

**Understanding the Motivations Behind Donating IT to
ACCESS Tech**

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand the experiences and motivations of technology donors participating in McMaster University's ACCESS Tech IT collection events. Conducted in October 2023, 18 interviews were carried out to gather firsthand insights from donors. Thematic analysis was employed to identify two key themes: convenience and sustainability, further categorized into sub-themes of decluttering, accessibility, reducing waste, and self-satisfaction. These themes underscored the motivations guiding donors to contribute their technology devices. Key recommendations identified from these findings include improving transparency regarding personal data on donated devices, enhancing volunteer training to increase efficiency during collection drives, establishing alternative locations for donors, publicizing the environmental impacts of technology donations, and improving post-event follow-up. By elucidating the drivers behind technology donations, this research offers valuable insights for organizers and institutions aiming to optimize technology donation and collection events.

Keywords: IT Donation, Donor Experiences, Donor Motivations, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Technology Recycling, Technology Repurpose

1.0 Introduction

In an era marked by rampant consumerism and the consequential generation of vast amounts of waste, one particularly concerning type is Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), commonly known as electronic waste or e-waste (Shittu et al., 2021). For the purposes of this paper, e-waste encompasses any discarded electronic or electrical equipment. E-waste is of particular interest for multiple reasons: ethical concerns; resource management and impacts; the risks to both the environment and to human health; and global quantities of WEEE.

Contrary to the name, the destructive potential and moral considerations of e-waste begins closer to the technological production line. The mining processes of metals required to manufacture electronics are poorly regulated, resulting in several ethical concerns. For instance, cobalt is a valuable metal that has been increasingly used as part of the decarbonization efforts as it is used to create rechargeable batteries in electronic devices such as smartphones, laptops, and electric vehicles (Calvão et al., 2021; King et al., 2017). The global demand for cobalt has increased so dramatically that it has tripled in the last decade alone and is projected to double again by 2035 (Calvão et al., 2021). However, cobalt mining is so poorly regulated that the operation has been dubbed “modern-day slavery”: workers are without a base salary or social protection mechanisms and there have been reports of child labour (Amnesty International, 2016; Gross, 2023). Furthermore, adult miners and the communities surrounding the mines have been shown to have increased levels of cobalt and other metals in urine and associated exposure-related oxidative DNA damage (Banza Lubaba Nkulu et al., 2018).

Resource management is another pressing concern. As previously mentioned with cobalt, the demand for the finite resources required for electronics production is rapidly increasing. An additional concern is that these resources are not being properly recycled: the monetary worth of e-waste raw materials is estimated to be \$57.0 billion but only \$10.0 billion worth of e-waste is recycled and recovered sustainably, offsetting 15.0 million tonnes (Mt) of CO₂ (Shahabuddin et al., 2023). Hazardous materials including lead, cadmium, mercury, and brominated flame retardants (BFRs) complicate e-waste recovery (Rautela et al., 2021). Processes such as open burning, metal acid stripping, and incineration in attempts to recycle e-waste further pose environmental threats due to the byproducts and the intensive processes themselves (Shahabuddin et al., 2023).

The improper disposal of e-waste not only pollutes the environment but also poses significant health risks to individuals through the ingestion of heavy metals and exposure to hazardous byproducts from informal recycling methods (Rautela et al., 2021). These pollutants can be dispersed and accumulated in the environment, eventually being magnified and entering humans as the final consumer (Leung, 2019). Another risk to human health is through direct exposure via inhalation, inadvertent ingestion from dust and soil, dermal absorption, and more. As seen in the

example above in Congo, these pollutants can have long-lasting health effects that are passed down through generations.

E-waste management is of global significance as it is relevant to several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations (United Nations, 2015). For instance, e-waste management directly affects Goal 3: “to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination”; Goal 6: “to improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials”; and more.

However, systemic barriers such as inadequate infrastructure and regulatory frameworks hinder progress (Rautela et al., 2021). The major challenges of e-waste treatment include collection; sorting and inhomogeneity of waste; low energy density; prevention of further waste; emission; and cost-effective recycling (Shahabuddin et al., 2023). Moreover, the global nature of e-waste trade further complicates efforts, with developed countries exporting most of their e-waste to developing nations, exacerbating environmental and social inequalities (Visvanthan et al., 2010).

