Conference Abstract

Advancing the Catalogue of the World's Natural History Collections

Donald Hobern[‡,§], Deborah L Paul[|], Tim Robertson[‡], Quentin Groom[¶], Barbara Thiers[#], Alex Asase[¤], Maofang Luo[«], Patrick Semal[»], Matt Woodburn[^], Eliza Zschuschen[ˇ]

‡ Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Copenhagen, Denmark
§ International Barcode of Life, Canberra, Australia
| Florida State University, Tallahassee, United States of America
¶ Meise Botanic Garden, Meise, Belgium
# The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, United States of America
¤ University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana
« Chinese Academy of Science, Beijing, China
» Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels, Belgium
^ Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom
ˇ The National Herbarium of Suriname, Paramaribo, Suriname

Abstract

Information about natural history collections helps to map the complex landscape of research resources and assists researchers in locating and contacting the holders of specimens. Collection records contribute to the development of a fully interlinked biodiversity knowledge graph (Page 2016), showcasing the existence and importance of museums and herbaria and supplying context to available data on specimens. These records also potentially open new avenues for fresh use of these collections and for accelerating their full availability online.

A number of international (e.g., Index Herbariorum, GRSciColl) regional (e.g. DiSSCo and CETAF) national (e.g., ALA and the Living Atlases, iDigBio US Collections Catalog) and institutional networks (e.g., The Field Museum) separately document subsets of the world's collections, and the Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG) Collection Descriptions Interest Group is actively developing standards to support information sharing on

collections. However, these efforts do not yet combine to deliver a comprehensive and connected view of all collections globally.

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) received funding as part of the European Commission-funded SYNTHESYS+ 7 project to explore development of a roadmap towards delivering such a view, in part as a contribution towards the establishment of DiSSCo services within a global ecosystem of collection catalogues. Between 17 and 29 April 2020, a coordination team comprising international representatives from multiple networks ran *Advancing the Catalogue of the World's Natural History Collections*, a fully online consultation using the GBIF Discourse forum platform to guide discussion around 26 consultation topics identified in an initial Ideas Paper (Hobern et al. 2020). Discussions included support for contributions in Spanish, Chinese and French and were summarised daily throughout the consultation.

The consultation confirmed broad agreement around the needs and goals for a comprehensive catalogue of the world's natural history collections, along with possible strategies to overcome the challenges. This presentation will summarise the results and recommendations.

Keywords

collections, catalogue, Index Herbariorum, DiSSCo, CETAF, GBIF, GRSciColl, ALA, iDigBio

Presenting author

Donald Hobern

Presented at

TDWG 2020

Funding program

References

- Hobern D, Asase A, Groom Q, Luo M, Paul D, Robertson T, Semal P, Thiers B, Woodburn M, Zschuschen E (2020) Advancing the Catalogue of the World's Natural History Collections v2.0. GBIF Secretariat. https://doi.org/10.35035/p93g-te47
- Page R (2016) Towards a biodiversity knowledge graph. Research Ideas and Outcomes 2 https://doi.org/10.3897/rio.2.e8767