

BHL User Feedback Management Report

The User Feedback Management Working Group (UFMWG) seeks support and guidance from the BHL Members Council to shape the way the BHL Consortium responds to requests, questions, and other feedback from users of the BHL website and services. Member institutions are asked to consider supporting BHL users by offering staff time to assist with the triage and response to user inquiries about use of the BHL website, metadata/cataloging errors, scan requests, QA problems, image licensing inquiries, and other questions and suggestions offered to BHL by its community.

While the UFMWG's preference is for an additional FTE for the BHL Secretariat to manage BHL User Feedback, it is understood that this is not a possibility given BHL's resources. UFMWG also recognizes that even if such a position were provided, one FTE cannot be expected to manage all of BHL's User Feedback alone – assistance from consortium staff will always be needed to support user inquiries.

See [Appendix A](#) for a detailed list of Feedback Management Tasks directly pulled from the [Staff Meeting Presentation](#).

UFMWG has considered a wide range of solutions to building a scalable and sustainable model for managing BHL's User Feedback. UFMWG proposes the following changes, some technical, some policy-oriented, in order to maximize BHL's level of customer service given limited resources and while minimizing staff time:

- **Empower Users.** Rely upon more descriptive auto-response emails and a more robust FAQ to help users help themselves.
- **Enhance User Triage.** Enable users to self-triage through more (and more descriptive) "Type" options on the BHL webform and within our backend system (Gemini). Reduce confusion and user error by merging BHL's two webforms such that all Types are accessible from one webform.
- **Redirect Reference.** Eliminate time consuming research questions by having staff refer such 'true' reference questions to brick and mortar libraries (preferably BHL partner libraries).
- **Do Not Respond to Scan Requests.** Only respond to users submitting scan requests if the item is in copyright or not held by any BHL library.

However, the need for staff support remains. Tasks include, but are not limited to:

1. Triageing non-scan requests, including redirecting reference questions
2. Responding to users with technical problems (PDFs, scientific names, refer to tech team)
3. Carrying out the metadata edits and digital object corrections revealed by users
4. Responding to users with policy questions (membership, contributor, permissions)
5. Responding to internal staff queries on open tickets (policy, protocol, best practices)
6. Moderating open tickets (including, periodically, the Scan Request Pool)
7. Maintaining the FAQ, auto-response emails, and any boilerplate text and canned responses
8. Manning scan request queue (could also turn into metadata edits).

The UFMWG has considered an alternative idea for managing the scan requests we receive from users. The idea is to **Utilize a Scan Request Pool**. This would implement a self-serve model of creating an institution's digitization queue. Instead, the open pool of scan requests will be available to all consortium members to select titles when ready to digitize. The UFMWG is concerned that this work would ultimately fall to the institution with the highest digitization throughput (SIL).

While the UFMWG continues to explore various methods for distributing this work among the staff of BHL Consortium Institutions, the Working Group requires more knowledge of what is feasible and reasonable for each institution.

Here is an overview of the work that the UFMWG did to reach its conclusions:

1. Updated the Current Auto Response Email to reflect current staffing
 - a. Sets user expectations lower so that they do not expect a response
 - b. Limitation: email cannot contain html, so hyperlinked text is not available (the questions cannot direct the user to their answer, and the urls for the wiki pages are long and unwieldy), and neither are bulleted lists (Tech Team can enable this with some work).
 - c. See [Appendix B](#) for new (now current) wording
2. Literature Review
 - a. Focused on best practices for Distributed/Collaborative Asynchronous Virtual Reference Services
 - b. See [Appendix C](#) for a list of selected resources
3. Environmental Scan (Webforms)
 - a. Looked at other digital libraries' webforms to get a sense of how other libraries are using user triage to add automation to their practices.
4. Sample of BHL Institution Practices (Reference Services)

- a. Asked BHL institutions re: current reference practices
 - b. Non-universities (most BHL institutions) have less staff and less (or no) documentation of practices, fast response times for internal requests, slower ones for external ones, no slower than 1 week.
 - c. See [Appendix D](#) for the questions we asked
- 5. BHL Policies & Guiding Documents
 - a. Looked to the Strategic Plan for guidance
 - b. <https://biodivlib.wikispaces.com/About#Strategic%20Plan>
 - c. See [Appendix E](#) for highlights from the Plan
- 6. Additional Tools from Countersoft Gemini
 - a. looked into what possibilities are available in the software that we use that we might be able to implement in order to improve efficiency
 - b. Example: email directly from the system, rather than using home institution email
 - c. Example: automatic emails triggered by age of issue, etc.
- 7. Models of Service
 - a. Came up with concepts for multiple models of staffing the service at a 'level 4' without using a new hire or using Secretariat time - none were perfect, and all rely on some level of staffing from the Member institutions.

