DigiVol
A new way of volunteering
Paul Flemons, Simon Bear, David Baird, David Martin, Rhiannon Stephens, Leonie Prater,
April 2015
What I am talking about today

What is DigiVol, why we set it up and how it came about

Volunteer profiles
  DigiVol Lab
  DigiVol Online

Survey Results

Retaining Volunteers

Structured Volunteering

Pros and Cons of Online Volunteering
Why and How?

**Primary Reason**
To digitise our collections

**Secondary Reason**
Engage the community

**Partner**
Atlas of Living Australia
Public Participation in Digitising at the Australian Museum

**Stage 1**

**DigiVol**
Volunteers Digitising Collections - Capturing images and "partial records"

Nicole and Louise

- Image, species name, catalogue number

**Stage 2**

- Public Participation

- Complete record and georeference

- EMu Database

- Image, species name, catalogue number
### Costs of DigiVol to AM?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DigiVol Lab</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid staff – 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers – 70 per week</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DigiVol Online</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer coordinator – 0.2 per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers – 900</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Data processing</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid staff - 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Total</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid staff – 2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers – almost 1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **DigiVol Lab:**
  - Image 60000 specimens a year

- **DigiVol Online:**
  - Transcribe 30000 specimens a year
DigiVol Laboratory
DigiVol

Volunteers building knowledge and communities through digitising collections

Virtual expedition of the day

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM MALACOLOGY COLLECTION

Australian Museum Bivalve Expedition - 12

Start transcribing

Honour Board

Day Tripper

Brittany Ebert

Weekly Wonder

Brittany Ebert

Monthly Maestro

Megan Edey

DigiVol Legend

Megan Edey

View my notebook

Expedition stats

153805 tasks of 176487 completed
954 volunteer transcribers.

News

30 Apr 2015

DigiVol Survey

A survey was sent to DigiVol transcribers and validators. Could you please help us by filling it out by Friday 15 May. Thanks!
How it all began?

The United States National Herbarium (US) is housed in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, located in Washington, DC. Many of the plant groups represented in the U.S. National Herbarium rank among the finest and/or largest in the world. The United States National Herbarium was founded in 1848, when the first collections were accessioned from the United States Exploring Expedition (50,000 specimens of 10,000 species). Current holdings total 5 million specimens, making this collection among the ten largest in the world representing about 8% of the plant collection resources of the United States. The herbarium is especially rich in type specimens ($110,000).

Volunteers: 163
Tasks: 18830 in total (100% transcribed, 98% validated)
Expeditions: Specimens 27
Underway: 2
Complete: 25

NMNH US Expeditions

Smithsonian Institution - Euphorbiaceae Galore Set 5!
500 of 500 tasks transcribed (100%)
225 tasks validated (45%)

Smithsonian US National Herbarium Barberry plants (Berberis) - Deactivated
173 of 173 tasks transcribed (100%)
172 tasks validated (99%)
How it all began?

Volunteer score 371
Tasks transcribed 117 (85 of which have been validated)
Tasks validated 254
First contribution 4 years ago

How you're making a difference!
- You have added 40 species to the ALA
- You have contributed to 18 new field observations
- You have participated in 28 expeditions
- You have transcribed 0.06% of the total transcriptions on DigiVol
How it all began?
How it all began?

Recent Forum Posts

**Topic: AMENTOV1_1899_509_K8753_K8786.jpg**
Posted on 25 May, 2015
Nice work Teresa - yes Dermastids are the bane of collection managers as they love to munch on collections P

**Topic: Work is disappearing!**
Posted on 20 May, 2015
Ok - Im not sure what you mean by the Command button? Is that on your Mac computer keyboard?

**Topic: Work is disappearing!**
Posted on 20 May, 2015
Hi Cynthia, Which expedition was that in? Regards Paul

**Topic: Congratulations Reiner!**
Posted on 10 May, 2015
Yes congratulations Reiner - great contribution from you, much appreciated from all of at DigiVol! Rhiannon will be in touch. Best Regards Paul

**Topic: Who can we email to report issues?**
Posted on 02 May, 2015
Hi Helen, Please send to Rhiannon.stephens@austrmus.gov.au She will be at work Monday so should be able to respond to you then Cheers Paul

Forum topics you are watching

- AM_MALA_DRW_169_0617.jpg
- New Volunteer Could Use Mentor?
- Formatting Forum Messages
- Austroaeschna multipunctata dragonfly
51% complete!
Megan hits 15000!

