

NEXUS OVERVIEW

PLATFORM OBJECTIVES, VIEWER EXPERIENCE, & STRUCTURE



Natural History Filmmaking (NHF) is in the midst of a major paradigm shift. Audience preferences are changing, closer ties being made to conservation and production methods shifting. The BBC's Planet Earth II was 6hrs of blue-chip documentary 6 years in the making. 2089 days were spent in the field on 117 expeditions, often with 30 or 40 cases of kit to transport. That's impractical.

People don't need 8K resolution for home-streaming, but they do need large volumes of engaging content. Impact producing demands sustained interest in the viewership, so a regular output trumps one-off masterpieces. COVID-19 has brought to light the impracticality of flying film teams to locations and locally generated, unscripted content is flourishing. The Nature Nexus is an adaptable model that capitalizes on these trends.

A network of filmmaker-naturalists ('scouts') forms the core. Their number is scalable, but 50 will be used as an example. Scouts may come from any background but priority is given to those in prime position to cover an animal character's story: researchers, tour guides, rangers etc. They are given two weeks of intensive training via online theory modules and practical assignments, ideally supervised by an experienced camera operator sourced nearby. Each trained scout is contracted to film local wildlife (following a specific subject) for an hour a day, and their feeds are compiled into a livestream show. In this case, it would last for 6hrs per day (half a dozen feeds should be active at any time for variety in cross-cutting, and redundancy measures are accounted for).

The rest is simple. A pair of directors act as curators, assisted by a pair of expert naturalist-presenters who add commentary to each animal's story. They can answer viewer questions in real-time and flesh out the subjects' life stories.



NEXUS OVERVIEW

PLATFORM OBJECTIVES, VIEWER EXPERIENCE, & STRUCTURE



Further advantages of this workflow are listed below:

- the audience becomes invested in the animal characters' lives, adding depth
- naturalists themselves become the content creators, diversifying coverage
- the output volume per hours worked increases by 10-20 times
- topical issues can be addressed and viewers are better educated/ entertained
- VR filming (TBC) could give viewers agency through immersion
- the show is entirely transparent, promoting audience trust and loyalty

Currently, the Nexus is merely a concept. To realize it, three things are necessary: a logistical/ administrative framework, financial backing and/ a pre-existing audience base. The former of these is secured and successfully tested in the form of Elliot Connor's charity Human Nature Projects. This pioneered a decentralized organizational model termed 'mass individualism' that scaled it to having volunteers across 100 countries in the space of 2 months and has maintained efficient operations for over 18 months since. It is suggested that an outsourced management agreement would be formed between a backer and HNP to de-risk the network creation and admin, tapping into its networks.

As for the latter two factors, a strong showing for either one would be sufficient to launch the Nexus. Regarding costing, fees for 50 scouts at 30USD/hr would be \$546,000 annually. That value would be matched in approximately equal halves by presenter/director wages and by scout setup costs, leading to a total first-year budget requirement of \$1-1.2 million approximate. Initially, the platform could be tested at little cost with a few scouts, however a higher number improves efficiency. A conservative goal of 1 million viewers is envisioned within 12 months.

You can contact Elliot at elliottconnor@humannatureprojects.org for further info.