See [Appendix F](#) for our estimates of work time.

See [Appendix G](#) for one concept of dividing up the work via new Types in Gemini.

Appendix A

Feedback Management Tasks

As outlined in the 2015 Staff Meeting Presentation

- 1. Gemini Admin [Secretariat]
 - System maintenance / upgrades [Secretariat]
 - Register new accounts
 - Manage system settings and customization options
 - Communicate with Countersoft (Vendor)
 - Staff Communication & Training [Secretariat]
 - Develop and share best practices and workflows
 - Create and maintain documentation
 - Train staff on use of the Gemini system
- 2. Triage Incoming Issues

- Categorize and standardize incoming issues
 - Assign Component, Priority, etc
 - Alter issue title (to match item title) if needed
 - Link issues together as needed
- Assign incoming issues to the correct Resource(s)
 - Portal Edits to contributor or Portal Editing Queue
 - Tech questions to Tech Team (and/or TAG?)
 - Scan requests to holding libraries
 - QA issues to contributing library
- 3. Respond to Users
 - Send canned responses when possible (~12 pre-made)
 - Confirm scan request now in queue
 - Image reuse requests
 - Can't scan – not held / in copyright
 - Send custom responses as needed
 - 'True Reference'
 - Interface between Tech Team and users
 - Follow up on issues assigned to others
 - Clarification questions
 - Perform minor work / Assign 'major' work
 - Re-generate PDFs
 - Merge Author Names as requested
 - Add items to Portal Edit / Pagination queues
 - Research convoluted publication histories
 - Inform users when work is complete (optional?)
 - Build relationships / support BHL
 - Reply to user replies
 - Solicit "BHL and Our Users" Posts
 - Record user praise in "Testimonials"
- 4. Moderate all open issues
 - Check in on open issues (follow up)
 - Re-prioritize issues as needed (age, duplication)
 - Revive stagnant issues long overdue
 - Reassign issues as needed
 - Ensure resequencing, linking, etc occurs before close
 - Communication
 - Reinforce protocol / best practices (as set by Admin)
 - Statistics
 - Update issue metadata as needed
 - Report stats on Staff Calls
- 5. Respond to Staff
 - Provide Feedback as requested by staff
 - Essentially, provide consultation services
 - Respond to requests for assistance when assigned
 - Answer policy questions
 - Weigh in on decisions
 - Suggest other resources
 - Monitor particularly challenging issues

- Follow complex issues
 - Moderate at a more granular level
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Appendix B

Auto-Response Email - revised (now current)

Subject: BHL Feedback Received

Thank you for contacting the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) with your feedback.

We received your comments as follows:

URL: *[url of the page the user was on]*

[comments from user]

BHL is voluntarily staffed by our Partner Libraries (<http://biodivlib.wikispaces.com/BHL+Consortium>). We are limited in our ability to respond personally to each contact with our patrons. We appreciate your patience. A BHL staff member may contact you if we require further information or clarification.

In the meantime, you may find useful information on our Help Pages (<http://biodivlib.wikispaces.com/help>). For example:

- * When will the title I requested be available in BHL? What is the Scan Request process?
- * How can I download a book / series of pages / single image from BHL?
- * Can I reuse your images? If I do, how would BHL like me to attribute them?
- * What link should I use when I cite BHL items in my published research?
- * Where can I find information about supporting the BHL as an individual or institution?

Thank you for your continued use and support of the Biodiversity Heritage Library. We appreciate your feedback!

With thanks,

Biodiversity Heritage Library | www.biodiversitylibrary.org

Appendix C

Selected Items from Literature Review

Focused on Distributed/Collaborative Asynchronous Virtual Reference

- a. IFLA award-winning paper written by BHL staff!
 - "Heeding the Call: User Feedback Management and the Digital Library"
 - <https://repository.si.edu/handle/10088/16155>
- b. ALA has "Guidelines for Implementing and Maintaining Virtual Reference Services" that seem to address our situation:
 - <http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/virtrefguidelines>
 - See section 3.4 - "Collaborative Virtual Reference" (focus on the best practices provided regarding "asynchronous virtual reference")
- c. ALA also has "Guidelines for Cooperative Reference Services"
 - <http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinescooperative>
- d. Additionally, ALA offers "Virtual Reference Companion : A Guide for VR Coordinators and Librarians"
 - <http://www.ala.org/rusa/vrc>
 - see: staffing/partners
- e. IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines
 - <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/reference-and-information-services/publications/ifla-digital-reference-guidelines-en.pdf>
- f. Digital Reference Triage: Factors Influencing Question Routing and Assignment
 - <http://quartz.syr.edu/rdlankes/Publications/Journals/triage.pdf>
- g. A Model of the Reference and Information Service Process
 - <http://blog.rusq.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Agosto-et-al.pdf>
- h. Internet Public Library [a cautionary tale]
 - <http://www.ipl.org/div/about/>
 - folks might be interested in this as a case study, closed after nearly 20 years of reference service, staffed mainly by volunteers (or people who were voluntold through their reference course in library school...). Perhaps there are some lessons to learn from this?

