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SMARTPHONES HELP DETECT ILLEGAL DEFORESTATION IN REAL-TIME

 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Rainforest Connection charity wants to be able to detect unauthorized logging as it happens, by hanging solar-powered smartphones from trees.

Illegal logging is a problem around the world, and we've already seen the [Malaysia Forestry Department](#) employ RFID tags to track trees if they're felled. Now environmental charity [Rainforest Connection](#) wants to be able to detect criminals in action in real-time, by hanging solar-powered smartphones from trees.

Based in California, the organization is currently undergoing a pilot project in the Air Tarusan reserve in Sumatra, whereby old Android devices will be fitted with solar panels and hung from the trees. They will be used to constantly monitor the sounds of the local environment through built-in microphones, alerting rangers when the frequencies associated with a chainsaw are detected. The system will send information back to a central database in real-time, including the location of the logging activity – enabling authorities to tackle illegal tree poaching as it happens.

Rainforest Connection aims to create an API to enable developers to create other apps that could make rainforest surveillance of all kinds easier. Are there other situations in which repurposing old smartphones as remote data-tracking devices would be fruitful?

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