Still, there are both local and global initiatives for sustainable e-waste management, including local donation drives, recycling programs, and legislation (Shittu et al., 2021). In the realm of charitable endeavors, initiatives like the ACCESS Tech initiative at McMaster University grapple with the challenge of effectively engaging donors and addressing their concerns.

In Hamilton, Ontario, members of the McMaster University community and of Empowerment Squared (E2), a community non-profit aimed to assist marginalized, newcomer, and racialized communities (Empowerment Squared, 2024), combined their efforts to create the ACCESS Tech initiative (previously called Trash to Treasure). McMaster’s departments of Facility Services and University Technology Service provide leadership, funding, and logistic support for ACCESS Tech, including funding for student staff members to lead the day-to-day operations. ACCESS Tech staff members collect technology from McMaster staff, faculty, and students, and then sort, clean, and test device functionality. In addition, the ACCESS Tech team removes and ‘sanitizes’ computer hard drives, to ensure personal data cannot be retrieved. After the technology has been tested and hard drives have been sanitized, members of ACCESS Tech deliver the highest quality devices to E2 who install up-to-date software and deliver items to community members in need. All remaining items are made available for reuse by members of the McMaster community (Kang et al., 2023).

Previously, motivators and facilitators of donating technology at the ACCESS Tech initiative of fall 2022 were studied (Kang et al., 2023). To better understand the reasons for donating technology, we have continued to delve deeper into the overall experience and motivations to donate technology at ACCESS Tech events.

Understanding the underlying psychology driving donor behaviour is crucial in navigating this landscape, a concept underscored by the principles of behavioural economics (Karlan et al., 2019). By delving into how and why individuals make decisions in the real world, this field offers valuable insights into fostering greater generosity. Whether donations stem from impulsive, emotionally driven responses or more deliberate, carefully considered contributions, grasping these dynamics is essential for tailoring outreach strategies effectively.

In 2016, a comprehensive literature review sought to uncover the external motivators guiding individuals in emerging countries to donate money and goods (Mainardes et al., 2017). This study identified nearly 46 distinct variables, which were then categorized into five overarching motivating factors: environmental and/or political motivations, the cause or circumstances prompting the donation, the characteristics of the organization soliciting donations, influence from third parties, and personal rewards. Through semi-structured interviews with 22 frequent donors, a donation model was developed and validated, shedding light on the intricate interplay of factors shaping donation behaviour within emerging economies.

Understanding the specific drivers behind the donation of technology, in particular, holds significant promise for initiatives like ACCESS Tech. By leveraging insights from behavioural economics, organizations can tailor their marketing approaches to appeal to both impulsive and deliberate donors, maximizing contributions while maintaining ethical integrity. Rather than being viewed as manipulative tactics, these strategies serve to empower donors by illuminating the decision-making processes that underpin their philanthropic actions. Through such nuanced approaches, barriers to giving can be overcome, ultimately fostering a culture of generosity and social responsibility while respecting the autonomy of donors.

This paper delves into the experience and motivations for donating technology at ACCESS Tech donation events at McMaster University.

2.0 Methods

The goal of this qualitative research study was to better understand the experiences and motivations for donating IT to the ACCESS Tech: IT Collection, Reuse, and Donation Initiative at McMaster University. This study obtained ethics approval from McMaster's Research Ethics Board (MREB #6100).

2.1 Recruitment

For this study, we collaborated with ACCESS Tech and students from McMaster University's SUSTAIN 3S03 course focused on *Implementing Sustainable Change* within the community. The ACCESS Tech donation drive was promoted on social media prior to the event with the use of platforms such as Instagram. The collection drive event took place on October 20th, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the McMaster University campus. Our collaboration involved

actively contributing to the preparation and coordination of the event to ensure smooth execution and successful donations. We recruited study participants on-site immediately after a participant donated technology. On-site recruitment was ideal for our study due to the practicality, efficiency, and economically friendly nature of in-person interviews. Additionally, this method proved to be convenient for participants, eliminating the need for them to visit an alternate location for interviews. The recruitment process involved approaching potential participants, presenting the purpose of our research, and emphasizing the incentive which consisted of a McMaster University reusable water bottle. For prospective participants expressing interest, we provided detailed briefings on study protocols encompassing the organization of the interview process, all in accordance with guidelines outlined in the *Letter of Information* of the study.

