Pre-Digitization Curation

What to do with the fossils once we get them out of the ground

Jessica Utrup
Yale Peabody Museum
iDigBio Paleontology Digitization Workshop
September 24-25, 2013
Where to begin

What will be digitized?
Specimens?
Field Notebooks?
Ledgers and Catalogs?
Labels?
Grant-driven project?
Prioritize!

You need a plan.

Does your institution have any predetermined digitization policies? Does your institution have any project management plan in place?

Biodiversity Informatics, 7, 2010, pp. 93 – 112

NATURAL HISTORY SPECIMEN DIGITIZATION: CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

Ana Vollmar (formerly 1), James A. Macklin (1), Linda S. Ford (2)
Damage?

If a specimen or object is damaged, do you route it to conservation or simply make a note and move on?
Specimens - Taxonomy

Taxonomic Hierarchies

- Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology
- Plant Systematics
- Vertebrate Paleontology and Evolution

Plus recent papers for certain taxonomic groups that have been significantly updated since the publication of these works.
Specimens - Identifications

Expert determinations?
Trained museum assistant?
Graduate students?

Who enters new taxonomy? How do you keep spelling errors to a minimum?
Specimens - Numbers?
Institutionally-unique catalog numbers?
Globally Unique Identifier (GUID)?
http://tinyurl.com/persistentidentifier
Image Naming Conventions

http://tinyurl.com/idigbioimages

Institution-wide standards or division-specific standards