

# Collection Management in a Changed Digital Landscape:

Progress and challenges for the US Herbarium  
with a newly digitized collection

Sylvia Orli  
US National Herbarium  
National Museum of Natural History



Smithsonian

# Collection Management in a Changed Digital Landscape:

Progress and challenges for the US Herbarium  
with a newly digitized collection

during COVID-19

Sylvia Orli

US National Herbarium

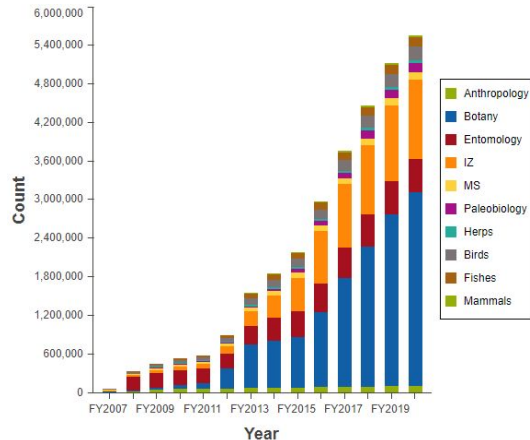
National Museum of Natural History



Smithsonian

# US Herbarium Digitization

Nearly 4 million records completed



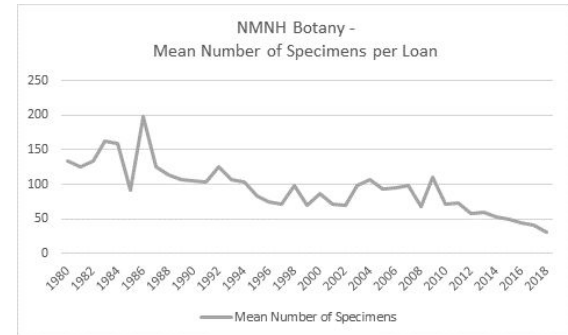
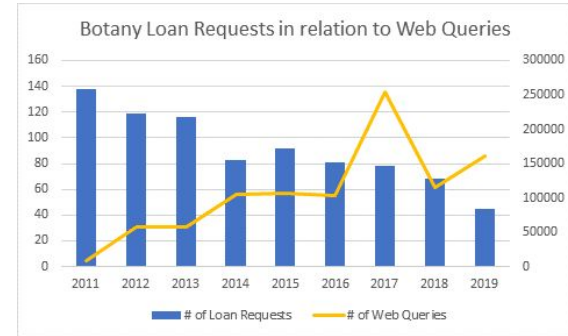
2.1 million label transcriptions by conveyor in 5 years



# Original Presentation (pre-Covid 19)

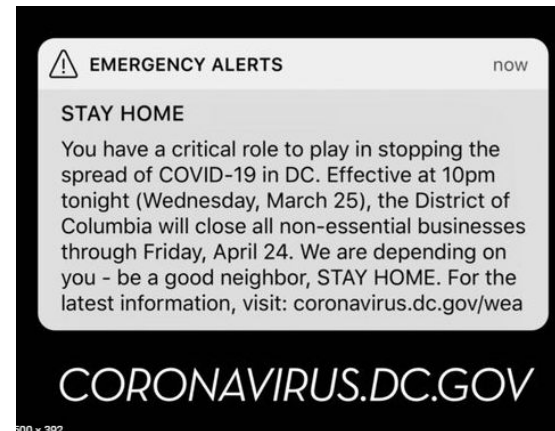
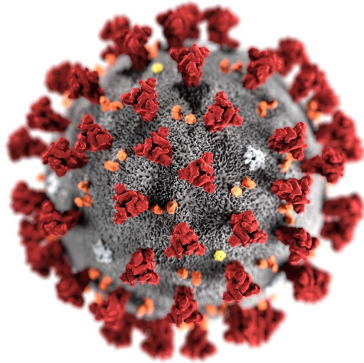
- **Effects of digitizing collections on collection management duties**

- Loans
- Destructive sampling
- Accountability
- Expectation of availability and accessibility
- Quality - data analysis ready



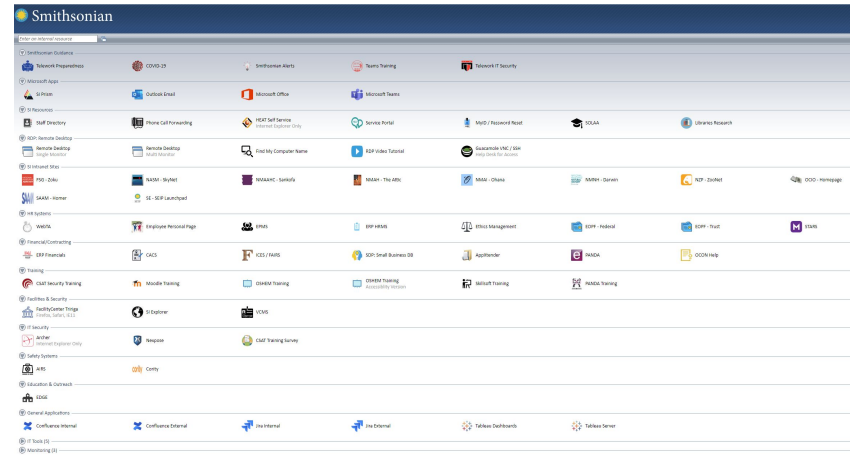
# Covid-19 Emergency (late March 2020)

