

Viewpoint Q&A

Dr Kim Feddema

Can you tell us about yourself and your current role?

Hi, I'm an early career researcher and lecturer in the School of Business and Law at Edith Cowan University in Boorloo/Perth. Although I now work in marketing, I have a background in conservation, completing a double major in Conservation and Zoology for my undergraduate degree and then undertaking a Masters of Primate Conservation. After working in conservation and the zoo industry for the better part of 7 years, I switched over to marketing to complete my PhD at the University of Western Australia as I was interested in exploring behaviour change and demand reduction for wildlife products. This was a huge leap of faith but one of the best choices I could have made.

I finished my PhD in December and am pleased to now have a balanced research/teaching role. My research now focuses primarily on two domains, i) the negative impacts of social media imagery of primates on welfare and trade, ii) promoting behaviour change and demand reduction around illicit wildlife products. In my teaching role, I am currently working across work-integrated learning units, helping marketing students demonstrate their theoretical learning in applied practice. Within these courses, I aim to encourage students to employ their discipline skills to develop solutions to solve real-world social issues and aid non-profit businesses and campaigns.

What attracted you to social marketing?

Primarily my interest is in behaviour change. Coming from a background within a "crisis discipline" it was always frustrating to see a lack of engagement with education and an unwillingness to commit to pro-environmental behaviours. I found that through my research, much of the answers I was looking for were coming from the social marketing research on health campaigns and this sparked my first interest in the field.



What are the most satisfying parts of your work as a social marketing researcher?

For me, it is critical that my work as a researcher has demonstrable impact. Although it can be fun to get lost in the weeds of conceptual development and theoretical frameworks, fundamentally I want to be able to look at my career and feel as though I have had a positive impact on my community and my ecological system. Working in conservation, and particularly in trade and welfare, can at times be overwhelming and even depressing, so I get the most satisfaction out of knowing that I am playing my own small role in improving outcomes for biodiversity and species health.

Can you share with us a project that you are worked on that went particularly well?

As I am very much still in the early stages of my career, I am still working towards being able to conduct larger-scale behaviour change initiatives. However, one project that I am very proud of is my work in applying service dominant logic theory to the field of conservation and sustainability. I began this project in 2021, in a paper in *Biological Conservation* ([doi: 10.1016/j.biocon.2021.109060](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2021.109060)) encouraging wildlife trade researchers to avoid using prescriptive typologies of 'value' in assessing product use and demand.



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That paper was presented at several conferences and received excellent feedback from service scholars who had never considered working on social marketing or conservation marketing before. It also won the best student paper prize for the marketing department at my university. The project continues and my co-authors and I working on another paper, as well as continuing to network with traditional service scholars and encouraging them to apply their work to novel contexts.

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges faced by social marketers and/or social marketing today?

In my opinion, one of the biggest challenges faced by social marketers today is the rate and scope of information that individuals receive. Particularly as in social media marketing, I find it difficult to keep up with the speed of information dissemination online, and this can make it difficult to compete with the array of inputs that our target consumers have. As people are bombarded with “experts” and opinions on their behaviours, finding ways to provide accurate information and influence actual behaviour change seems increasingly difficult. This offers an exciting opportunity though to innovate and develop solutions that leverage technological advances and improve our reach and our impact though, so it’s not all doom and gloom.

Finally, what tips do you have for other social marketing researchers?

I’m not too sure I have that many tips as I still feel pretty new to the field, however something I think has helped me along the way is to be very open to networking and collaborating with those outside your field. I believe social marketing is one of the more diverse cohorts out there, but the more that we can work with industries, contexts and disciplines that are outside of our usual scope, the better we can leverage their unique skills and create truly transformational change.