Friends

- Baz Walter
- Teresa Van Der Heul
- Diana Gershwin
- Nathan Carroll
- Jennifer Bergk
- Reiner Richter
- Megan Edey
- Merrietta Skold
- Jennifer Singfield
- Geoffrey Berry
- Yolande Lebrun
- Dan Monceaux
- Grahame Parsons
- Clare Vincent
- Emily Chenery
- Jaine Stockler
- David Bray
- Noel Blake
- Brian Allured
- Nicole Kearney
- Rhiannon Stephens
- Helen Robinson
- Cynthia Crawford
Task Topic - UHIM2014.23097.jpg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UHIM Catalog Number</td>
<td>UHIM2014.23097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordinateUncertaintyInMeters</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Collected (YYYY-MM-DD)</td>
<td>1970-11-09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>Kauai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector</td>
<td>L. Ching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Liris laborious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorship</td>
<td>F. Smith, 1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/Territory</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS Latitude</td>
<td>22.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other locality info</td>
<td>Kapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS Longitude</td>
<td>-109.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would the collection dates for these specimens be in 1800’s or 1900’s? T

Since it was validated in 1873, the collection date would have been before that. I.e. 1870.

Thank you for that Brittany. I have obviously missed something somewhere as I have been using the name and date below the specimen name, as the author. That means that all the tasks I have done will have to be altered. If you could put the project back up I will make the necessary corrections, under instruction of course, and will re read the tutorial. So terribly sorry, Teresa
Welcome to the Australian Museum Bivalve Expedition - 12

Australian Museum Bivalve Expedition - 12 overview

Bivalvia, commonly called the bivalves, is a taxonomic class of marine and freshwater molluscs that have a laterally compressed body enclosed by a shell in two hinged parts. The two rounded halves called valves are usually mirror images of each other and they join at one edge by a flexible ligament which, in conjunction with nearby interlocking "teeth" on the two valves, are known collectively as the hinge.

Australian Museum Bivalve Expedition - 12 personnel

Expedition Leader
1. Baz Walter (460)

Scientists
1. Jack Austin (169)
2. Diana Gershwin (94)
3. Caroline Davy (50)

Collection Managers

Technical Officers
1. Michelle Bramley (7)
2. D Stokes (2)
3. Teresa Van Der Heul (1)
4. Karla Way (1)
5. Rebecca Watson (1)
6. Brittany Ebert (1)
How it all began?
How it all began?
How it all began?
Survey of DigiVol Online Volunteers

- 86 responses
- 954 volunteers overall
- 271 over the past 6 months
Volunteers: Online v Lab

DigiVol Online

DigiVol Lab

What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>DigiVol Online</th>
<th>DigiVol Lab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteers: Online v Lab

What is the highest form of education you have completed?

DigiVol Online

DigiVol Lab
Volunteers: Online v Lab

DigiVol Online

What is your employment status?

DigiVol Lab

What is your employment status?
What motivates the volunteers?

For each of the below categories, can you please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 what was your motivation to volunteer in DigiVol?

- Interested in natural history and cultural museum...
- Doing something worthwhile
- Making a contribution in the field of biodiversity
- Volunteering at home
- Making a contribution to the Australian Museum
- Sense of purpose it gives me
- Using the skills I already have
- You enjoy transcribing
- Gaining new skills and experience
- Making a contribution to another institution on...
- Being part of an online community through a forum
- Using it as work experience to help with gaining...
What do they like doing?

For each category, can you please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 what you like doing on DigiVol?

- Researching species, people and places: 35 (5), 18 (4), 14 (3), 2 (2), 14 (1)
- Transcribing field notes: 34 (5), 21 (4), 13 (3), 7 (2), 9 (1)
- Transcribing specimen labels: 26 (5), 32 (4), 12 (3), 7 (2), 13 (1)
- Learning about new expeditions through tutorials: 15 (5), 19 (4), 17 (3), 11 (2), 2 (1), 16 (1)
- Validating specimen labels (for validators only): 8 (5), 7 (4), 2 (3), 3 (2), 1 (1), 28 (1)
- Validating field notes (for validators only): 6 (5), 3 (4), 3 (3), 3 (2), 1 (1), 32 (1)
- Providing feedback to others on the forum: 2 (5), 6 (4), 21 (3), 20 (2), 7 (1), 26 (1)
- Social connection on the forum: 2 (5), 24 (4), 24 (3), 6 (2), 22 (1)
Satisfaction and support

What is your level of satisfaction with volunteering in DigiVol?

- 5 (very satisfied)
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 (not satisfied)

Are you provided with enough support on the DigiVol website?

- 5 (excellent level of support)
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 (not enough support)
Are you happy with the current level of communication from DigiVol?