Appendix D

Questions Re: Reference Services

1. Does [institution] have a set turnaround time for answering questions?
 2. Are internal/external patrons treated differently?
 3. What is the approximate volume of questions? [institution] as a whole? For [biodiversity subject area] specifically?
 4. How many staff members are answering questions? For [institution] as a whole? For [biodiversity subject area] specifically?
 5. Does [institution] have any boilerplate text or rules about how responses should be worded?
 6. Where do responses from [institution] come from (generic email address or personal email of answerers)?
 7. Is this a documented policy or just informal guidelines? If there is documentation, can you provide it, and can it be shared internally in BHL?
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Appendix E

BHL Strategic Plan Notes

BHL Strategic Plan: <https://biodivlib.wikispaces.com/About#Strategic%20Plan>

[Text from BHL Strategic Plan, emphasis added.]

Goal 5: Mission Enabling : Ensure our success through increased financial strength, effective administrative support, and organizational excellence : **Maintain effective administrative support and organizational excellence by ensuring communication strategies with our users are open and responsive.**

Value Statements

Stewardship : BHL **must be trustworthy, reliable and accountable to its users**, sponsors, members and partners. We **operate with transparency** and adhere to the highest ethical standards to ensure this trust and to ensure access to BHL digital content now and into the future.

Service : The BHL **serves the world of biodiversity researchers and those interested in biodiversity** through aggregation and stewardship of the digital files and through improving discoverability and user interfaces and increasing opportunities for research and interpretation.

Engagement : By **engaging with user communities across the globe** the BHL will support discovery and innovative uses of open access biodiversity information to **facilitate dialogue** about scientific issues within social and cultural contexts.

International Workings : Working across institutional and political boundaries, the BHL engages with partners across the globe in building content, repatriating literature, supporting partners, **innovative approaches to long- term capacity building and sustainability of this global resource**, harmonising content and rights issues.

Inspiration : The BHL stimulates curiosity about nature and culture, inspiring people to learn, explore, and better understand their role and impact in this world.

Leadership : The BHL **aspires to leadership in the realms of digital libraries, collaboration**, and open access for biodiversity literature.

Appendix F

UFMWG's **guestimate** as to what % FTE is needed for each of the following tasks:

1. Triaging non-scan requests, including redirecting reference questions - 20%
2. Responding to users with technical problems (PDFs, scientific names, refer to tech team) - 5%
3. Carrying out the metadata edits and digital object corrections revealed by users -20%
4. Responding to users with policy questions (membership, contributor, permissions) - 10%
5. Responding to internal staff queries on open tickets (policy, protocol, best practices) - 20% (**secretariat**)
6. Moderating open tickets (including, periodically, the Scan Request Pool) - 20%
7. Maintaining the FAQ, auto-response emails, and any boilerplate text and canned responses - 5% (**secretariat**)
8. Manning scan request queue, could also turn into metadata edits: 50%

Therefore: **1.5 FTEs at minimum. With .25 coming from secretariat, so 1.25?**

However, this work would likely be distributed across multiple areas of work, and take more time as it gets distributed among multiple staff members. Additionally, work is already underway as part of the following dependencies:

Task Area	Responsibility
Gemini issue tracking system administration	Digital Collections Manager
Copyright/Permissions management	Digital Collections Manager
Committee work	Various: Cataloging, Membership, Technical Team
Digitization work	BHL Staff
Curation work: portal edits & metadata corrections, QA issues, etc.	BHL Staff
Documentation updates	BHL Staff + Digital Collections Manager

Appendix G

A basic model / combination of ideas

What the user would see on the website:

I want to.... [Please select one]

- 1) Request that a title be digitized and added to the BHL.
- 2) Report incorrect metadata or bibliographic information
- 3) Report a problem with BHL's image files, website, or services
- 4) Inquire about copyright or image licensing for items in the BHL.
- 5) Inquire about how I or my organization can work with the BHL.

What BHL staff would see in Gemini:

These options are automatically sorted into one of 5 workspaces: SCAN, META, TECH, USE, or JOIN. (workspace names are limited to a maximum of 4 characters)

FTE Percentages above are mapped to these workspace.

