

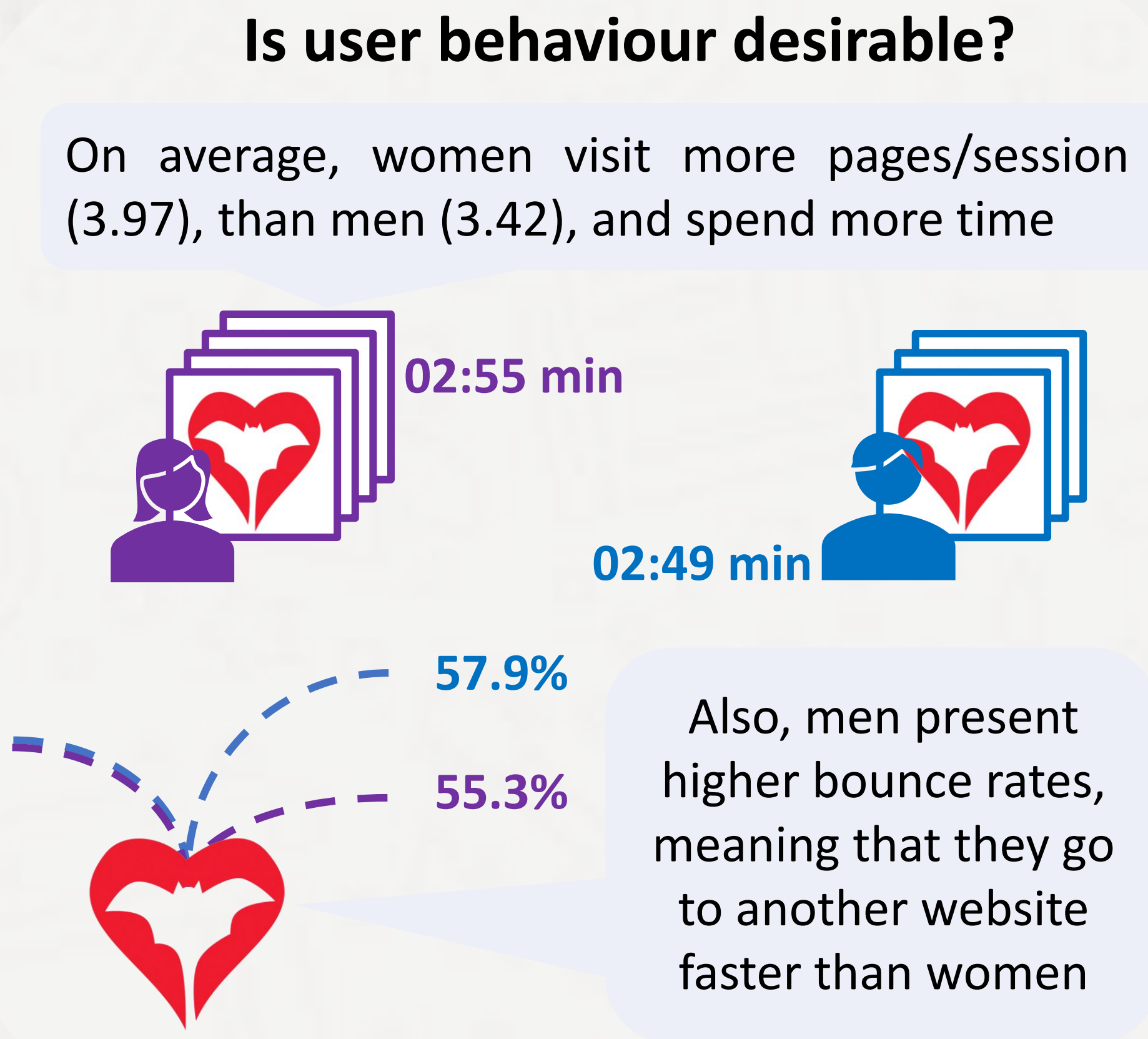
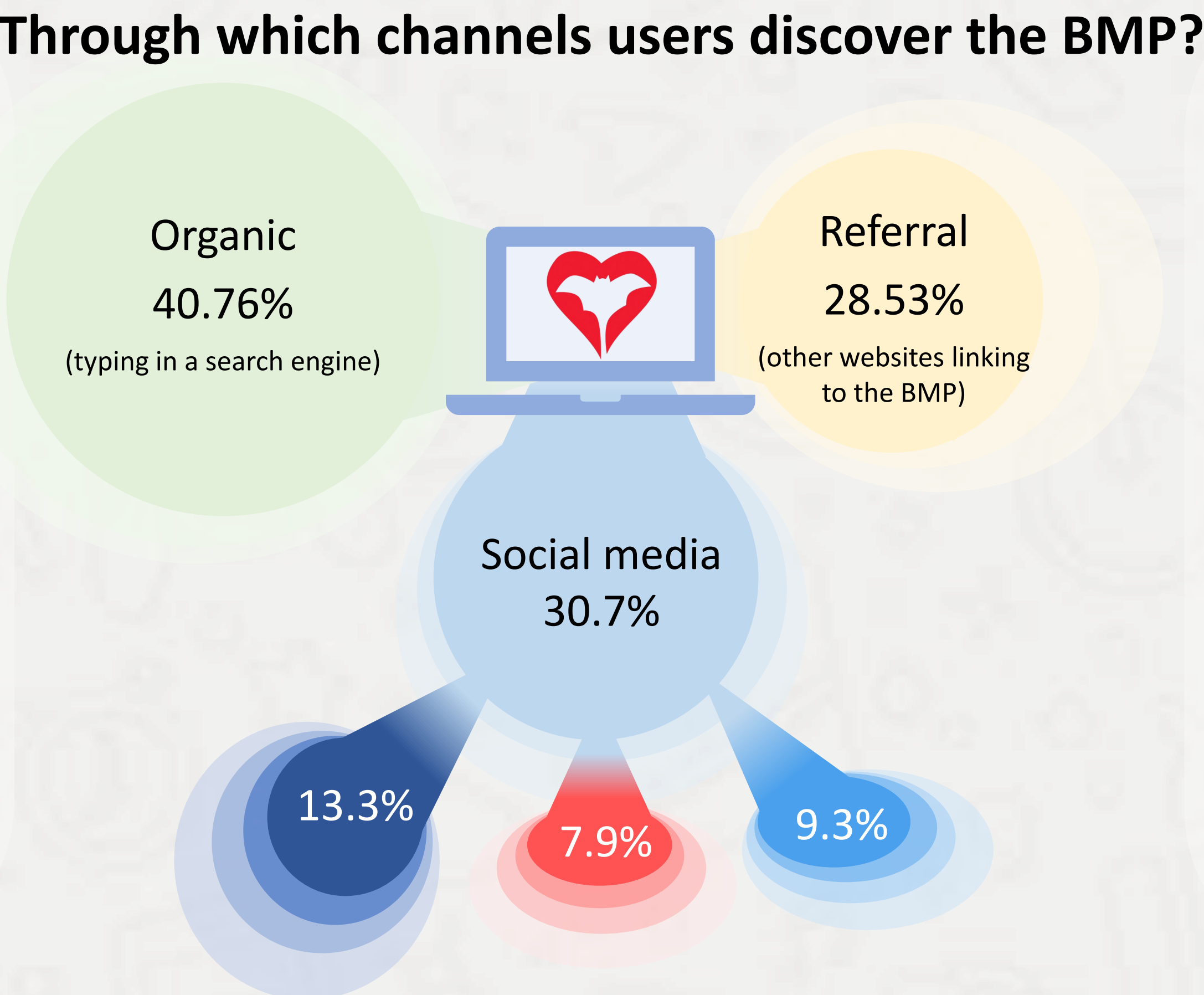
