Australian Museum

The Art of Science: matching ALA data and heritage artworks in a mobile app

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nature culture **discover**

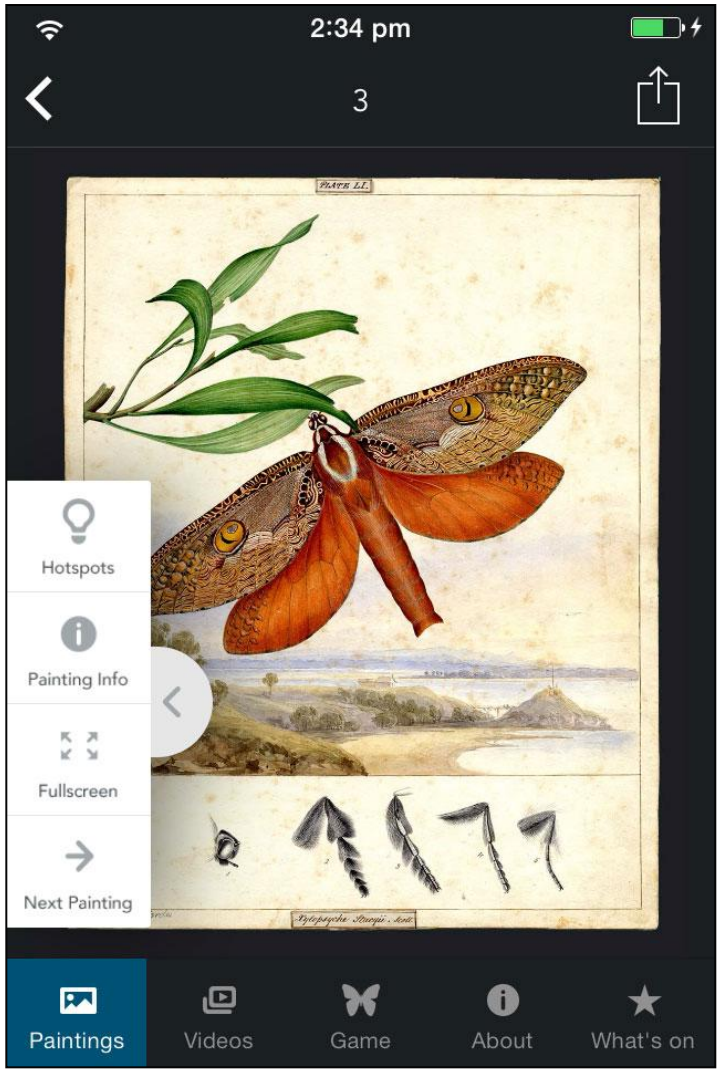
Australian museum

The Art of Science app

- A showcase of detailed paintings by prominent natural history illustrators, sisters Harriet and Helena Scott.

- From the 1850s they documented the life histories and immature stages of Australian moths and butterflies.

Video of the app features



Background

- Apps4nsw competition

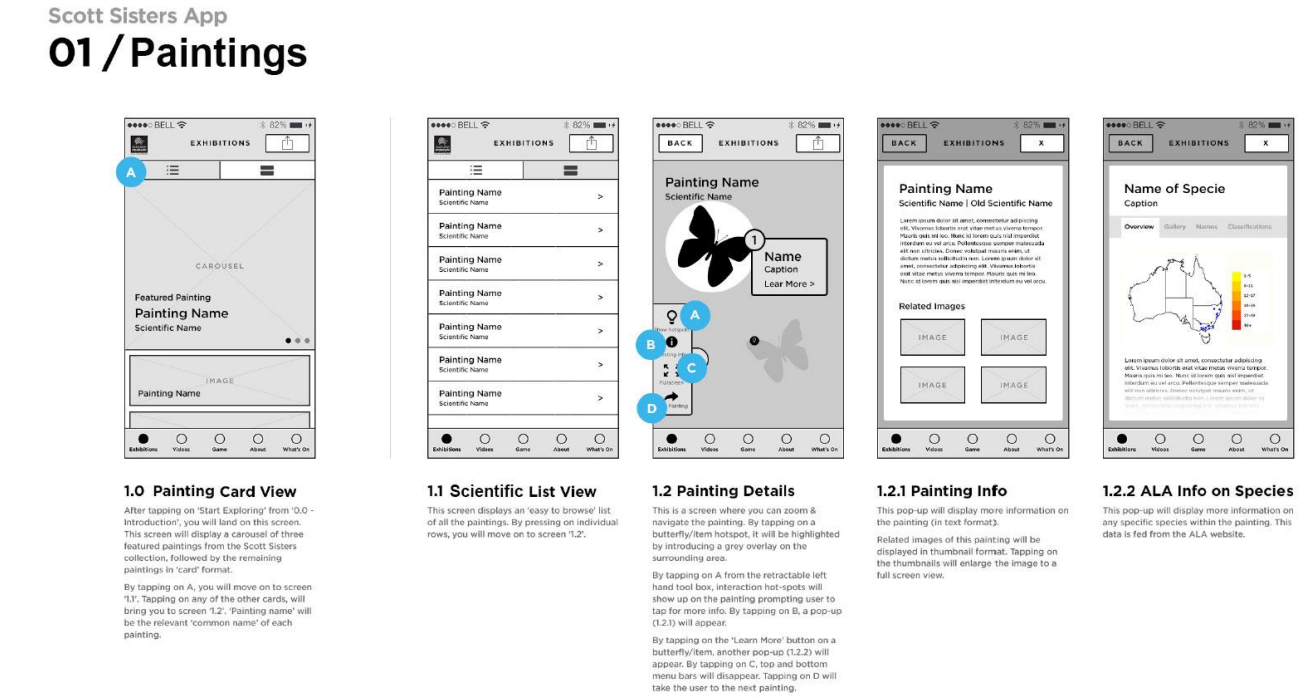
- $15,000 funding for an app (3 month deadline)
- Developed by 

