

Building a Global Open Extensible Biodiversity Commons Network

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Abstract

Recent global events reinforce the need for local to global coalitions to address a variety of socio-environmental challenges such as the current COVID-19 pandemic (Cook et al. 2020) and biodiversity loss in general. Scientists reviewing data and fitness for current and future use note urgent necessary changes needed in data collection, specimen collection and preservation, infrastructure, human capacity, and standards-of-practice (Raven and Miller 2020, Morrison et al. 2017, Cook et al. 2020). Multi-faceted research questions often require cross-disciplinary collaboration. A recent paper analyzed conservation and disease mitigation research author networks and discovered that certain disciplines do not work together unless the research has outcomes that serve all groups involved (Kading and Kingston 2020). This research reinforces the finding that common goals offer a powerful way to build effective cross-disciplinary networks, speed up collaboration, and more effectively take on complex research.

To move toward a Digital Extended Specimen (DES), the *alliance for biodiversity knowledge* is engaging in community building. The above summary when coupled with conversations from our alliance-led [online consultations](#) reinforces known threads and reveals some emerging themes about partnerships and collaborations. Our group continues to work on defining what a Digital Specimen is (or is not) and then communicating that succinctly to the worldwide community. At the same time we recognize the need for an extensible digital specimen object, we note the need for an extensible network. We note that groups need to and are motivated to solve local issues (as in for their town, or their country or continent). So, looking for and selecting common threads across these regional scales will be key to realizing and motivating effective partnerships and networks. Foremost, this includes expanding participation beyond Europe and North America. We recognize the need to form new partnerships to expand our network and learn from our new partners. For example, the Digital Humanities community would like to talk about the intersection of the humanities, social sciences, biology, and collections that can help each other to do better research.

With this talk, and through participation in TDWG2021, we seek to share information and insights gathered so far about next steps and about building and sustaining the network we need to realize a biodiversity data commons and get input from those who participate in our session.

Keywords

Digital Specimen, collaboration, partnerships, network, alliance

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Conflicts of interest

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