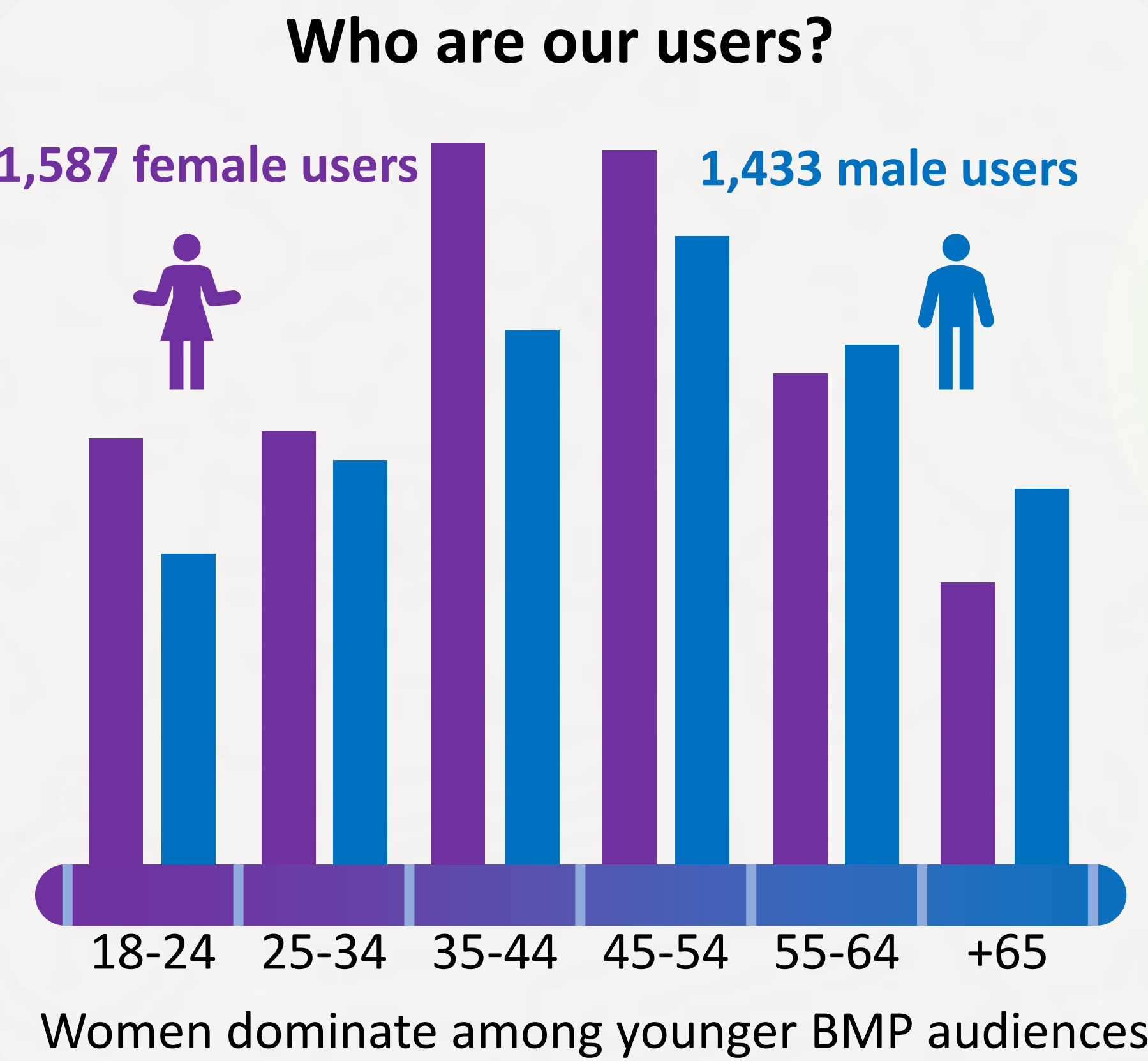
Social media as a tool to boost a citizen science project: Insights from the Bat Monitoring Programme