- Yes: 74
- No: 8
Q20 Honour Board: it was important motivation for me at an early stage. Now I'm relaxed about it.

re Question 20. The honour board is not particularly important to me, but I think it is a good thing to have. It is interesting to see who is doing what and how much can be achieved. Quite inspiring I think.
Retaining volunteers

When did you commence volunteering with DigiVol?

- 2011: 8
- 2012: 16
- 2013: 19
- 2014: 23
- 2015: 20
Contribution frequency

How frequently do you volunteer on DigiVol?

- One or more times a day: 6
- One or more times a week: 26
- One or more times a month: 25
- Rarely: 27
- Never: 1
Contribution effort

How long do you use DigiVol at a time?

- 12 people use DigiVol for ½ hour
- 29 people use DigiVol for 1 hour
- 22 people use DigiVol for 2 hours
- 22 people use DigiVol for more than 2 hours
Recruitment

Where did you originally hear about DigiVol?

- Atlas of Living Australia website: 24
- Australian Museum website: 16
- Australian Museum members: 8
- Volunteering website: 7
- Word of mouth: 5
- Social media: 13
- Other (please specify): 24

[Diagram showing the distribution of responses]
Where do they volunteer from?

Do you carry out your volunteering work with DigiVol:

- On a computer from home: 64
- At a DigiVol institution (please specify below): 22
- On a computer elsewhere (please specify below): 8

Australian Museum Digivol Lab (19); at work (5); on a computer at Museum Victoria
On what kind of device(s) do you use DigiVol?

- Desktop: 52
- Laptop: 42
- iPad or other tablet: 7
- Mobile: 1
Other online projects?

Do you volunteer with any other online projects?

- Yes: 26
- No: 60
Improving skills?

When you started in DigiVol, how would you rate your familiarity with computers, reading old handwriting and using the mapping tool on a scale of 1 to 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>5 (very familiar)</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 (unfamiliar)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer skills</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching species, people and places</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading old handwriting</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Mapping Tool (for specimen label transcribers)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you rate each skill now on a scale of 1 to 5?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>5 (very familiar)</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Computer skills</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching species, people and places</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading old handwriting</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Mapping Tool (for specimen label transcribers)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Does your volunteering use the skills and knowledge gained through your education and/or work?

- Yes: 64
- No: 20
Skills useful elsewhere?

Have your DigiVol skills been useful outside of the DigiVol website?

- 23 (not useful)
- 20 (3)
- 5 (4)
- 5 (extremely useful)
Is English your first language?

- Yes: 77
- No: 8

Other first languages: Filipino; French; German (2); Portuguese; Romanian; Russian
Social Media

Which of the following content sharing/social networking sites do you use?

- Facebook: 48
- Youtube: 40
- Blogs: 20
- Twitter: 18
- Instagram: 11
- Flickr: 9
- Other (please specify): 5
- Prefer not to say: 3
- None of these: 24

Other: Tumblr (2); Dropbox (2); Google +; LinkedIn
Do you volunteer with any other online projects? - Yes (please specify which projects)

- Zooniverse (6)
- Trove (5)
- ABC Citizen Scientist - transcribing ships' Logs for weather reports
- ALA
- Birds in Backyard
- Bowerbird; ALCW; Fungimap
- British red cross
- CalBug
- Climate Watch for the Earthwatch Institute
- Coursera TA
- FamilySearch Indexing
- Gutenberg
- Nature Abounds
- Smithsonian Institution Transcription Center
- Nature Abounds
- University of Iowa
- Virtual Volunteering, Wa Govt, Historical Record.
- Worm, penguin
- Smithsonian Transcription Centre, but also taxonomy tag Biodiversity Heritage Library Flickr images, edit Wikipedia & add data to NatureWatchNZ.co.nz
- Herbarium@home, Geonames.org
Survey - Employment fields

Please list your previous/current fields of employment (eg science, administration) - Open-Ended Response

- Landscape contracting, Teaching horticulture
- Science (Biology and Geology)
- Administration, IT Support
- Libraries
- Physics, IT and computers, Management
- Not been employed, but should soon be employed in the companion animal industry
- Teaching High School Science with particular interest in Biological sciences and geology
- Veterinary field
- Teaching, Secondary school - Events Manager for Faraday Institute for Science and Religion. US Government contractor for Archival/Curation/Preventative Conservation of historical objects
- Mathematics; Information Technology
- Science
- Teacher
- Employment - Retail - Studying - Science and Museum Studies
- Government administration - science & research infrastructure
- Library, Archives, Education
- Science
- Horticulture, Business Admin.
- Engineering drafting
- Education, art and design
- Administration
- Education
- Geology
- Archaeology
- Librarian
- AG Dept of NSW: Supreme Court of NSW, Team Leader, Civil Registry - 11 yrs; + Courtlink (Justice Link) UAT Analyst - 2 yrs. English First - ESL teacher - 18 months. British Side - ESL teacher - 16 mths.
Survey - Employment fields