- Smithsonian staff and affiliated persons ordered to leave museums in 2 working days
- All work must be conducted at home under a stay-at-home order
- Staff reside in DC, MD, VA but museums fall under strict DC guidelines
- Federal and Trust staff paid under “Telework - Emergency” designation



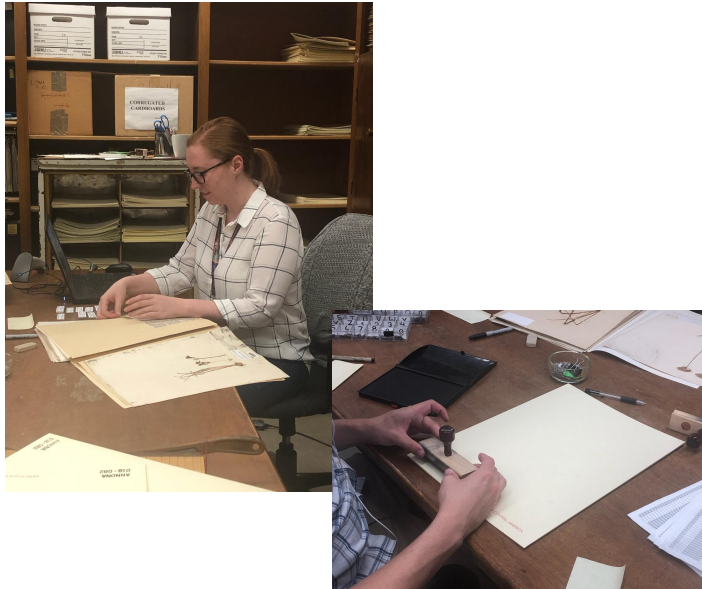
# SI Telework Measures

- **Telework system for entire Smithsonian**
  - Easy access for anyone with network account
  - Remote access of work computer
  - Full scale menu of applications
  - Available to SI staff and affiliates only days before telework emergency
- **NMNH Botany creates emergency plan**
  - All Collections staff given long-term online Data Catalog duties (transactions, collection records, etc.)
  - Collection Management Vendors switched to new contracts for data catalog telework
    - Contracts renewable based on return-to-work date
    - Funding shifted to contracts as a priority

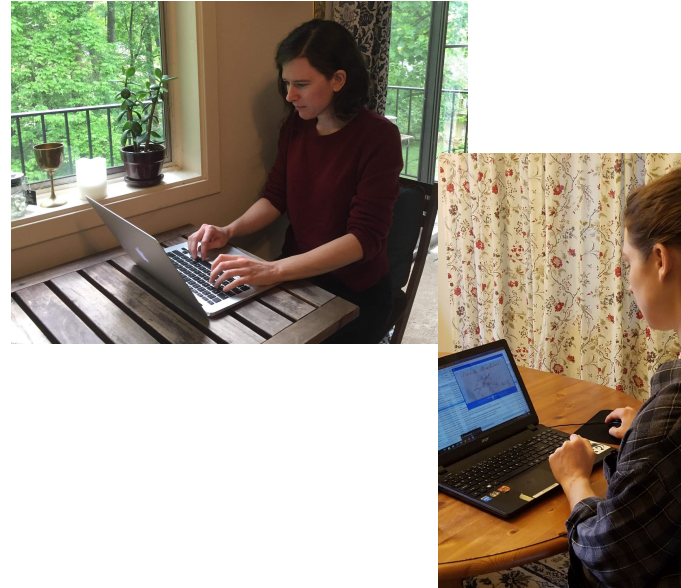


# Collection Management Roles

Quickly switch from physical onsite work:



To virtual offsite work:



# Botany Data Catalog Clean Up

## Backlog of Catalog clean up

Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Tucuman	Departamento Trancas. Tapia.*
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Chaco	Territorio del Chaco. Las Bueñas.
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Jujuy	Departamento Cumbaya*. Cerro Moreno*.
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Tucuman	Departamento Capital. Barranca Colorada.
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Salta	Departamento Oran. Cartagal*.
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Tucuman	Departamento Tafi. Las Oreas*.
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Salta	Departamento Oran*. Arroyo de Cortagal*.
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Jujuy	Departamento San Pedro. Sierra de Santa Barbara.
Venturi, S.	2043431	Argentina	Tucuman	Departamento Tafi. La Hogada.