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The **Bat Monitoring Programme (BMP)** is a citizen science-based bat database that has been running since 2009, using the main social media pages to disseminate its results, activities, courses and to reach potential volunteers. We used the BMP as a model system to study how social media usage can be used to boost a bat citizen science project, exploring its website traffic, modelling how social media performance relates to new users visiting the website and analyzing which kinds of content work better. We also provide some guidelines for similar citizen science projects wanting to optimize their social media use.



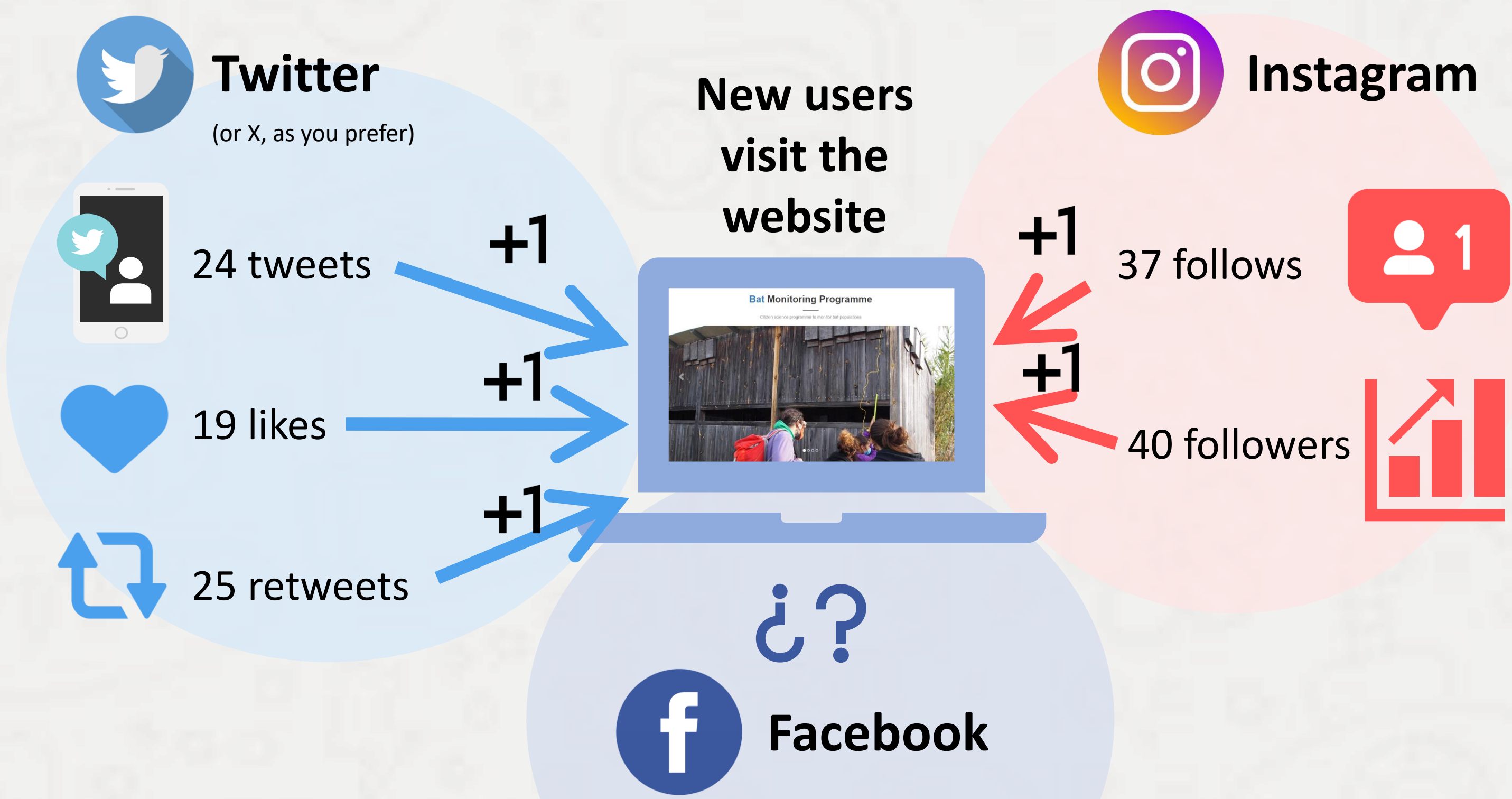
Website exploratory analysis: traffic and users



Does social media performance boosts website traffic?