- We had worked with Biodiversity Volunteer Portal and knew of extensive specimen data on ALA site

Aim: merge a historical collection with contemporary science to demonstrate its ongoing value as an archive of science for new audiences

Big content, big data

Challenge: to structure and standardise a large volume of information from the 1800s to the present day so that it's meaningful for the audience and appropriate for the medium

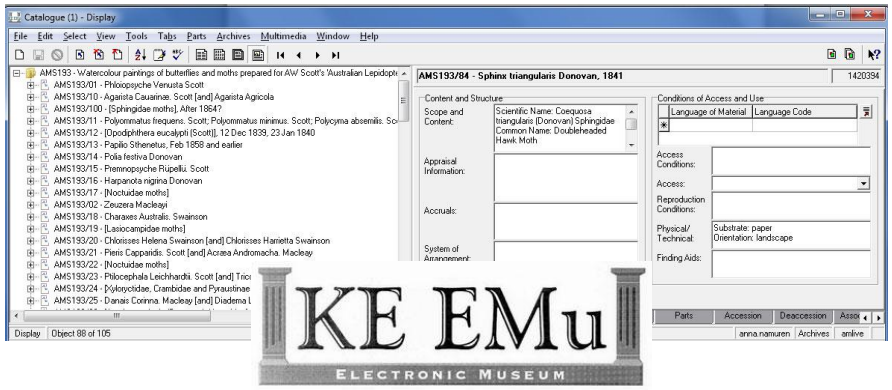


beaconmaker

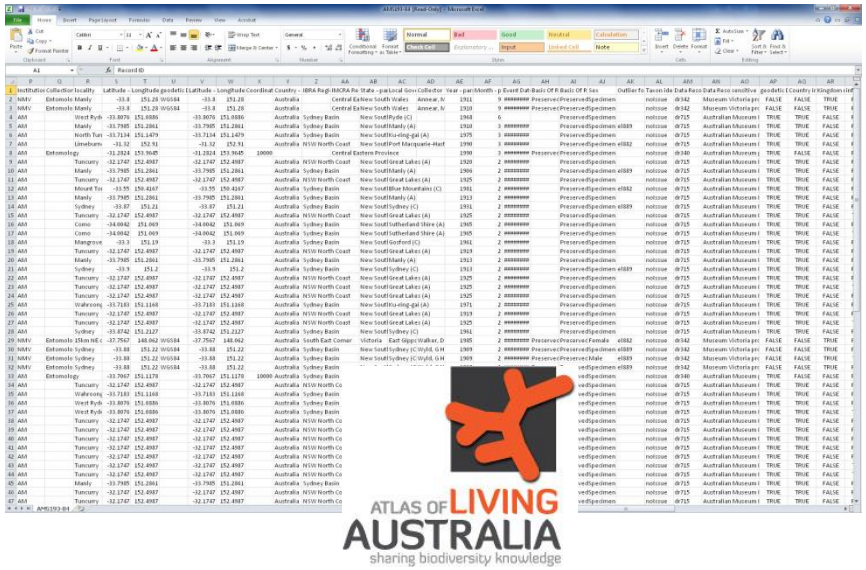
Big content, big data

Sources of information:

KE EMu D/B: Common name, old scientific name, images, exhibition captions, biographies, other narratives. Exported to CSV and JPEG