WG's **guestimate** as to what % FTE is needed for each of the following tasks:

1. Triageing non-scan requests, including redirecting reference questions
 - a. 20% with 5% each to META, TECH, USE, JOIN
2. Responding to users with technical problems (PDFs, scientific names, refer to tech team)
 - a. 5% to TECH
3. Carrying out the metadata edits and digital object corrections revealed by users
 - a. 20% to META (does not include work of CAT and EDIT)
4. Responding to users with policy questions (membership, contributor, permissions)
 - a. 10% to JOIN
5. Responding to internal staff queries on open tickets (policy, protocol, best practices)
 - a. 20% to Secretariat
6. Moderating open tickets (including, periodically, the Scan Request Pool)
 - a. 20% - 5% each to TECH, META, JOIN, USE
7. Maintaining the FAQ, auto-response emails, and any boilerplate text and canned responses
 - a. 5% to Secretariat
8. Manning scan request queue, could also turn into metadata edits
 - a. 50% to SCAN

1 -> SCAN = scan request workspace. Digitizing Partners pull from there and add info when researching. Moderator looks at all incoming and redirects in-copyright items and other inappropriate things. That person also dedupes with existing, open requests (increase priority if needed), as well as other items in the workspace waiting to be assigned. Person also updates Title field as needed / links related issues, etc. No user response needed - all triage and clean-up. User responses come from individual institutions if at all (not required but recommended).

50% (5 people?)

2 -> META = metadata workspace. Moderator redirects inappropriate content as needed. Complex questions go to Cataloging (**CAT**) workspace for review and

response if needed, unless needs to go to TECH for technical help. Add comment explaining why. Less complex items go to Portal Editing (**EDIT**) queue. Add a comment with information about which partner institution(s) are involved, approx how many items, add priority. CAT already exists and is run by the cataloging group. EDIT could be run by its own group, who oversee edits, but is currently just open to all BHL Gemini users to help when they can.

30% (3 people for META, plus pre existing CAT Committee, plus EDIT open to all with META checking on it periodically?)

3 -> TECH = technical issues workspace. Moderator redirects inappropriate content as needed. Deals with 'easy' tech problems (PDFs) and responds to users for those only. Reassigns metadata problems to META. Assigns technical issues to tech team (not a workspace, but directly to Mike/Joel/Susan) with comment re: subject and if user should have a response.

15% (3 people?)

4 -> USE = copyright and image reuse workspace. Moderator redirects inappropriate content as needed. Responds to user questions about reuse of content in BHL. Uses canned responses for the most part.

10% (2 people?)

5 -> JOIN = membership and partnership workspace. Moderator redirects inappropriate content as needed. Responds to users as possible or reassigns to those who can.

15% (2 people?)

[+ 25% = Secretariat (Bianca)]

Reps from the 5 groups to report out to staff on the Staff Calls.

Vision:

The public and BHL staff members take on the majority of this load, by sorting feedback as much as possible, and dealing with 'easier' questions/issues. Bianca is brought in only when her expertise is needed, so she can best prioritize. Other staff can take on the tasks that do not require her extensive knowledge of all things BHL, so that she can focus her energies where truly needed. Same goes for protecting all Secretariat time. Also, no one institution is controlling this endeavor. More representative of BHL as a consortium.

Benefits:

BHL staff gain familiarity with Gemini features and BHL policies, and get to work with other staff members (building expertise, confidence, and community). More transparency on Staff Calls re: inner workings of BHL. Leadership opportunities for staff. Shares the burden across the entire consortium. Decent response times for users. Brings in lots of eyes, so hopefully this will just continue to improve as people bring in new ideas after they work in a particular role. If folks need to be in Gemini in order to moderate, might help keep Gemini in their minds re: institutional Gemini?

Challenges:

Requires at least 10 positions (2 per workspace) that did not exist before (not counting Bianca/Jackies old/current roles, and not counting CAT roles), if not more for moderating. How long should these terms last? 1 year? 6 months?

We have not addressed the question of ensuring that users are being responded to after something is reassigned to an individual person. Ex: something is assigned to Mike/Joel/Susan, and they are asked to respond to the user. How do we make sure this happens?

Do we add a Component "Response Needed" that makes it clear that this ticket needs someone to respond to the user before closing? The Component would need to be removed after the user had been responded to. Someone (Grace? as outreach/communications?) could have a workspace for all items that need response, and could look at this list quarterly to ensure that nothing is open for too long / that the component is removed if the user has been responded to. This is sort of how the Reference component has been (inconsistently) used .