GLM (Negative binomial) = New users ~ Social media metrics

(1x each platform, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram)

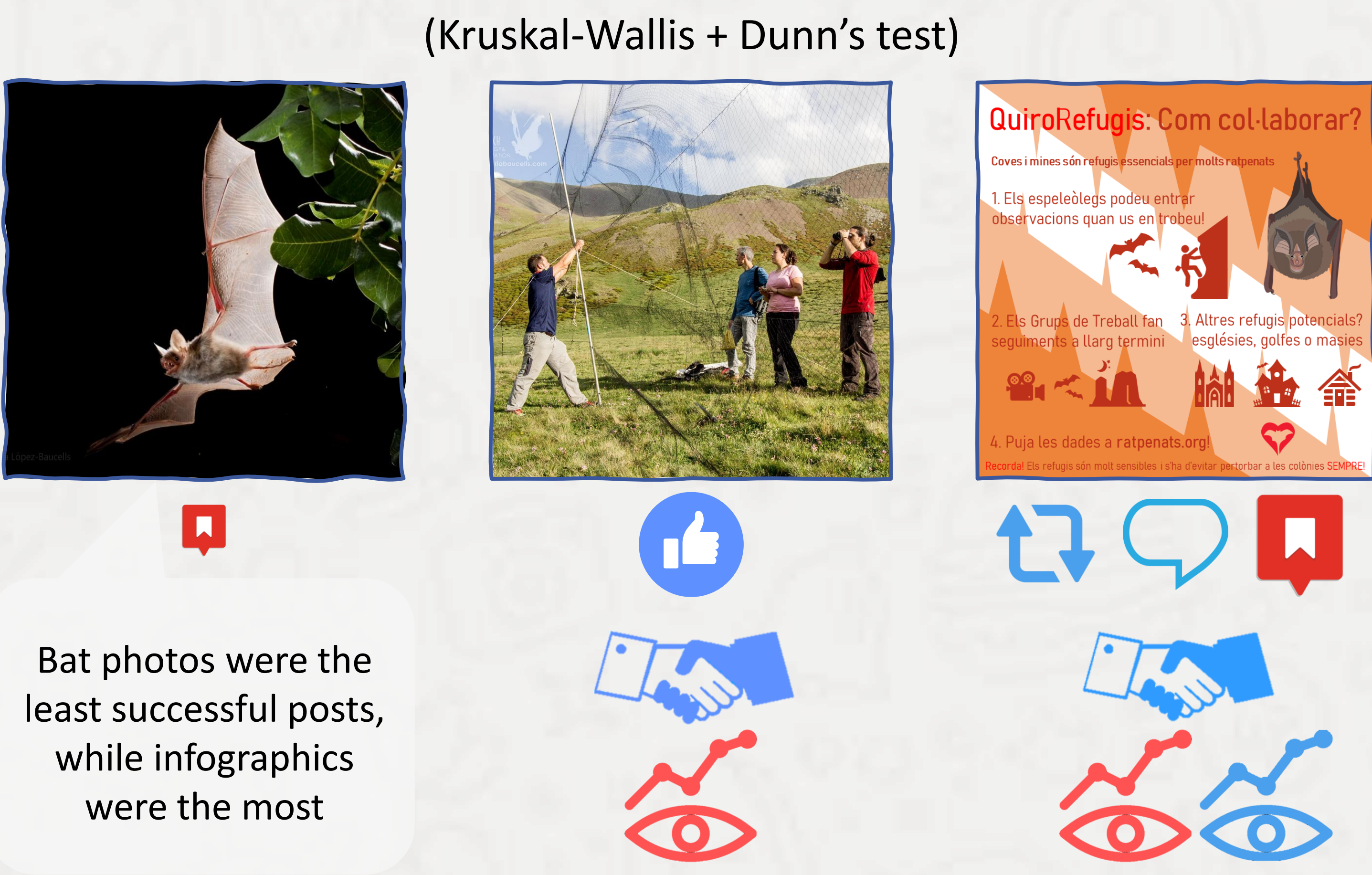


Twitter and Instagram had metrics related with BMP traffic (each variable with a $p < 0.005$), while Facebook did not appear to have any effect on it.

Which content works better in each social media page?

20 bat photos, 20 photos of people and 20 infographics

Testing their performance regarding different social metrics



How do our volunteers use social media?

Method: Unstructured questionnaire among 75 volunteers



Guidelines for the proper use of social media (in a citizen science project)

- Do not just do social media, use all the analysis tools you have, to understand it.
- A compelling narrative is crucial for the success of your project.
- Be active in Twitter, and Instagram, posting a lot and aiming to get a lot of followers, through infographics and photos showing the work behind the project.
- Posts about the conservation problems bats face may be the key in their success.
- Traditional dissemination methods should not be overlooked, as social media is mainly a complement.



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