Building the Digitization Coordinator Network (DigiCoordNet)

BioDigiCon 2023 - September 20, 10:30-11:30 am EDT

Session Outline

Welcome and Introductions	Jill Goodwin
"DigiCoordNet - coordinating digitization efforts of biological collections in US & Beyond"	Sylvia Orli
"The potential for coordinated digitization activities in biocollections: expected outcomes, progress, and obstacles"	Gary Motz
Preliminary outcomes from the DigiCoordNet - Tips for a Digitization Coordinator, Community Resources	Sylvia Orli
Discussion	Laurence Livermore, Holly Little

Connect with us!
Sylvia Orli, orlis@si.edu
Jillian Goodwin, jgoodwin@floridamuseum.ufl.edu
Holly Little, littleh@si.edu
Laurence Livermore, l.livermore@nhm.ac.uk
Gary Motz, gary.motz@yale.edu

Questions/Polls (add your thoughts at these highlights)

Do you have a digitization coordinator role at your organization? (add a +1 to yes or no)
- Yes (+1…it's one of the many hats I wear)
- No +1 +1+1+1+1
- Additional Comments:
  - How is this "digitization coordinator" different from a "biodiversity informatics manager?"
    - [HL: I would say it is a subset of the tasks of the larger role of biodiversity informatics manager. Could definitely still be the same person, but a portion of the work under that umbrella that is focused very specifically on the act of digitization]
  - Many (most?) collections have a person / persons who have multiple roles. Do you envision that this "digitization coordinator" has only this role?

- ○ Do people have a single coordinator that crosses multiple collections (paleo, zoology, herbarium, etc.)? If so, how do you divide up responsibilities? Did this lead to more institution buy-in?
- ○ Is digitization being used just for 2D and 3D imaging? Or is there digitization/transcription and archiving of other documents included in the definition, too?
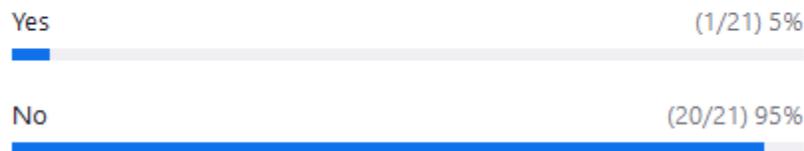 - ■ [HL: from my perspective, all of the above]

1. Do you have a digitization coordinator role at your organization? (Single Choice) *

21/21 (100%) answered

Yes (11/21) 52%

No (10/21) 48%

Is this that person's only role? (add a +1 to yes or no)
- ● Yes
- ● No
- ● Additional Comments:
  - ○

2. Is this that person's only role? (Single Choice) *

21/21 (100%) answered

Yes (1/21) 5%

No (20/21) 95%

Do you believe the leadership at your institution understands the importance of your collections? (add a +1 to yes or no)
- ● Yes +1
- ● No +1
- ● Additional Comments:
  - ○

3. Do you believe the leadership at your institution understands the importance of your collections? (Single Choice) *

21/21 (100%) answered

Yes   (13/21) 62%

No   (8/21) 38%

How do you think digitization coordination would help your digitization efforts?
- (https://jhpoelen.nl) I think coordination would help to promote group cognition to facilitate re-use of tools/data/best practices and available skills in existing research collaborations.
- At my institution, digitization is largely correlated with whether we have grant (NSF/IMLS) money to support person-power. Other than that it's hit or miss with graduate student and volunteer support (both of which may take supervision). A coordination network would help us keep our digitization efforts ongoing and sustainable.
- Can a digitisation coordination Network help the smaller collections to come together?
  - [GM : Yes,absolutely! The DCN *could* also eventually be a group of independent contractors that are a traveling band of digitizers that can be mobile and really hone their skills and equipment so that a small institution doesn't have to spin up all of those people, hardware, software, and services]

What do you think would be an essential tip for working towards coordinated digitization at your organization?
- (https://jhpoelen.nl) allocate time and money to nurture existing and emerging cross-institutional digitization efforts. In my mind, collaborative efforts are useful *and* time and resource intensive. Coffee and cookie (e.g., workshop) grants are useful, but excludes independents like myself from participating fully because the significant time investments are **not covered**.
- The role is more than managing projects (which is often imaging) & the people doing the imaging. At the end of the day a coordinator role is likely to not be funded IF there isn't Impact shown from imaging more specimens. Impact through stats, dashboards, images accessible, publications etc is often what might want to be seen
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What community resources would be useful to you?
- The fact that mostly larger institutions with institution buy-in have been a part of this project so far is worrisome from the perspective of a smaller institution with very (very) limited resources. How is this effort possible (much less sustainable) for us at small institutions? Especially since the larger institutions are also getting the bulk of the federal grant money. So making this conversation inclusive for smaller institutions would be useful. +1 +1

- - (https://jhpoelen.nl) yes, and investing in *pooling* resources between "smaller" and "bigger" collections may benefit a sense of togetherness - I think that seemingly fuzzy togetherness feeling would lead to more integrated research efforts, which, in turn, would lead to more integrated (digital) knowledge.
    - Not feeling left out is always nice, but that doesn't really solve the problem that I don't have the resources to do the job. I have students and volunteers to do work, but no one to supervise them.
      - In my mind, supervision is part of pooling resources, but perhaps I am misunderstanding the point you are trying to make.\
      - I think it can be a part and I'd be very interested in seeing how it could be accomplished.
- Student development in digitization to bring into the workforce once we graduate
  - Maybe funded internships could help with this? +1

Notes

Quote from Sylvia: Leadership is "indifferent" to digitization ... that will be key to address.

Participants/Interested in future news (Please include name and email)
- Laura Wilson, lewilson6@fhsu.edu (I'm one of the small museum people and would love to be more involved in figuring out solutions)
- Craig Brabant, brabant@entomology.wisc.edu
- Jon Woodward, jwoodward@oeb.harvard.edu
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