4.5. Incentives for contributors (GOVERNANCE)

dhobern #1 March 27, 2020, 11:15am

> This is topic 4.5. 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

Relatively little effort may be required for each institution to register and manage its own collection records. However, the stability of the system will depend on continued effort from these institutions or from other parties to correct errors and outdated information. There should be clear benefits or incentives encouraging stakeholders to contribute this effort. A key goal should be to ensure that the catalogue contributes usefully for the work of collection managers and taxonomists. Acknowledgement of contributions may also be valuable.

Other materials

The following contributed presentation is particularly relevant to this topic:

- **Presentation: CETAF and DiSSCo Collections Registry**

Questions

- What are the incentives for different contributors to maintain information in the catalogue?
- How can these be maximised?

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

Presentation: CETAF and DiSSCo Collections Registry

Collections Catalogue - Daily Summaries

Integrated summary from 17 to 30 April 2020

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

Advancing the Catalogue of the World's Natural History Collections

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

Adelantando el Catálogo de Colecciones de Historia Natural del Mundo

建立《全球自然历史馆藏名录》

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neilcobb #4 April 28, 2020, 4:24pm

If you develop a process that does not require their direct involvement then life will be easier…much easier!

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》

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pzermoglio #5 April 28, 2020, 9:54pm

@neilcobb True, but not for long, as they will complain because they were not involved :)

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pzermoglio #6 April 28, 2020, 9:54pm

Some enticements I can think of are:

- **Free advertisement.** The catalogue should look good (professional but friendly), and make institutions look good. For example, it was mentioned in some other thread the possibility of allowing collections/institutions to include their logos and else. This would be a kind of "free advertisement" of the collections, which can work both towards attaining financial aid and on people's pride of their own work. Some kind of newsletter could be thought of too, where every now and then some set of collections and their value are highlighted to the broad community.
- **Tool for internal work** . If easy to manage and maintain, it could be a tool for the collections that helps them to:
  - get the numbers they need to report for their periodical internal assessments.
  - more easily assess where to direct efforts (digitization, curation of different types of materials like field notes, etc.).
  - allow discovery of own value by showing ways in which institutions/collections can be seen, other perspectives of own value which might not have been in the mind of the collection at the time.
  - identify potential collaborations with other collections.
- **Recognition.** The catalogue should provide a means of acknowledging peoples' work in their different roles.

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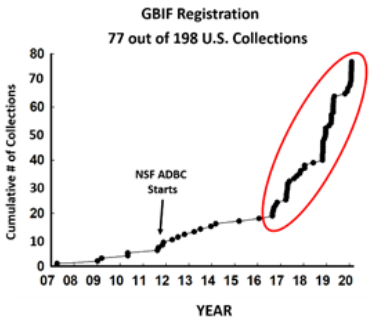
neilcobb #7 April 28, 2020, 10:18pm

I coordinate **SCAN**, which serves data from 210 North American arthropod collections. Once a collection is set up they do not have to do much. I have had complaints that metadata or data is not correct, I have never had anyone complain that they were not directly involved enough. SCAN is set up so they can change their own metadata and edit their own records. But it is set up nicely so that data providers do not have to do much more than produce data.

In 2017 I changed my tactic in terms of getting collections registered with GBIF. I said I would do essentially do all the work (not a lot to do anyway but…) and my success rate went way up.



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pzermoglio #8 April 29, 2020, 4:04am

(Sorry in advance if this is drifting away from the original topic…)

@neilcobb Neil, I think maybe my answer before was a bit brief to clearly express my thoughts. I do wholeheartedly agree with you that if things are easy for people they tend to participate more. This may involve lowering the technical threshold as well as the time needed spent on getting on board.
The experience you shared about SCAN is a great one (thanks!). It clearly shows your point, but I think I also see a couple of things that would probably need to be discussed further:

- someone has to take care of the work if not the collections themselves (in the SCAN case it was you). Of course technology could help quite a bit in this, automating a lot of steps and making it more friendly to work with. Yet the helpdesk, at one or more points of the process, never goes away. (In my view it *should never* go away.). I can imagine that dealing with over 200 collections must be time consuming, even if as you say it is not a lot. Do you think a system where one person or a few take care of the thing is scalable to a world catalogue? Or rather, how do you think we could scale it? Who and how should do the work you are doing at a global scale, and how do we fund that.
- We probably want collections to be as involved as they want to be. Making things easier, absolutely, but trying to avoid "personalism" at an organizational scale as much as possible. I believe when people can take action on themselves, and not depend entirely on what others do or decide, they can see their participation matters and they can feel the projects as their own. I think such sense of ownership will be important mostly when thinking of sustainability in the long-term. So long story short, in my ideal world people would be enabled (with awesome tools and toys that make their lives easier) rather than served. Does that make sense?

(but note that some of this may be coming from me being a freak and always wanting to know the details of how the back-ends work :) I recognize not everyone may have the same interest and/or time to spend in this and might want and/or need someone else to do it).

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neilcobb #9 April 29, 2020, 1:07pm

@pzermoglio I agree completely

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frederikberger #10 April 29, 2020, 3:11pm

Recently I discussed with collection managers the possibility of acknowledging work through collection metrics and was quite surprised by the negative response. Documenting people's work makes it also possible to control their work and there was a strong feeling against any form of public recognition. However, this is probalby more a topic that has to be dealt with at institutional level

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pzermoglio #11 April 29, 2020, 7:24pm

From **@maperalta** in the **Spanish thread**

Incentives: assignment of greater value when applying for funds and acknowledgement of all the community of the existence of valuable material.

1 Like

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pzermoglio #12 April 29, 2020, 8:44pm

From **@ErikaSalazar** in this **Spanish thread**

- Grants programme (training courses, funds for projects aimed at improving the collection) that could be applied to by those who have the record up to date. For this it is important to define how often should updates happen.
- Experts tours payed by GBIF to improve taxonomic resolution of the collections that have the record up to date.
- Free licenses for specialized data management systems.