

Participation in a volunteer digitisation project from a collection management perspective

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Citizen Science



“The systematic collection and analysis of data; development of technology; testing of natural phenomena; and the dissemination of these activities by researchers on a primarily avocational basis.”

(from OpenScientist website)

A screenshot of the website for the "Atlas of Life in the Coastal Wilderness" project. The header is dark brown with a logo of a stylized orange and white coastal plant on the left. The title "Atlas of Life in the Coastal Wilderness" is in white, with the tagline "exploring, learning, recording" below it. A navigation bar contains links for HOME, GET INVOLVED, LINKS, SIGHTINGS, and HELP. The main content area shows a photograph of several orange, cup-shaped fungi growing on green grass. At the bottom, there is a dark brown banner with the text "BIOLITZ 2014 SPECIES GUIDE" and a welcome message: "Welcome to our long-term project to build an atlas of biodiversity of our place, where community works with science to explore, learn and record."



Citizen Science



Perceived Benefits

- Increased scientific literacy
- Engaging the broader community in science
- Increased relevancy of science
- Increased scientific output
- Cheaper science

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farewell
Shorebirds
farewellisnorebirds.org.au

Onsite Component

- Volunteers take images of text and specimens associated with collections



DigiVol - Image capture



DigiVol - Online Component

- Volunteers access captured images online and transcribe text data into database fields

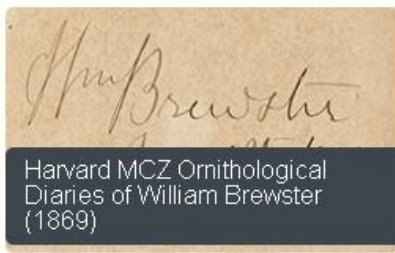


[Biodiversity Volunteer Portal](#) » Biodiversity Volunteer Portal

Biodiversity Volunteer Portal

Helping to understand, manage and conserve biodiversity through community based transcription of archival and natural history collections

Virtual expedition of the day



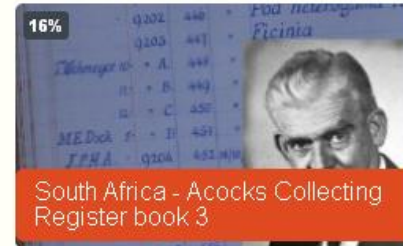
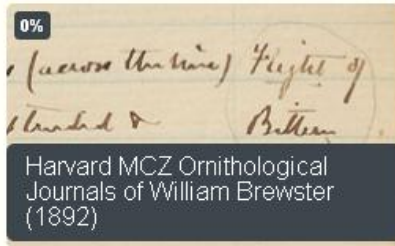
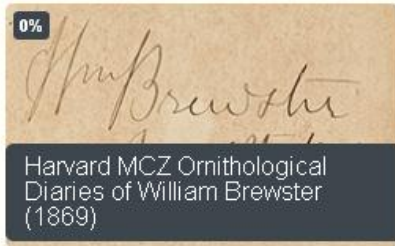
HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY, ERNST MAYR LIBRARY
Ornithological Diaries of William Brewster (1869)

Start transcribing [A](#) [A](#)

Honour Board

Day Tripper		View Top 20
Megan Edey	50	
Weekly Wonder		View Top 20
Baz Walter	155	
Monthly Maestro		View Top 20
Baz Walter	1455	
BVP Legend		View Top 20
Megan Edey	16949	

More expeditions [View all](#)



[View my tasks](#)

Expedition stats



81769 tasks of 94304 completed
615 volunteer [transcribers](#).

News

21 Jan 2014

A new and better BVP!

