

Notes from November 9 Group Meeting

Attending: Craig Moritz, Andrew Doran, Michael Black, Carla Cicero, Holly Forbes, Mark Goodwin, Diane Erwin, Kip Will, Joyce Gross, Patrick McGrath, Chris Hoffman.

Members of the BNHM-IST community met on November 9, 2009 to discuss the collection management system evaluation. A good discussion of issues was held and wide range of feedback was gathered with regard to the evaluation. While each system has its strengths and weaknesses, the BNHM-IST Partnership needs to focus its resources on a single platform. While the evaluation and scorecard rely on a number of assumptions, it has generally been a fair process. Because of its overall high score in the evaluation, CollectionSpace should be the platform that the Partnership focuses on, assuming that the concerns identified during the evaluation and discussed by the group are addressed. Several factors make broad group support for CollectionSpace difficult without reservation. Most importantly, CollectionSpace is currently still in its development phase. Also, given differences in data models and functions, CollectionSpace needs to demonstrate that its data model and user interface can be adapted to handle a subset of representative natural history museums.

Given these issues, the following conditions apply to the group's recommendation:

- CollectionSpace must continue to demonstrate progress towards its completion and must meet its deadline for a working version 1 at the end of the grant period.
- CollectionSpace must have the functionality that it is given credit for in the evaluation.
- We must see an instance of CollectionSpace populated with a significant quantity of natural science data (e.g., more than 100,000 records).
- We must see different kinds of natural science data migrated into CollectionSpace, demonstrating that CollectionSpace can be customized as needed on a per-collection basis to meet the needs of different kinds of collections.
- Funding and sustainability issues for ongoing support as well as deployments will need to be addressed.
- Assurances must be in place that existing systems will be supported at their current level of support until existing functionality is in place in CollectionSpace.
- Migrations to the new platform will start with those that are a) in the most need right now for a new system and b) are most ready and willing to participate in a migration. In addition, c) deployments that help build broadly needed capabilities will given preference (in case of a tie).
- CollectionSpace must provide relatively solid estimates of the time and resources required for deployments.
- CollectionSpace must provide solutions for campus collections beyond the BNHM Consortium.
- CollectionSpace must provide a framework for research, education, and public service in addition to management of the collection.
- CollectionSpace must provide the abilities for integrating other functions of the museum (e.g., archives and libraries).

A go-forward plan must be developed that addresses these concerns.

- Dates by which different conditions are addressed must be incorporated in the plan.
- A Plan B should be developed in case CollectionSpace fails to address these conditions.
- Each museum must know what its situation is with regard to CollectionSpace and/or continued support for its existing system(s).

Museums can opt out of the BNHM-IST platform. However, they will then become responsible for the hosting and management of their collection management system.

Collaborations between the BNHM-IST platform and other systems must be encouraged.