2.2 Informed Consent

To assess consent, recruited participants were asked a series of questions and explained study protocols outlined in the *Oral Consent Script*. Participants were asked for their consent to participate in the study, about the anonymous use of direct quotes, and being audio-recorded. We also explained the potential study risks to participants and informed them of the general study order of operations and protocols, including transcription information and the overall study timeline. Afterward, we informed participants that they could skip any interview questions they did not wish to answer and end their interview at any point and still keep the incentive.

2.3 Data Collection

We collected data through in-person interviews with participants of the ACCESS Tech donation drive. With the approved consent of our participants, we recorded interviews following the *Interview Guide* to be transcribed at a later date, ensuring participant identity confidentiality throughout all stages of the research process. We also informed participants that they may choose to have a hand-written interview rather than an audio-recorded interview. However, none of the participants interviewed requested a hand-written interview. Data collection took place on the McMaster University campus on October 20th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We asked all participants questions regarding their experience at the ACCESS Tech donation event, motivations for donating technology, and expectations of the donation drive, in addition to suggestions for future ACCESS Tech donation events. Following data collection, we transferred audio files to a secure OneDrive hosted by McMaster University. Immediately after, audio files were deleted from the original recorders to adhere to participant privacy standards established in the approved ethics documents. Each interview underwent a meticulous process, beginning with transcription, followed by rigorous revisions to ensure accuracy and contextualization of conversational nuances. Subsequently, we coded the data, culminating in the identification of recurring themes across the dataset.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data from this research project was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis seeks to identify patterns, called themes, within a variety of forms of data such as interviews. Although thematic analysis is regularly utilized for qualitative research, it is often poorly described and outlined in literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Despite this caveat, Braun and Clarke (2006) aimed to provide a detailed explanation of this form of data analysis which was heavily referenced for the purposes of this research. Thematic analysis required several decisions to be made prior to analysis, in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006). These decisions are outlined below. The accuracy of the transcripts was verified by cross-referencing them with the original audio recordings. Initially, we each read all transcripts multiple times to identify ideas consistent throughout participant interviews. Based on these ideas, our research team collated relevant ideas into codes. During our meetings, we discussed our individual findings, deliberated new codes, and returned to the data for revision. All relevant data was gathered and we generated themes. Our research team later reviewed the themes while cross-referencing the coded extracts and entire data set to ensure relevance. We gave the refined themes clear definitions and titles. Our discussions ensured a comprehensive review of the data to come to intercoder agreement. Finally, we selected key extracts to include in the final manuscript.

A theme can be identified by its prevalence within the data. This prevalence can be determined by the observation of a patterned response within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Potential themes were deemed significant if they were observed in more than five interviews.

We decided to pursue a rich description of the data set. We selected this method as we desired to contribute to a broader understanding of each theme to existing literature (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Currently, the existing literature is not comprehensive and, when considering the local context of McMaster University, only consists of one previous report. Hence, providing a broader scope, rather than a narrow one following the detailed account approach, may allow for future research to explore related phenomena (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Choosing to proceed with a rich description does, however, potentially lose nuance, detail, and understanding of specific themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A detailed account may be more beneficial when an adequate amount of literature exists on the topic.

For this research, we conducted an inductive thematic analysis. This is the bottom-up form of thematic analysis which is data-driven whereby themes identified are strongly linked to the data itself (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This was selected over a theoretical approach. The theoretical approach consults literature and aims to fit the data into a pre-existing framework (Braun and Clarke, 2006). We referenced a previous project group's report that conducted similar research with a sample size of 20 participants, allowing us to develop questions that can further allow us to better understand the motivations for donating technology; however, the previous study did

not significantly blend itself into this work (Kang et al., 2023). The motivation to unbiasedly analyze the collected data further solidified our decision to take an inductive approach.

For this project semantic themes in our data were analyzed. This approach is more accessible and transparent, making it easier for us as researchers and our readers to understand and relate to the findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Choosing semantic themes is appropriate because we want a straightforward, accessible, and efficient way to identify and describe the motivations behind technology donation (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is particularly valuable as our study goals and context align with a more surface-level analysis of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In contrast, we decided that exploring latent themes would be beyond the scope of our investigation as we are novice researchers.

