IMLS Interim Progress Report 3

Interim Progress Report
IMLS Museum/Library Collaboration Grant
University of Michigan
Flora and Fauna of the Great Lakes Region
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The 3rd reporting period has been highlighted by significant progress towards the implementation goals of the project. Most of the content will be online by midsummer, with final elements added in late summer. In addition, we have been working closely with the programmers in Digital Library Production Service to ensure that added functionality required by this project is in place prior to full release. Finally, detailed preparation for evaluation is underway, scheduled to begin in late summer and continue into Fall 2002.

Digitization

The major accomplishment of this period was the capture of fish specimens by DLPS photographer, Sally Bjork. This process was fraught with difficulties, from the final selection of representative specimens by the museum curators, to technical difficulties involved in lens, lighting, props, depth of field, and the like in the actual capture process. We are documenting this process in detail and will add it to the project web site as a case study to inform future work of this nature. Our museum partners were very active in this phase of the project.

We are tying up various loose ends from earlier digitization work, including scanning various miscellaneous documents remaining from the first pass, rescanning some substandard images identified in the quality control process, and scheduling work with the Preservation Department for scanning on their newly acquired Zeutschel planetary scanner.

Metadata Creation

Field notes metadata creation continued. Our student under the direction of Judy Ahronheim, project metadata specialist, created records for the mammals field notes. Because of the ultimate decisions made with respect to fish specimen capture, the Fish Division curatorial staff developed a separate database to provide direct access to the specimen photographs. We had previously thought that the images could be linked directly to the museum catalog database entries.

As with digitization, much effort during this period went into augmentation, clean up and problem solving related to metadata records for various collections, including the fungus watercolors, fungus monographs, and fish field notes.

Online Access, Interface Development and System Functionality

This has been the major focus of activity during this reporting period. It began with putting the 3 collection management databases on line during the winter and developing the prototype interface. Terri Geitgey, the project librarian, presented the prototype to the museum curators in January, and followed up with them in a series of individual meetings in the months following. Throughout this period, the basic interface was continually revised to provide the functionality they requested (where possible). In February, the fungus watercolor collection was added, and other collections are being readied now to add to the cross-collection searching environment.

The current prototype is online in production at:
http://test.images.umdl.umich.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?g=allgl-ic;xc=1;page=searchgroup; sid=3d5c3dd1be7f03e3b2ded8c7df6bd200 The project team members held meetings with the DLPS programmers and interface developers to develop specifications for cross-class searching to support retrieval of the full text component of the collection (fungus monographs) along with the various other databases. In addition, functional requirements for integrating the display of figures as full images within scanned texts were specified. Both of these efforts add major new functionality to existing DLPS systems and to our open source DLXS search and retrieval software (http://www.dlxs.org/)

Evaluation Planning

Terri Geitgey developed a detailed timeline for project evaluation as well as a framework for our final report, tied to both the project goals and the Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections. A copy is attached (evalplan.doc). The project team has met to review the plan and assign responsibility to team members and others for executing various parts of the evaluation process.

Additional activities

Terri Geitgey, project librarian, has presented our work in progress to several groups of visitors, including the Michigan Research Libraries Triangle. She also attended the Web Wise conference in Baltimore on behalf of the project.

Judy Ahronheim, with Stephanie Haas from FL, organized a session for ALA in Atlanta, called Fish, Fungus & Photos: Librarians as Metadata Collaborators.