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Conference Abstract

Biodiversity Community Cyberinfrastructure in the Specify Collections Consortium

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Abstract

The Specify Collections Consortium ("SCC") is a member-funded organization currently comprised of 70 biodiversity collection institutions--universities, research centers, and government agencies from around the globe. In 2018, the SCC was created as a follow-on to the Specify Software Project that had a 20-year history as a US NSF grant funded biological collections software engineering and technical support project. Founding members of the Consortium include the National Natural History Museum of Denmark, and in the United States, the Universities of Florida, Michigan, and Kansas. The SCC plans to build on its open-source collections computing platforms to bring research analysis and integration to the collections curation environment. The inclusion and integration of genetic data standards, Nagoya Protocol business rules, and biogeographical analysis in Specify platforms will extend museum digitization and cataloging to engage collections in broader computational communities, for increased research, educational, and policy impact. Significant investments by the South African National Biodiversity Institute, the Natural History Museum of Geneva, and regional collections in additional countries are contributing to the Consortium's growth and financial sustainability. Code contributions from Consortium members have supplemented their financial commitments to produce capabilities that immediately benefit all members. We will present an update on the Specify Consortium's progress during its first 1.5 years, and outline its near- and long-term priorities for collections community engagement and technological innovation.

Keywords

open source, collaborative computing, sustainable cyberinfrastructure, institutional membership consortium, collections databases, technical support, cloud hosting

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