

iDigBio: Summit 3 Breakout Session: Community Building, Collaboration and Opportunities

Attendees: Rich Rabeler, Barbara Thiers, Hank Bart, Pam Soltis, Judy Skog, Deb Paul, Ed Gilbert, Wayne Elisens, Dena Smith, Greg Budney, Elizabeth Martin, Dave Bloom, Chris Dietrich, Shari Ellis, Joanna McCaffrey

Things discussed:

1. Communication issues and challenges in TCNs: within a TCN, between TCN's, knowing "who is doing what" (digitizing which collections), needing a clearinghouse of intelligence, of information that, if shared, would save time or create community.
2. Within a TCN, the tendency is for information to flow up but not down.
3. It is a common problem in large projects to need to work on effective communication.
4. We need to do a gap analysis in the data with respect to each network's question, to fill the gaps in the data.
5. Judy Skog suggested TCNs need to work on bringing onboard new collaborators to fill the gaps, to make the datasets richer.
6. Why don't TCNs go out to invite others to join their network? One reply: concern over being able to deliver the expected dataset from the existing collaborators; making the data "mountain" larger, esp. later in a project, may be difficult.
7. The PI should be looking around in their community, inviting others to fill in, join.
8. A potential PI needs to make a commitment when considering becoming part of a TCN, to communicate and deliver the expected data.
9. If people don't want to collaborate, don't invite them into a TCN/PEN - let them lag behind, wait until they are more motivated.
10. iDigBio should offer a list of available, willing TCN coaches.
11. Message: 'What do you at your TCN want to communicate' - we need to reflect on this to tune our message to others.
12. Divide up the roles in a TCN, communicator, manager, trainer, etc.
13. Need a project manager free agent who has time to look over all of the moving parts, within and among TCNs, be a communicator.
14. Mixed use and adoption of social media - training opportunity - 'BiodivTwit' channel?
15. Some institutions say to the TCN PIs: Why are you bothering with outreach? We need to reverse that institutional mentality.
16. Refer to 'ToolBox.org' as a way to get project management training to a new TCN (dpaul) <http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/toolbox/>
17. Idea for a workshop: Project Management for science, collaborative projects.
 1. Judy: reference to 'Project Science' - a good resource for starting up scienceprojects, some reference also to COLLABIT
 2. Hank Bart: The Fish Tree of Life project had a session with a sociologist to understand the issues involved in collaborative project management, and to try to make improvements.
 3. Is the level of success in communication and collaboration project size-dependent? The consensus is 'no'.

4. We need to have more collaboration among the TCN projects about 'E&O', and 'Research', how do we mobilize those topics among TCNs with respect to their stated E&O activities (in their proposals)?
5. Do immersive training in the digitization workflow tasks (like NYBG).
6. NYBG is re-evaluating whether having a staggered roll-out of participants works - it can be exhausting to always have people in orientation mode.
7. Judy Skog: what are the questions we should be asking related to the broader impacts @ the end of the grant period - the 'project outcomes' document. Perhaps we should ask ourselves the questions now so that we have time to do the work to HAVE a good outcome.
8. Once you are in sustaining mode, after the funding is over, what will you/your TCN be working on to answer their research question - are you ready, will your digitized data really be sufficient to answer that question?
9. P. Soltis: We should pool lessons learned and practices into a paper; a case study in collaborative scientific project management. Attendees agreed this would be valuable to the community, esp. future TCNs.

TCN Coaches (please nominate yourself):

1) Barbara Thiers

2) David Bloom: project management and administrative issues