4.1. Ownership of information for each collection (GOVERNANCE)

dhobern #1 March 27, 2020, 11:07am

> This is topic 4.1. in the *Governance* section of the ***Advancing the Catalogue of the World's Natural History Collections*** consultation. Use this topic to discuss the questions listed below.

Background
The basic assumption is that each institution should have primary responsibility and control for information on its collections. However, it may be appropriate to delegate full or partial responsibility to thematic, regional or national communities that have data curators able to ensure the quality and standardisation of collection records. In some contexts, where institutions have for any reason not provided authoritative information, or do not have the resources to do so, there may be reason to allow or encourage a wider user base to contribute and improve collection records. In all cases, a version history is required for the information, so that users can understand and respond to changes made by others.

Other materials

The following contributed materials are particularly relevant to this topic:

- **Presentation: Index Herbariorum - Perspectives of a Long-Standing Collection Catalog**
- **Presentation: CETAF and DiSSCo Collections Registry**
- **Presentation: ALA Collectory**

Questions

- How should ownership and access control for collection records be managed?
- How should appropriate editors be recognised and validated?
- Are there situations where automated or human intervention will be required to resolve disagreements or discrepancies?

Advancing the Catalogue of the World's Natural History Collections

---

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

Faire Avancer le Catalogue des Collections d'Histoire Naturelle du Monde

---

Presentation: Index Herbariorum - Perspectives of a Long-Standing Collection Catalog

---

Presentation: ALA Collectory

Presentation: CETAF and DiSSCo Collections Registry

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

---

3.4. Collection management systems (TECHNOLOGY)

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

---

Collections Catalogue - Daily Summaries

Integrated summary from 17 to 30 April 2020

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

---

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

---

dshorthouse #4 April 16, 2020, 6:38pm

> dhobern:
>
> How should ownership and access control for collection records be managed?

Doesn't this depend on what information needs to be managed? High level, coarse metadata about the collection is a public good. Use wikidata. However, more granular & volatile information like staff, their contact details and roles might require a heavier design with permissions & delegation.

1 Like

qgroom #5 April 17, 2020, 7:34am

The issue of ownership and access control has been a major problem, mainly due to the inactivity of collections in maintaining their metadata. Well-curated records directly from an authorized representative of an institution should remain the gold-standard for a record. I feel we should be aiming for a primary data source, which mean accepting data from third parties should not be accepted unless they can somehow be verified as an authoritative source.

Here are some ideas to encourage institutions to actively maintain their records…

1. Make the last updated date on the record prominent on the record and make it more prominent on inactive records.
2. Highlight missing data on the record.
3. Calculate and display a completeness score for the collection records.
4. Make it very easy for institutions to register and maintain their records.
5. Allow institutions to add promotional text/images so that they can take some pride in their record.

1 Like

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

Integrated summary from 17 to 30 April 2020

dshorthouse #6 April 17, 2020, 2:35pm

Items in your list are what I'd call soft, endogenous drivers. All result in some adoption through word-of-mouth. "It's easy, you should do it too!"

Another one:

6. Make it visible **who** made the last update.

All of which assumes we want & need a curated registry (early Yahoo!) vs an index (Google).

Missing in your list are the hard, exogenous drivers that resonate with institutions. "We should make this a stated duty in a staff position because…"? A significant reason for inactivity of collections in maintaining their metadata is simply staff turnover, not attrition or secession. Former staff did not inform new staff; it wasn't an institutional requirement to communicate the importance of that task. So…what would make it a top-of-the-list, institutional requirement?

1 Like

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

Integrated summary from 17 to 30 April 2020

qgroom #7 April 17, 2020, 3:22pm

I totally agree.
The parallels with persuading individuals to register and maintain their ORCID ID are very similar, but the transfer of ownership is an additional complicating factor. It also means their has to be an administrator to handle queries, which is a significant extra burden.

1 Like

elyw #8 April 24, 2020, 8:34am

+1 from me on all of those.
The only one to add is to have frequently-offered professional development so that new collection managers coming into organisations can access the information they need to learn about their obligations are to keep the collection record up to date.

1 Like

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

Integrated summary from 17 to 30 April 2020

waddink #9 April 24, 2020, 9:05am

We could work towards establishing a new role in the institutions, that becomes responsible for maintaining the digital information describing collections, specimen datasets, the institute and its facilities and services. Since providing access to the collections for science is a key role for natural history museums, it is important to have this in place. In ELViS designs we call this the institute moderator role.

1 Like

pzermoglio #10 April 24, 2020, 3:34pm

I think this is key:

> qgroom:
>
> 4. Make it very easy for institutions to register and maintain their records.

Establishing a new role in institutions, as @waddink suggests, would be ideal in theory, but in practice, at least in some parts of the world, there is only one person in charge of a collection (even of a whole, small, museum!), having to fulfill the roles of curator, manager, "IT" person, communicator, etc., all on their own. Adding another role for those people could represent more burden than help, so the ease to create and maintain records should be of high priority.
There probably is something to be said also about recognition of the efforts associated with roles, which could encourage people to actively take those roles. If there could be a way to credit people (not in the "oh, yes, thanks for what you do" way, but something a little more "formal"), taking up new roles may be more appealing. I guess this is more towards the social side of issues, but I think very related to the sense of ownership.

4 Likes

neilcobb #11 April 28, 2020, 4:11pm

One of the goals of the NSF-ADBC program was to engage higher-level administrators at each institution. At least in the US I think this is still a huge problem.

Collections Catalogue - Daily Summaries

Integrated summary from 17 to 30 April 2020

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

pzermoglio #12 April 29, 2020, 7:17pm

From @maperalta in the **Spanish thread**

Regarding access control, at a national level [Argentina] there are previous experiences under the regulation of the [Biological Data] National System (SNDB).

bsterner #13 April 29, 2020, 9:53pm

There have been some important research advances we should consider on how indigenous cultural labels and knowledge can be incorporated into Western scientific databases. Especially for descriptions of archeological, genetic, or cultural heritage collections, this is a serious issue for overcoming ethical limitations of past and present research that do not fully respect or benefit indigenous peoples. I think the main point here is to proactively support future projects that would incorporate indigenous cultural labels and worldviews in collection descriptions.

Gupta, Neha, Sue Blair, and Ramona Nicholas. 2020. "What We See, What We Don't See: Data Governance, Archaeological Spatial Databases and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in an Age of Big Data." Journal of Field Archaeology 45 (sup1): S39–S50. doi:10.1080/00934690.2020.1713969.

Cherry, Alissa, and Keshav Mukunda. 2015. "A Case Study in Indigenous Classification: Revisiting and Reviving the Brian Deer Scheme." Cataloging & Classification Quarterly 53 (5-6): 548–67.

Moulaison Sandy, Heather, and Jenny Bossaller. 2017. "Providing Cognitively Just Subject Access to Indigenous Knowledge Through Knowledge Organization Systems." Cataloging & Classification Quarterly 55 (3): 129–52. doi:10.1080/01639374.2017.1281858.

Duarte, Marisa Elena, and Miranda Belarde-Lewis. 2015. “Imagining: Creating Spaces for Indigenous Ontologies.” Cataloging & Classification Quarterly 53 (5-6). Routledge: 677–702. doi:10.1080/01639374.2015.1018396.

Decolonalising geographical names in collections data

Extending, enriching and integrating data