

Conference Abstract

Interoperability, Attribution, and Value in the Web of Natural History Museum Data

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Abstract

Collections, aggregators, collaborative digitization projects, publishers, researchers, and external users are actors in a complex web of biological specimen data interactions, workflows, and pipelines. The software that mediates interactions among these diverse players enables the creation and delivery of species occurrence data from specimens to a growing set of research data consumers. Informaticists have made great strides in developing the individual services, standards and functions; researchers can now almost effortlessly discover and access massive amounts of museum data to address important, integrative science questions. We need to continue to refine individual tools and capabilities that are part of collection data pipelines, and more emphasis is needed on better integration to ensure the automatic transfer of data--enabling museum data pipelines to work with little or no manual intervention. Also, in order for community systems to benefit all parties, specimen data resources not only need to be efficiently aggregated downstream, but 'value adds' need to flow in the reverse direction--upstream to collections, for their benefit, to recognize their role and facilitate their sustainability. There are valuable, un-realized benefits that collections could be accruing from their participation in aggregation architectures and from the subsequent use of their data by researchers. The Biodiversity Collections Network, a US NSF-funded Research Coordination Network project is planning a series of workshops in collaboration with other collections community groups to identify gaps and one-way traps in the collections data pipeline. The meetings will explore pathways for more effective integration and value distribution in the chain that

connects collections, aggregators and data consumers. This talk will highlight relevant examples and outline BCoN's vision in this area.

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