We used an essentialist approach to thematic analysis. Using this approach, we can theorize the motivations, experiences, meanings, and reality of the participants due to the unidirectional relationship between meaning, experience, and language (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Since our group is seeking to understand the experiences and motivations for donating IT to ACCESS Tech, we will mainly be using the essentialist approach when theorizing our data. Alternatively, a constructionist approach examines how events, realities, meanings, and experiences are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thus, using a constructionist framework is not ideal to focus on motivation within individuals which is what we are seeking to understand (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.0 Results

3.1 Themes

Our research aimed to understand donors' motivations for contributing their used technology to the ACCESS Tech donation event. Through analysis of 18 conducted interviews at the ACCESS Tech donation event, we identified prevalent themes when understanding why individuals were donating their used technology. Through thematic analysis, we identified two key themes: convenience and sustainability. Additionally, four sub-themes were further identified from the analysis: decluttering, accessibility, waste reduction, and self-satisfaction. These themes were considered significant in our analysis as they meet our prevalence criteria for the theme being present in at least five interviews.

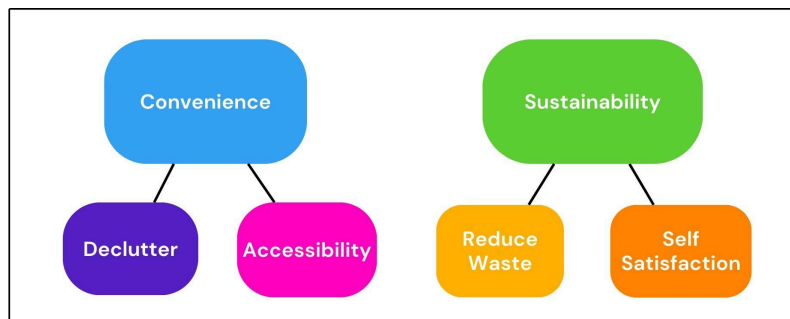


Figure 1. Thematic map of analysis for the key motivators of donating technology to the ACCESS Tech donation drive.

3.2 Convenience Sub-themes: Declutter

We found that individuals were significantly motivated to donate technology as a means to declutter their home, office, or workspace. The sub-theme of decluttering was mentioned in 16 of the 18 interviews. When analyzing the sub-theme of decluttering, it was evident that individuals face frustrations when managing excessive amounts of unneeded technology. Tech accumulation creates clutter in living and workspaces. This clutter has prompted many individuals to seek disposal options. Participant 11 articulated this sentiment and emphasized decluttering as a motivating factor:

“The incentive is to make space, get it out of our inventory, and not have to worry about it anymore.”

Similarly, Participant 9 also voiced a common frustration of managing surplus technology, underscoring the challenges of tech accumulation and the importance of having sustainable disposal options:

“We always have a lot of extra computers and monitors and stuff and we kind of just have them sitting around and we don’t know what to do with them.”

This prevalent sub-theme highlighted a significant motivating factor among participants to donate their used technology, as many tended to retain their old or unneeded technology until the event.

3.3 Convenience Sub-themes: Accessibility

The subject of accessibility emerged as a major motivating factor for donors. The sub-theme of accessibility was mentioned in 12 of 18 interviews. Many individuals emphasized the importance of ensuring ease of participation, particularly for individuals interested in contributing multiple, larger, or heavier items of technology. Despite the event’s accessibility to the McMaster community, participants expressed a desire to further enhance accessibility to encourage broader participation. Participant 1 noted the convenience of proximity while also highlighting the potential benefits of improved accessibility to further motivate donations:

“... It was super easy for me because it was a printer and I was able to carry it. If I had larger items, an incentive might be something like being able to book an appointment for someone to pick up. Or, like, to be able to come and help transport the bigger items.”

Moreover, participants stressed the importance of accessibility in facilitating participation in the donation event. Participant 2 suggested that improved accessibility measures could further incentivize and motivate donations:

“I think, again, just accessibility. Not having to walk maybe far across campus. If there were opportunities for these to kind of be remote. Having someone come with a little cart or a trailer might help some individuals. For us, we’re close by so it was not an impediment.”

These insights underscore the significance of accessibility in fostering a conducive environment for technology donation, ultimately encouraging more individuals to participate.

3.4 Sustainability Sub-themes: Reduce Waste

We found that individuals emphasized the importance of sustainability and a desire to be environmentally friendly as a motivation behind their donations. This subtheme was mentioned by participants in 15 of 18 interviews. Interviewees perceived their donation as a means to both extend the lifespan of their technology and minimize waste. Many interviewees highlighted the importance of reusing, repurposing, or recycling technology appropriately. Participant 9 underscored the sense of responsibility felt by donors in seeking environmentally friendly solutions for their technology. They emphasized the significance of providing individuals with an outlet to responsibly repurpose and recycle their technology, thereby contributing to sustainable practices. These feelings were encapsulated by a sentiment provided by Participant 8:

“I know that it’s really bad to just throw away tech and that especially when it’s functional, it’s incredibly wasteful. So, I do believe in trying to make things last for as long as possible.”

