

**Oregon Zoo: Zoo Quest
Portland, Oregon**



How do you capture the interest of tweens with smartphones and help them make the connection between their purchasing power and habitat destruction? For the Oregon Zoo, we did just that.

In 2014, The Acorn Group joined forces with writer Leslie Comnes to develop Zoo Quest, a program inspired by geocaching and other popular questing games. Equipped with a souvenir passport, children follow rhyming clues that successively lead to six stations dispersed through the zoo. At each station they encounter a Zoo Quest sign that answers the question and get their passport stamped. As they travel around the zoo, they begin to make the connection between their smartphones and the wildlife they are watching.

The Zoo Quest message is not about abandoning smartphones and other electronic media. Rather, it's about thinking about delaying the purchase of new media because of the cost to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Tarnished lands

Did you know electronic devices contain gold and other valuable metals?

Gold makes electronic contacts more reliable. Tin is used in solder (SAW-der) to bind components together.

But, mining these metals can be devastating. In Indonesia, miners cut down the rainforest in search of gold and tin. This reduces Asian elephant habitat and drives elephants onto roads and farms, where they may be killed. Mining also discharges mercury and other toxins into the water.

The Acorn Group created the Zoo Quest interpretive message hierarchy, Zoo Ambassador Training Manual, Zoo Quest passport, animal stamps, Zoo Quest exhibit signs, infographics, pledge sheet, and hands-on materials for the discovery carts, as well as protocol for formative and summative evaluation of the program.

Station 1

Clue:

*These animals hear each other from miles away
But when it comes to their future, they don't
have much say.
Mining the metals that electronics contain
Has damaged their habitat – and their Asian
terrain.*

Question:

*How are these animals connected to everyday
electronics?*

Global trade

What does it take to make an electronic device?

Find these components and build your cell phone:

- SILVER (PERU)
- COPPER (CHINA)
- GOLD (INDONESIA)
- TIN (SOUTH AFRICA)
- TANTALUM (CONGO KINSHASA)