- IT, TV
- science (previous), finance (present)
- Occupational Hygiene
- Television/film production, Tertiary Education - Educational Technology, Medical Education - Web-based curriculum materials, Research and Ethics
- Education / maths / computing
- Administration
- Banking and finance
- statistics
- Science, Interior Design, Computer Programming
- Education; Musician
- Library - research; Teacher Librarian
- Education
- teaching science consultant tourism industry technician
- Academic teaching and research
- Research scientist
- Merchant Banking, Farmer, house wife, sales person, own seafood businesses
- Nurse Mum Private studies in botany and mycology
Survey - Employment fields

- Spatial Analyst
- RAAF Supply Officer, Proprietor Wholesale Nursery
- I've been a lawyer and a manager of a Fine Wine department in a specialist wine shop.
- Victorian government - online website development, web content development, data administration (master data, classification, quality management, data management framework, data strategy, etc), information research and analysis, business analysis, business processes, client service (call centre, website, counter), contract management, training.
- administration, real estate, project management, accounting
- botanist (Canada); automotive industry (Australia)
- administration
- IT, research
- Public policy
- Administration
- Biodiversity scientist, information technology advisor
- Archaeology
- science, education, museum
- prefer not to say
- Science/Healthcare
- Engineering design, Librarian
- Veterinary science, ornithology
- Librarianship
- Archaeology, Museums, Research
- Customer service, retail, education
- Science / IT
- Administration, proof reading
- Education (exam administration)
- Health sector in administration for the Federal government
- Previous - Hospitality, Retail  Current - Administration
Survey Feedback - They love DigiVol

• Even though I am unable to be actively involved I enjoy the sense of community and knowledge that when time permits I will be able to rejoin. Sense of continuity.
  • Thanks for this wonderful opportunity,

• Just keep up the good work. Its groundbreaking in terms of changing attitudes to volunteering.
  • Just keep me involved. I'm in love with all over again. xxxxx

• Thanks for all the effort put in to giving volunteers a great opportunity to contribute to the work of the museum here and others around the globe.
  • Great way to volunteer from home and in your own time.

• I began volunteering with DigiVol whilst living in Australia but since being home again in Ireland I have lapsed as a volunteer. could I be reinstated? (J.meadhra@gmail.com) thanks to the project I have gotten a position with the National Museum of Ireland Natural history collections cataloguing. So I would say my time with DigiVol was very worthwhile.
Survey Feedback - Dedication to doing it properly

- Increase training and oversight of volunteers who sign up. Some transcribers clearly have not read tutorials and validators must redo much of their work.

  - As only done couple of transcribes would like to know if what I have done is ok
    - Perhaps show a fully correct entry in the system for learners to emulate.

- The written tutorials are great, but it would be useful for new volunteers to receive some individual feedback about the accuracy of their work when they start transcribing.

- For myself the main problem is often not knowing if I have been entering data in the correct format.
  
    - More notes in the forum on quick tips for the expedition being transcribed,
    - Was having trouble finding who to contact to know if what I had done was ok

  - Feedback to transcribers to correct misconceptions
Not dissatisfied but I think that regular (monthly) newsletter would keep Digivol online activities in irregular transcribers' minds ;-) Irregular email updates when necessary perhaps.

- A monthly Newsletter would be great.
Keeping volunteers engaged

**DigiVol Lab**
- Behind the scenes tour
- Where in the world is digivol
  - Certificates
- Variation in activities
  - different collections

**DigiVol Online**
- What we do
- leader board
- My notebook

What we want to do – google hookups or skype chats
- More social media
- Newsletter
Structured volunteering

onsite at the Museum – DigiVol Lab and DigiBlitz events
offenders returning to the workforce
schools
work for the dole
retirees

Structured volunteering could include:
1. a digitising lab or office like space that has computers with internet access
2. onsite training and training materials
3. supervision by suitably trained coordinators
4. structured reward system with the institution
   • Behind the scene tours
   • Video conference sessions with collection staff
Pros and Cons of Online Volunteering

Pros
- bricks and mortar infrastructure not required
- large potential volunteer base
- can do it from anywhere
- online space is very flexible in terms engagement
  - social media
  - newsletters
  - videos
  - video conferencing

Cons
- websites need developing and maintaining too
  - online volunteer management is time consuming
- more fickle – retaining volunteers much harder
- less personal contact with which to build a relationship
- social media can be time consuming and hit and miss
- so much choice for volunteers
Thankyou