This finding from our analysis illustrates participants’ desire to be more mindful of the wastefulness associated with discarding usable technology.

3.5 Sustainability Sub-themes: Self-satisfaction

Participants expressed a sense of altruism and community-mindedness, emphasizing the positive impact their donations could have on others. The positive feeling of self-satisfaction derived from donating played a significant role as a motivating factor for individuals, as evidenced by its mention in 8 of 18 interviews. Many interviewees recognized the value of their technology and highlighted its ability to benefit others by being repurposed or reused. The uncertainty surrounding the destination of their technology when taken to e-waste facilities also motivated individuals to opt for donating their technology to the event. This was further driven by a sense of trust in the donation process and the satisfaction of knowing their contributions were making a meaningful difference as expressed by Participant 18.

“I think it’s definitely a sense of community and you feel like you’re doing something good. If you just take this to the e-waste then you don’t really know where it is going. I trust you guys and I feel like you are doing something really useful.”

Additionally, participants mentioned the excitement and fulfillment derived from knowing their technology could be repurposed or given to charities to assist those in need. Participant 6 expressed this sentiment:

“We can give it to someone in need and we can accommodate their needs as much as possible. So, we don’t dump it but we can just recycle or give it to the charities. That always makes me excited about donating devices.”

Participant 14 added:

“Feeling like you’re doing something good. I mean, technology is not easy to recycle so if it can be repurposed, that’s good motivation and knowing that there are people that can use it.”

Moreover, participants found the atmosphere at the ACCESS Tech event to be welcoming and supportive, with the provision of donuts serving as a delightful incentive. Engaging with members of the ACCESS Tech team during the event further enhanced their donation experience. The sentiment by Participant 10 encapsulates the positive ambiance and sense of appreciation that participants felt, contributing to their motivation to donate:

“I don’t know, maybe the fact there’s like, everybody is really friendly here. It never seems to be like I’m gonna get turned away. The donuts even—I didn’t even take a donut but the idea that someone is going to appreciate the contribution: it just made it feel like such a good experience.”

This sub-theme highlights the altruistic motivations behind participants' technology donations, their desire to contribute to meaningful causes, and their intent to make a positive impact through their donations. Participants also emphasized having an opportunity to reduce waste and make use of workable parts or technology, noting how it can be beneficial to both the environment and other members of the Hamilton community.

In summary, our research identified two key themes motivating participants to donate: convenience in donating technology and the importance of sustainability. Participants in the donation drive were most commonly motivated to donate their used technology to declutter their workspaces by donating their used technology, finding the ACCESS Tech donation drive to be an accessible and convenient option. Furthermore, participants in the donation drive were motivated by a desire to be environmentally conscious and sustainable. Participants recognized the value of

technology that can be put to better use by others, motivating many to donate for this purpose. Donating to a good cause and being environmentally friendly elicited positive feelings of self-satisfaction, which was further supported through incentives provided at the event. Overall, our findings underscore the multifaceted motivations behind technology donations at the ACCESS Tech donation drive.

4.0 Discussion and Recommendations

4.1 Understanding the results

Our study showed that technology donations at the ACCESS Tech event were primarily driven by personal motivations. These motivations encompassed various factors, including: decluttering an office or personal space, community engagement and giving back, and environmental consciousness. Furthermore, there was a significant emphasis on the inclination to interact with amiable event volunteers and staff, along with the extrinsic motivation associated with receiving the advertised incentive. These insights, in conjunction with peer-reviewed literature, formed the basis for a coherent set of recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficacy of future ACCESS Tech events. Such recommendations are poised to foster greater enthusiasm for technology donations, aligning closely with the overarching objective of ACCESS Tech and the rationales behind conducting this research endeavor.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on our findings and key themes, we established the following recommendations: maintain an incentive for donors, utilize testimonials in marketing campaigns to target intrinsic motivation, increase event convenience and leverage competition. We believe that these recommendations can drive donor motivation and in turn, increase technology donations to ACCESS Tech.

