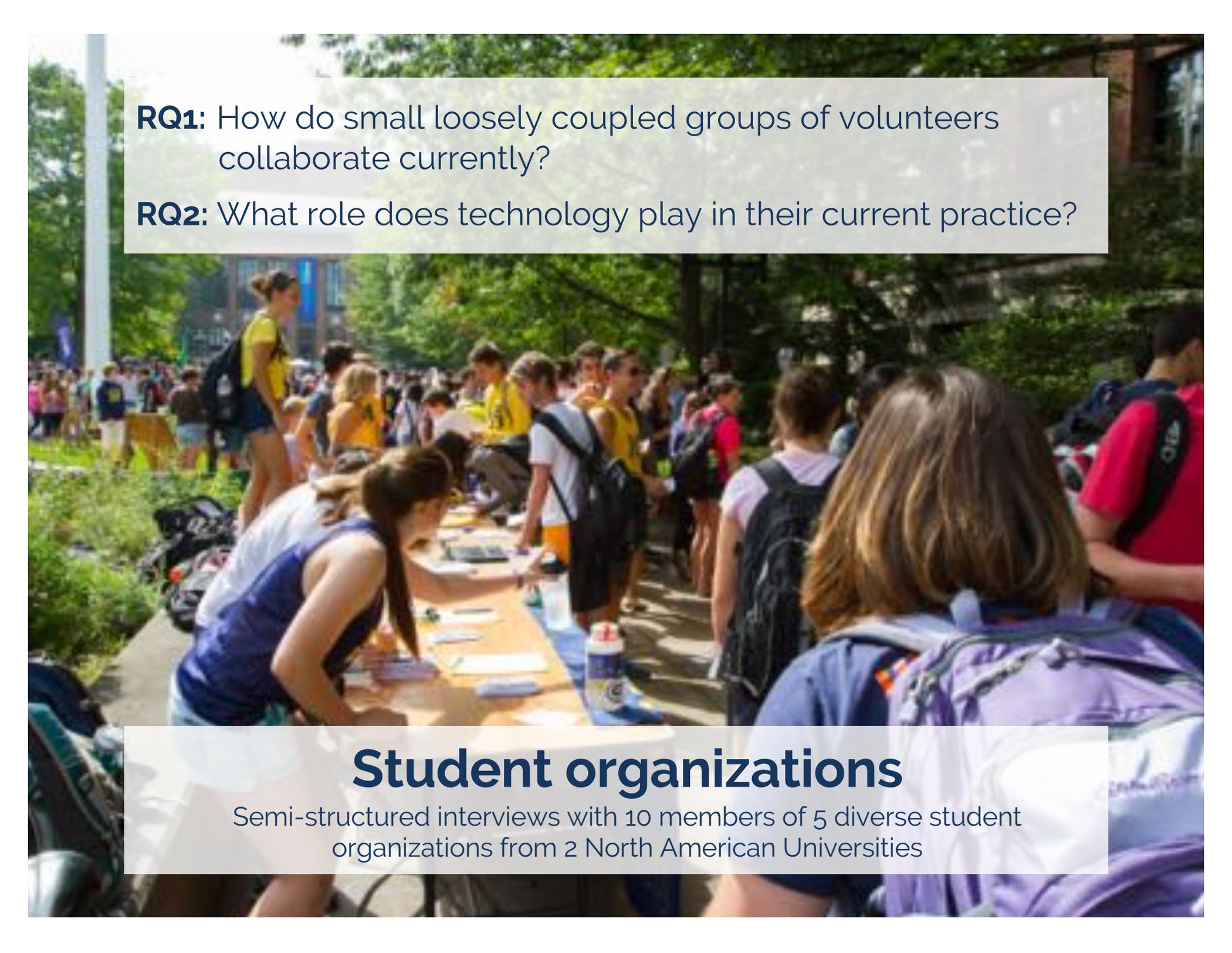|	
Non-profit organizations	→	Employees or coordinators
Short-term engagements	→	Longer term issues
Online initiatives	→	Offline causes
Motivational aspects	→	Operational processes

RQ1: How do small loosely coupled groups of volunteers collaborate currently?

RQ2: What role does technology play in their current practice?

Student organizations

Semi-structured interviews with 10 members of 5 diverse student organizations from 2 North American Universities

Individual:

- Motivation
- Satisfaction
- Past and current role
- Commitments
- Future intentions

Organizational:

- Activities
- Target of activities
- Feedback
- Awareness

Technology: Type of technology and purpose

Organization of events

Themed events, speaker series, socializing, fund raisers, hackathons, etc.

Initiation

In-person meeting(s)

Task distribution

Following up

Assessment of success

Recruitment of new members

Transition between generations

Parallel use of various technologies

Different messaging services and sharing platforms
Students often resort back to email due to perceived comfort

- Coding scheme is useful to identify existing practices
- Lack of **transparency**, defined **procedures** and **knowledge exchange**
- **Underutilization** of available technologies and resources

From small volunteer groups to hackathons

Hackathons are a common practice

To further the cause of the organization or to attract new members
Initial studies reveal similar approaches and issues

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Nolte et al. (2018). *Supporting Collaboration in Small Volunteer Groups with Socio-Technical Guidelines*. Proceedings of 16th European Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, DOI: 10.18420/ecscw2018_25.