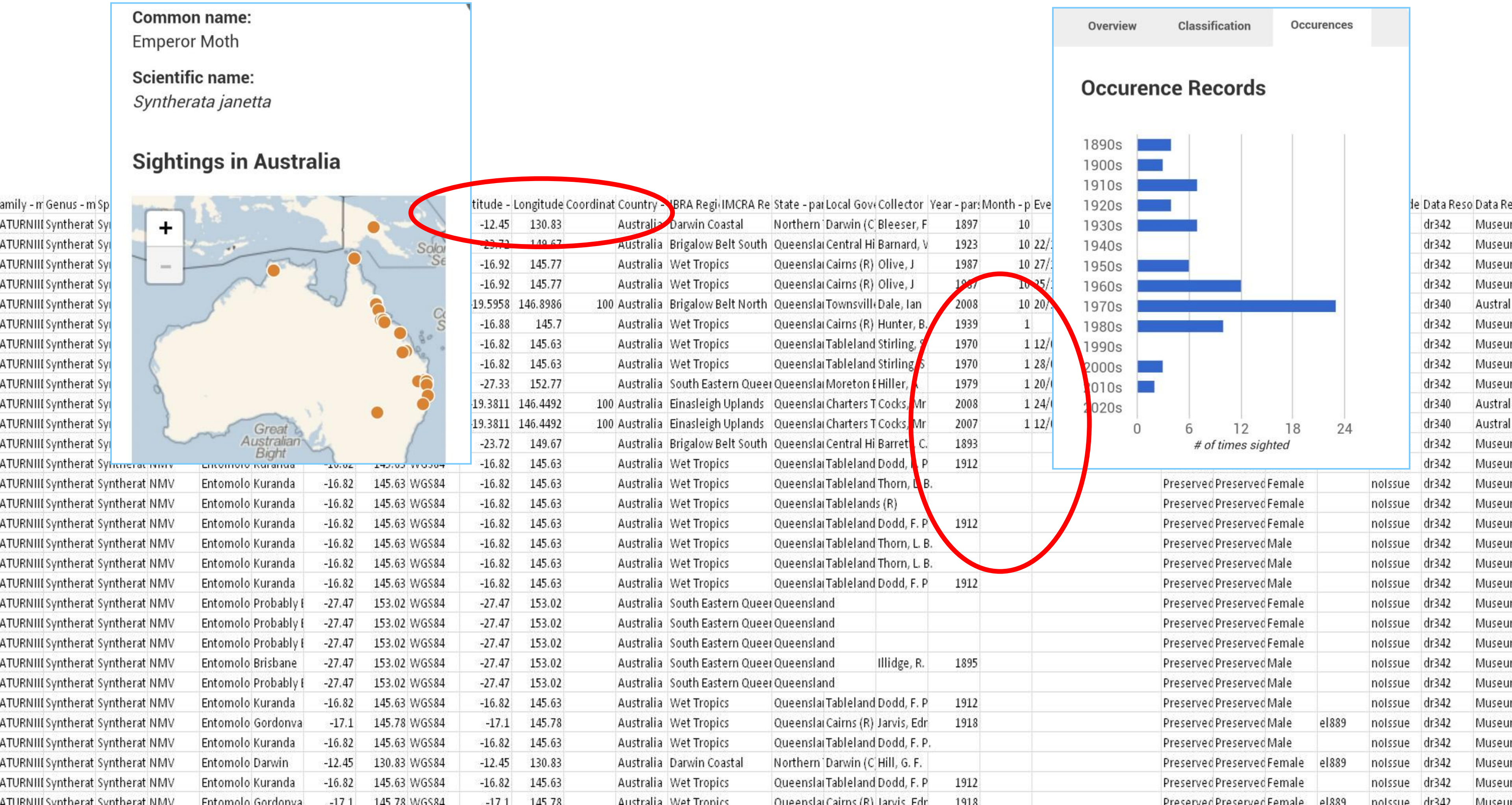


ALA datasets: Common name, new scientific name, geospatial, sightings over time data. Exported to CSV



Other: Content from MS Word/Excel, PDFs, video files. Imported into CMS

Visualising data



Final thoughts

- The experience of using ALA data: it's all there if you know what you're looking for. Should content/data for historical collections be made available in the same way?

- Merging heritage content and science data: will need to be re-structured for different audiences and platforms. Where do we archive the remixed version?

- The future: let's collaborate to merge contemporary science with our historical collections to demonstrate their ongoing value as an archive of science

Thank you

(PS: You've seen the virtual collection, catch the real thing from June 23, 2014: the Scott sisters exhibition at the Australian Museum)

www.australianmuseum.net.au