4.2.1 Maintain an incentive for donors

The interview data highlighted that a key motivator behind technology donations at the ACCESS Tech Event was the advertised incentive of donuts from the local shop, Donut Monster. This occurrence is not unique to the event as literature confirms that advertising an incentive often acts as a key motivational driver behind human actions (Beckmann and Heckhausen, 2018). The incentive theory of motivation describes how humans are extrinsically motivated when incentives are involved and can be used to encourage and promote certain behaviour we are interested in observing (Beckmann and Heckhausen, 2018). This theory aligns with the interview data collected in which the vast majority of participants noted their free donut was a motivational driver for their technology donation. Based on this information, we highly recommend maintaining the incentive offered to technology donors, increasing advertisements surrounding the incentive, and potentially increasing the value of the incentive itself.

4.2.2 Utilizing testimonial in marketing campaigns to target intrinsic motivation

Though extrinsic motivation, such as offering a free treat from Donut Monster with every tech donation, is an effective method to encourage donations, this tactic rarely promotes engagement beyond the immediate moment (Kácha and Ruggeri, 2019; Morris et al., 2022). Offering a balance of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to encourage a desired behaviour will increase the odds of success. Intrinsic motivation occurs when an activity or action is completed for the satisfaction or enjoyment of the activity itself, regardless of external factors such as incentives (Kácha and Ruggeri, 2019). The interview data revealed many were motivated by altruism and because they would feel good after donating to the technology drive, in other words, they were intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation instills long-term engagement and an increased chance for the repetition of specific action (Kácha and Ruggeri, 2019). It would be beneficial for ACCESS Tech donors to be intrinsically motivated as long-term engagement would result in recurring donations at events. A recommendation would be to focus on further intrinsically motivating donors. This could be done by showcasing past donors who recognized their increased self-esteem following their altruistic action of donating tech. Integrating testimonials into marketing campaigns will inspire future donations by increasing intrinsic motivation. Additionally advertising well-being benefits of tech donations is a recommendation to enhance intrinsic motivation. The impacts of this are twofold as the desire for appraisal, acceptance or status is also a motivator for human behaviour (Hladká and Hyánek, 2015). Testimonials showcase a high level of appraisal of an individual's actions and contributions to a cause. Using these in marketing can inspire further donations as new donors seek the same degree of status, acceptance and appraisal.

4.2.3 Initiate competition through the sharing of statistics around the success of previous ACCESS Tech donation drives

A very prevalent theme surrounding the motivations of tech donors involved the positive environmental impacts associated with their donations. Knowing tech donations would be either redirected to a good home or disposed of appropriately was a significant motivating factor driving donations. In numerous interviews, participants expressed a desire to better understand the impact their donations and involvement in the donation drive had on the surrounding community and the impact of the event overall on our environment. Using statistics from past ACCESS Tech events to create a competition between donors has an increased likelihood of positively impacting donor turnout. Along with the desire for appraisal, a common driver of human behaviour is the motivation to win, succeed, and put forth a strong performance (Franken and Brown, 1995). Creating an environment that encourages individuals to compete amongst each other in a friendly way motivates one another to be the best, potentially enhancing event participation (Franken and Brown, 1995). This can be tied in to the request to publicize more environmental information regarding the event by setting target donation goals in relation to past donation events or highlighting a breakdown of where donations come from whilst organizing a competition between categories. Creating opportunities for competition in relation to previous donation statistics can instill a desire to succeed and motivate donors to donate more to the

initiative. Improving post event follow up can set the stage to establish future competitive strategies moving forward.