Look for: A new honour Board A simpler front page that shows all of the currently available expeditions New transcription templates Improved validation work flow for validators



Institution: Australian Museum

Project: Australian Museum Hoverfly Expedition - 1

Catalog Number: K.405350

Taxa: Ceriana ornata

[Specimen Label Tutorial](#)

1. Transcribe All Text



Copy values from a previous task



2. Collection Location

Locality



State/Territory



Country



Latitude from label

D°M'S" D M S



symbols: ° ' "

Longitude from label

D°M'S" D M S



symbols: ° ' "

If the Latitude/Longitude do not appear on the label, find them using the mapping tool below

3. Miscellaneous

Collection date

(from) DD MM Year



(to) DD MM Year

Collector



Collection Method

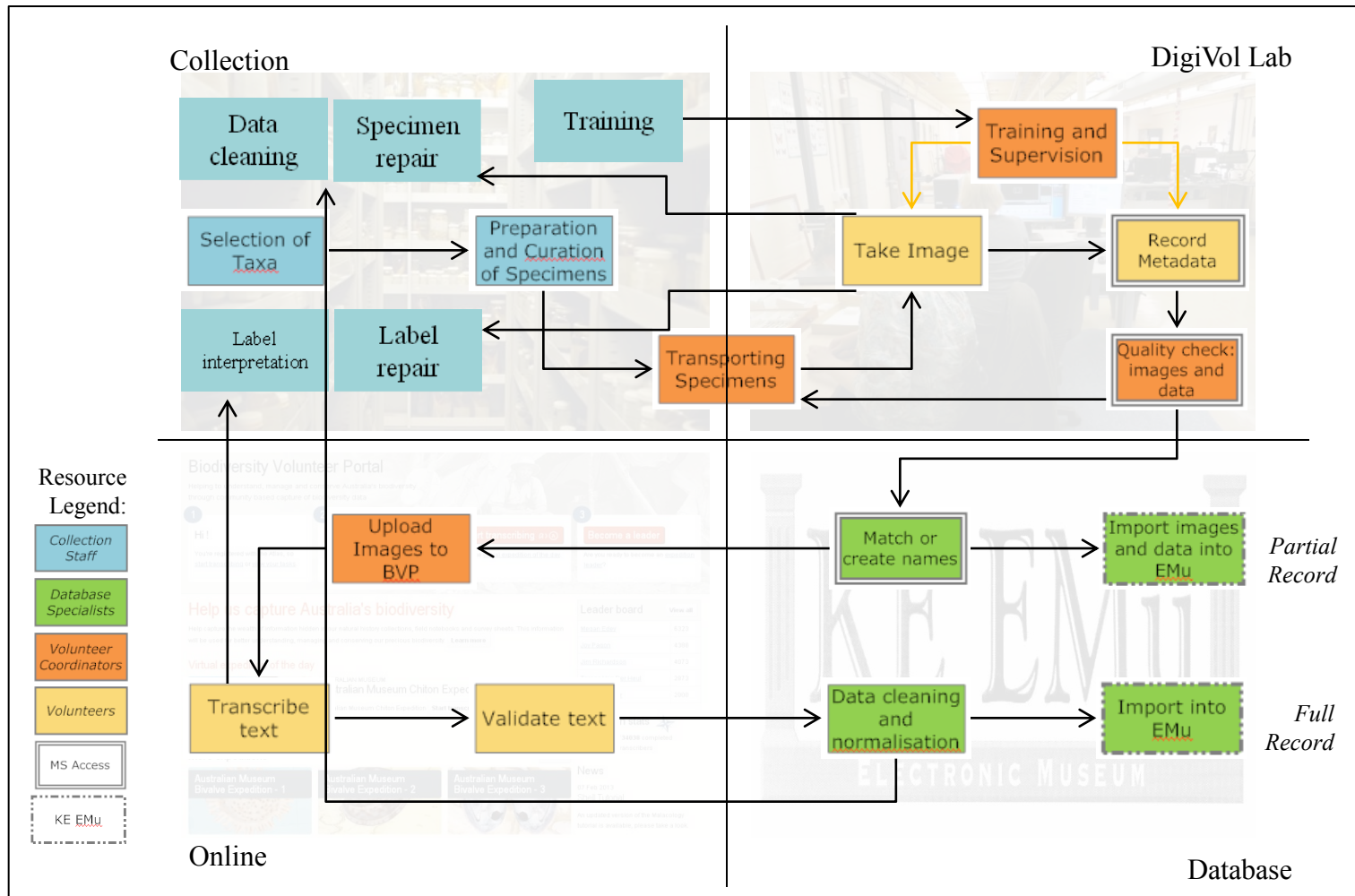


Elevation

From - To



Workflow



Benefits for Collection Management

Direct Benefits

- Data capture
- Integrates with curation projects
- Images of labels captured in database
- Can service research projects