**Endless!**

Schrenn*		Unknown		Sangoria.
Schrenx*		Unknown		Sangori*.
Schressck, -.	2011306	Unknown		Songoria.
Schsele*		Unknown		Ostfries. Insel Norderney.



# Collections Management Staff Assignments

Name	Records	Owner
Record_cleanup_Brothers	453	orlis
Record_cleanup_Gardner	312	orlis
Record_cleanup_Gardner_B...	419	orlis
Record_cleanup_groupA_Urban	542	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupB_Urban	616	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupC_Urban	618	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupD_Urban	608	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupE	611	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupF	625	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupG	610	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupH	580	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupI	583	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupJ	604	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupK	601	orlis
Record_cleanup_GroupL	604	orlis
Record_cleanup_Masters_B...	Unknown	orlis
Record_cleanup_Masters_b...	Unknown	orlis
Record_cleanup_Masters_B...	600	orlis
Record_cleanup_Masters_b...	Unknown	orlis
Record_cleanup_Ridley_ba...	Unknown	orlis
Record_cleanup_Ridley_ba...	Unknown	orlis
Record_cleanup_Ridley_ba...	571	orlis
Record_cleanup_Ridley_ba...	Unknown	orlis
Record_cleanup_toner	456	orlis
record_cleanup_toner_batch2	202	orlis
Record_cleanup_toner_batch3	208	orlis
record_cleanup_toner_batch4	143	orlis
Record_cleanup_toner_batch5	364	orlis
Record_cleanup_Urban_batch1	Unknown	orlis

356	Total	Doable?	Given to	completed
108	E. D. Merrill		Joe - batch 1	x
107	H. Eggert		Joe - batch 1	x
233	H. F. Pittier	x	Joe - batch 2	x
229	R. Seydel	x	Joe - batch 2	x
105	A. Ruth		Joe - batch 2	x
234	H. von Türkheim	x	Joe - batch 3	x
220	R. C. Ching	x	Joe - batch 3	x
156	C. R. Orcutt		Joe - batch 3	x
214	H. A. Allard	x	Joe - batch 4	
214	J. B. Leiberger	x	Joe - batch 4	
180	S. Lassimonne		Joe - batch 4	
587	S. Venturi	x	Masters - batch 1	x
375	Père Duss	x	Masters - batch 2	x
223	A. Macedo	x	Masters - batch 2	x
277	R. R. Stewart	x	Masters - batch 3	x
158	I. F. Tidestrom	x	Masters - batch 3	x
145	A. Mille	x	Masters - batch 3	x
321	A. Ducke	x	Masters - batch 4	
287	C. Bues	x	Masters - batch 4	
280	- Eggers	x	Ridley - batch 1	x
272	W. R. Maxon	x	Ridley - batch 1	x
267	R. S. Williams	no	Ridley - batch 2	x
255	C. Vargas Calderón	x (harder)	Ridley - batch 2	x
265	A. Tonduz	x	Ridley - batch 3	x
202	E. L. Ekman	x	Ridley - batch 3	x
161	P. C. Standley		Ridley - batch 3	x
259	J. Sinclair	x	Ridley - batch 4	x
256	W. E. Broadway	x	Ridley - batch 4	x
110	E. A. Mearns		Ridley - batch 4	x
404	J. Rock	x	Toner	x
208	Bro. Claude-Joseph	x	Toner	x
200	M. Cárdenas	x	Toner	x

## Telework March - May 2020

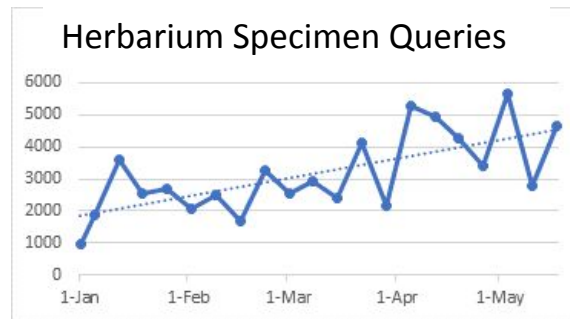
- 13 Collections / IT staff or contractors involved in data catalog clean up
- All performance plans and contracts amended to flexible scheduling for telework
- 560,000 specimen records added or cleaned up in data catalog

## Telework June - 2020

- Expectation of telework extension through the summer
- Phased re-entrance to the museums
- Preparation for telework as future standard of workplace

# Requirements for Digital Telework Readiness in Collections

- Robust telework system in place
- Digital Catalog
- Batched work (preferably in 2 week chunks)
- Willingness of Exec staff to fund this work
  - Important to keep Collections Work relevant and important during difficult fiscal times!



# Contact us

US National Herbarium, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, [USNH@si.edu](mailto:USNH@si.edu)

Sylvia Orli, Digitization Manager, US National Herbarium, NMNH, Smithsonian Institution, [orlis@si.edu](mailto:orlis@si.edu)

Thanks everyone!