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Conference Abstract

A Workflow for Adding Specimen Metadata to Images Captured in the Field

Richard Levy ‡

‡ Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver, United States of America

Abstract

Museum collections and their use is bolstered by supplying robust and comprehensive metadata and supplementary assets, such as genetic samples, methodology metadata, and images. In speaking with and working alongside scientists interested in using museum specimen data for addressing ecological questions, it has often been brought up that understanding the context in which a specimen was collected can lend helpful insight. One such way of adding contextual information to our collections is the capture of in situ and habitat images in the field during collection. Managing and linking such images with specimen data poses a logistical challenge.

Collections managers and field researchers at the Denver Botanic Gardens have created a workflow that allows for the recording of image metadata in the field and the eventual addition of Darwin Core occurrence metadata to in situ and habitat field image files. Designated field photographers, a role that can be filled by volunteers or paid field assistants, record information pertaining to each image they capture. Upon returning from the field, the data is uploaded to a MySQL database, alongside associated specimen and site data. The data is then queried in the form of a script and utilizing the ExifTool application, the information is then added to the XMP metadata of the image. Having this data embedded within the image not only aids in linking the corresponding field images with their specimen records, but also in the downstream management and access to images from the field. Here I present the current workflow we have developed and how its use has aided our effort to curate data rich specimens and images.

Keywords

collectons, images, field, metadata, Darwin Core

Presenting author

Richard Levy