Measuring the impact of digitising collections

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1. Why are we doing anything?
2. What is impact?
3. Inward measures – programme/project
4. Inward measures – impact
5. Outward measures – impact

Questions
1.1 Why does NHM have a Digital Collections Programme?

1. Deliver critical mass of digitised open data (including workflow development, infrastructure and automation)

2. Collections management inventory; moves; conservation etc

3. Science challenges / research use of data - both internal and external, includes new paradigm(s) from big data

4. Access & Public engagement with collections - includes citizen science
p.7 Our Impact
‘We will use technology to deepen engagement with the collection, including mass digitisation of specimens…’

p.9 Key Projects
‘Digitise major parts of our collection and make it openly available to public and scientific audiences worldwide’
1.2 What if we weren’t doing it?

• (arguably) non compliant with core collections obligation/mission to ‘make available’, in order to inspire love of nature and unlock answers to big issues

• Non-compliant with collections management standards/ best practice

• Science, and science funding, move on without us

• Collections access limited to our existing audience, and space

• Cumulative reputational harm – less relevant, less visible, visibly failing to live up to our brand (and others taking that ‘soft capital’ from us)

• Not aligned with Government priorities

• Continue to waste resource e.g. searching for the type of x
1.3 Outcomes?

**POLICY & PROTOCOL**
- 2 Year: Defined data policy & standards
- 5 Year: Policies embedded in operating practices
- 10 Year: World leaders in digital curation

**DATA CAPTURE**
- 2 Year: Prioritised digitisation workflows piloted
- 5 Year: Portfolio of mass digitisation projects
- 10 Year: Some major collections digitised

**PEOPLE & SKILLS**
- 2 Year: Task force formed and operating
- 5 Year: Best practice processes integrated into training
- 10 Year: Digital curation core part of BAU practice

**INFRASTRUCTURE**
- 2 Year: Refined collections database, tools & hardware
- 5 Year: Future collections database implemented
- 10 Year: Broad connections to other large digital collections

**STAKEHOLDERS & GOVERNANCE**
- 2 Year: Key user communities engaged
- 5 Year: Peer-to-peer development
- 10 Year: Proactive engagement of emerging audiences

**PARTNERSHIPS**
- 2 Year: Partners involved in pilot projects
- 5 Year: Fully-funded digitisation portfolio
- 10 Year: Major international coalitions

**RESEARCH**
- 2 Year: Research-orientated projects and initiatives
- 5 Year: Collaborative research material published
- 10 Year: Major contributions to grand challenges

**ACCESS**
- 2 Year: Live NHM Data Portal
- 5 Year: Tools, visualisations & analytics
- 10 Year: Integrated global network of users
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*Questions*
2. What is impact?

MSP definition:

‘A benefit is the measurable improvement resulting from an outcome perceived as an advantage by one or more stakeholders, which contributes towards one or more organizational objectives’
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Questions
3.1 We started with 3 questions:

Are we doing what we do as well as we can?
= Programme performance

Are we engaging everyone we need to in what we do?
= Programme reach

Is what we do demonstrably worth doing?
= Programme outcomes
3.2 Which generated KPIs:

Are we doing what we do as well as we can?
= Programme performance

Are we engaging everyone we need to in what we do?
= Programme reach

Is what we do demonstrably worth doing?
= Programme outcomes

Short-medium term measures:

- Spend against profile
- Income generation
- Delivery (e.g. project RAG)
- Data quality?
- Comms quantity and quality – internal & external
- Number & % specimens digitised
- Portal users/downloads
- Citations?
- Audiences, communities & partnerships?
- Adoption of tools & policies?
Between February 15 and January 18, 9.35bn of the Museum’s records were downloaded during 135,460,000 separate download events.

Collection records made up 80.06% of the total.

36.32% were downloaded from the Data Portal and 63.68% were via GBIF.

1,130,000 Data Portal pages were viewed during 177,000 sessions. 73% of sessions originated outside of the UK.
Pinned Insect Digitisation

3126
Species digitised (est)

429
Species digitised (month)

-11.18%
Monthly change

Progress to target
3126
0
4500

No. of species representatives digitised per month (estimate)

Species Cumulative Total
Species cumulative targets IRL

383.70
Hours Spent Mass Digitising

Digitiser imaging cost per specimen (£)

Mean imaging time per slide (secs)
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Questions
4. Impact – collections management

Running total of new specimen records added

Tranche 1

Tranche 2
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5. **Outward measures – impact**

*Questions*
5. Impact - Science

59
Scientific papers published since 2015 citing NHM digital specimens (via GBIF)
31 in 2017 = >2 per month

Report of the NHM Science Review, 2017:

‘9. New Technology creates scientific opportunity and releases latent value from the collections to meet new needs...The Museum’s Data Portal and Digital Collections Programme have been very significant successes during the strategy period.’

‘Recommendation 4. The Trustees and the Director of Science need to lead an effort to find ways to accelerate the large scale digitization of collections…’