Indirect benefits

- Increased awareness of collections
- Training of future staff



Negatives for Collection Management

Staff time

- Curation
- Specimen & label repair
- Training
- Interpretation

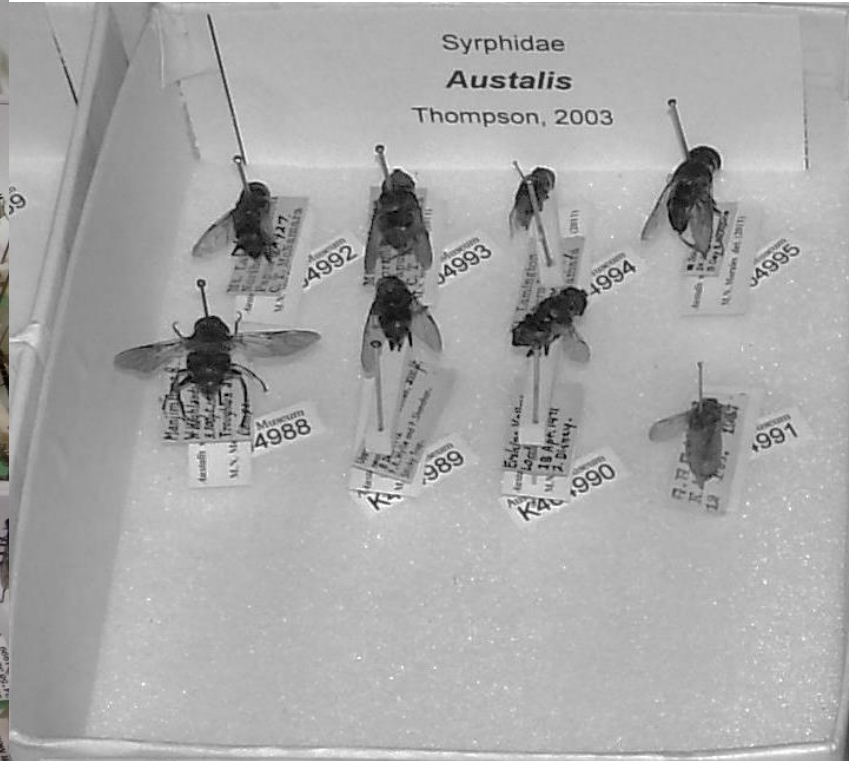
Other

- Specimen and label damage
- Lag in provision of data
- Questions about data quality
- Potential to divert funds from collection management
- Some groups cannot be done





Curation is essential



Curated and imaged specimens



Broken
Specimens

Specimen damage

Specimen damage

K 417605

No. 7

Genus Cerdistus

Species vitipes

Comment shattered.

Museum
5
18.2 Km E
Hurstville
NSW
14-79

NIELS
1/14

Successful?



Successes

- 29,509 entomological records in EMu since inception in 2012
- 10,667 “full” records (georeferenced)
- Cicadas, leaf and tree hoppers, Australian hawk moths
- Two staff members “created” (were volunteers)

Compared to.....

- Two technical staff and collection manager in Entomology ~ 10,000 records (without label/specimen images, but immediately available)
- Damage rates from DigiVol higher than in normal practice



Conclusions



- The benefits of DigiVol have to be assessed on a basis other than just generation of new specimen records
- DigiVol (or similar projects) should be considered as part of a larger strategy to digitise collections
- Funding for direct digitisation is unlikely to become available; funding for citizen science projects can be obtained
- Museums will continue to support strong citizen science projects such as DigiVol
- Many of the work strategies developed in DigiVol could be incorporated into collection management practice.

Thank you

Acknowledgments: Thanks to the many volunteers who have worked onsite and online to database our collections! I hope you have enjoyed your involvement, and know that we appreciate you.

www.australianmuseum.net.au

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