Using iSpot to support bioblitz events

We think iSpot is a valuable addition to the range of activities at bioblitz events and similar. If you have computers and internet access set up at your event then it is possible to use iSpot live, uploading observations from the event and often getting identification queries answered very quickly.

But perhaps even more valuable is the role that iSpot can play after the event is over: once you have captured people's interest and enthusiasm for wildlife on the day, iSpot provides a place where they can go after the event is over and get help identifying wildlife, from a wide range of experts. And indeed if the experts working with you are willing to continue supporting new wildlife observers they can play that role on iSpot.

Some suggestions for using iSpot at a bioblitz:
- If you intend to use iSpot on the day, the first thing is to ensure that the computers you are using can access the website, so you will need at least one log-in identity to be registered on the site. This could be an existing log-in that you already use, or if you wish you could register a new log-in identity specifically for your event. It is possible to run the same log-in on more than one computer, which has the benefit that the locations should only need to be set up once to become available on several machines.
- It is not (yet) possible to share a location between multiple iSpot profiles, so if you do end up using more than one log-on identity you may wish to set up the location details for each, so it's worth deciding on a grid reference beforehand, and then, when you go to iSpot and Add an Observation, paste the grid reference in to the "Use map" section to ensure a consistent location.
- The best way of grouping together all the observations from the event is to set up a bioblitz tag, which gets listed on a specific iSpot page. The tags follow the pattern:
  bioblitz-*YourSiteName*2012
  To see this in action, from the home page click on the Observations menu at the top of the page, and choose Bioblitzes. That takes you to: http://www.ispot.org.uk/bioblitz where you will be able to see the tag listed, once it has been created, and then click through to a page that shows all the tagged observations from your event. Of course, the tagging system only works if all the people entering observations remember to use the tag, so you'll need to tell participants that when they add an observation from the event, the correct bioblitz tag has to go into the "Descriptive tags" box. You should be able to start typing in "bioblitz-…" and then pick the correct tag off the drop-down list.
- What we've sometimes done is to print off slips or stickers to hand out on the day, saying something like:

  Learn about wildlife with iSpot
  iSpot.org.uk is a website that helps people learn about wildlife and how to identify it. At iSpot you can pursue your wildlife interests after the BioBlitz is over, joining a friendly community that includes many wildlife experts. Add your wildlife photos and get help with identifying what you've seen, and help others at the same time. iSpot has been developed by The Open University as part of OPAL, funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

  If you have photos from today's event that you want to add to iSpot when you get home, just go to iSpot.org.uk, register on the site, and then when adding your observations remember to put 'bioblitz-*YourSiteName*2012' in the box labelled 'Descriptive tags'. You can see all the bioblitz observations at: *[iSpot URL to be added]*

If you wish, we can set up a suitable tag in advance, and let you know the web address for where all the tagged observations will appear, so that can be printed on the slips as well. If after the event you'd like a data export of all the observations that have been tagged then we can organise that.

For any further information please **contact iSpot** via email to Martin Harvey (M.C.Harvey@open.ac.uk) or use the iSpot contact form: http://www.ispot.org.uk/contact