4.2.4 Prioritizing Event Convenience

Prioritizing event convenience is an additional recommendation established from the interview data and peer-reviewed literature. Many participants highlighted in their interviews that barriers to donate surrounded inconveniences about the event location. Though the McMaster University campus makes it convenient for students and staff to bring in their donations, navigating the campus becomes challenging for potential donors from alternative locations. A large part of the McMaster campus is given the same address of 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton Ontario; orienting oneself to locate the drop off site is not convenient nor accessible. Additionally, McMaster is closed to non-authorized vehicles, forcing donors to park far away and walk over their donations or pay an expensive fee to use on campus parking. ACCESS Tech should seek to re-evaluate their pickup locations and consider moving the event to a spot more accessible by off-campus vehicles. Many also mentioned that a pickup service would increase the convenience and ease of donating. Orchestrating a pickup service that could collect donations from a few central spots away from the university may further incentivise donations. Lastly, offering trollies or carts for faculty members and McMaster staff would enable donors to transport their bulkier items more easily and could allow the event to run more smoothly, potentially increasing the number of donations received. The American Society of Hematology analyzed motivational factors of students during blood donation events and found that conveniently located donation sites were among a primary force to encourage individuals to donate blood (Demmons et al., 2007). This study was conducted on a group of college students, which aligns closely with our research given ACCESS Tech's close affiliation with McMaster University. In a separate study investigating key motivators to select an online food delivery service in the city of Bangladesh, results showed convenience, accessibility, and minimal time limitations to be primary drivers of this behaviour and led to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chowdhury, 2023). Both of these examples highlight that convenience is a significant driver for human behavioural patterns and should be prioritized at ACCESS Tech events as well.

4.3 Future Steps

Future steps for this research involve developing a guidebook or action plan based on the proposed recommendations for ACCESS Tech based on the findings from this research project in addition to cited literature and past studies. The guidebook or action plan would aim to help increase turnout, donations, and the overall impact of these initiatives. Additionally, to continue research and make this an ongoing project, it would be important to continue collecting and analyzing data related to this topic. To elaborate, further rounds of interviews with modified or enhanced questions at upcoming and future ACCESS Tech events would help solidify themes and overall findings whilst facilitating greater insight into donor motivations. Lastly, a future step would be showcasing statistics from the event more publicly with donors and others

interested in getting involved. As there was an overwhelming interest in the data behind donations, restructuring the event to track and highlight the weights and numbers of donations would create a significant engagement opportunity for the community and help to further inspire future donors.

4.4 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge and recognize the limitations present in this research project. A study limitation was that demographic data was not collected. There may have been demographic trends amongst donors which could have driven certain recommendations made. The absence of demographic data meant that conclusions and recommendations surrounding these statistics could not be drawn. As a result, it was not possible to corroborate the desired method of event promotion with demographic information. In the future, it may be beneficial to gather this data to better understand who donors are (Dobosh, 2017). The sample of 18 participants may have been too small and may have created potential gaps in knowledge. During the event, only 18 donors had agreed to participate in the research and there was no alternative time to find participants. We were subsequently restricted in sample size. At times, it was difficult to determine if we had reached code saturation and if a theme was significant as we must have found a theme to be expressed by at least approximately a third of participants to be significant. However, part of these tensions may result from researcher inexperience. In the future, if exploring another ACCESS Tech event or technology donation event, it may prove to be beneficial by being more liberal in the sample size, such as having a sample size of maximum 25 to better ascertain saturation (Malterud et al., 2016). The researchers leading this project were also students with minimal experience. Our inexperience creates concern regarding potential researcher bias and may have decreased the quality of the interviews, whereby responses were potentially not as insightful (Kalman, 2019).

4.5 Summary

This study helped evaluate the research goal of seeking to better understand the experiences and motivations for donating tech at ACCESS Tech donation events. Through a series of 18 interviews conducted, transcribed and coded, we identified a series of recommendations for future events. The collected data highlighted that many were motivated to donate technology due to personal reasons. These included: aspirations to be environmentally conscious, desires to declutter a personal workspace and motivations to give back to the community through their donations. Based on these findings, we recommend maintaining an incentive for donations, using testimonials in marketing campaigns to promote intrinsic motivation, and using competition to further motivate donations.

6.0 Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Appendix A. Interview Guide

1. What made you come out and participate in the ACCESS Tech donation drive today?
 - a. Are there any additional reasons that encouraged you to participate in the donation drive?
 - b. Can you describe for me the process you went through starting from when you heard about this event until you got here with your items today?
2. What barriers do you feel exist in donating tech?
 - a. What made it easy?
 - b. What would you change?
3. Given your experience today, what stands out as enjoyable and unenjoyable about the event?
4. What would provide a greater incentive or make donating tech easier for you?
5. When you think of ACCESS Tech, what words come to mind?
 - a. [See if you can come up with a follow-up to specific words the interviewee may answer with]
6. What are some reasons that would encourage others or yourself to donate to ACCESS Tech?
7. What kind of impact do you want to see through these donation and upcycling events in the future?
8. What questions do you have about McMaster's ACCESS Tech initiative that you would like to know more about?
10. Is there anything else important that you would like to talk about regarding your experience?