

Dataversity

Outcomes from Dataversity

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Introduction

The Dataversity project was based on a hypothesis that improving the coordination of efforts among local government biodata managers would ultimately lead to better quality data to support biodiversity data management, locally nationally and globally.

That hypothesis can be stated as follows.

- Improved **coordination of efforts**, such as holding discussions and collaborating to develop tools, will result in
- local government biodata managers having **improved access to tools and assistance**, which will be
- used to **improve biodata management**, in ways that lead to
- **better data** available to support biodiversity management.

Narratives Describing Outcomes

The following accounts of what people have gained from Dataversity, and how they have used what they gained, were collected at the 2010 Dataversity National Workshop¹ held March 18-19, 2010 in Wellington. Some of these point to specific impacts on the availability of improved data to manage biodiversity.

Improved Coordination Between Local and Central Government

Jim Fretwell, Environment Bay of Plenty

Dataversity has enabled Local Government to discuss and agree a shared direction for biodata management. For the first time, for the first time, the Central Government biodiversity sector are hearing a consistent message about biodata from Local Government. This makes it a lot easier for Central Government agencies to involve Local Government in the establishment of a national biodata view.

Internal Biodata System Improved Faster

Jim Fretwell, Environment Bay of Plenty

Because I am close to my own project, I don't see everything about it. Discussions about our system among Dataversity members have enabled me to see more of the gaps, and weaknesses in our own system. This means our system can be improved, to better meet needs of others but also to better meet our own needs. It also adds impetus to speed up development. The result will be that we get a completed system at EBoP. And others get the system too.

1 http://dataversity.org.nz/about/workshops/national_workshop_2010

Opportunity for New Widely-Shared Biodata System

Jim Fretwell, Environment Bay of Plenty

The 2009 national workshop, and subsequent Nelson workshop led to an opportunity to integrate our system with ARCs system. A scoping study is currently under way for a project to integrate two systems from EBoP and two ARC systems. If this is successful, it will result in a comprehensive and modular system that can be shared right across local government.

Better Systems Developed

Lindsay Vaughan, Tasman District Council

One of our IT people came to the Nelson workshop, organised by Paul Fisher of NCC. From that, the TDC IT department learned more about what was possible, and where others were going. As a consequence, TDC has had better systems developed.

Better Prioritisation and Decision-Making

Lynnette Hartley, Department of Conservation

I saw the value of recording the methodology used against a data set for assessing data quality. I plan to talk to the administrators of Bioweb, the system that I look after, about applying it to Bioweb, for existing or at least future data. Bioweb data will end up in NHMS, so NHMS will have better information. This will enable better prioritisation, decisions making and therefore better management of biodiversity.

Better Access to My Own Data

Melissa Hutchinson, Tenax Consulting

I know people who I can tap for information. I have seen better options (than MS Access) to solve my data problems. I know people can tap for information. This will enable me to do a better job of building a database to manage my own data and ecological information. Something from a project I worked on ten years ago could be relevant for current work, and a database will help me keep track of and access that information more easily.

Bigger Questions Answered

Melissa Hutchison, Tenax Consulting

The metadata catalogues session was very useful, as I learnt about a range of websites that provide access to New Zealand biodata. I will have access to a lot more data, without having to collect it myself. This will enable me to answer much bigger research questions.

Problems Solved Faster

Nancy Willems, Environment Bay of Plenty

Dataversity has enabled me to network with people who face common issues. This has provided an opportunity to bounce ideas off other people, find out about their solutions, and work on common solutions. This reduces the time it takes to solve problems.

Shared Data Encourages Standardisation

Owen Spearpoint, Greater Wellington Regional Council

I got to talk to the person who manages NVS, a national database that I use. I found out that the database is more flexible than I thought. I will now put more info into NVS. I use two repositories now. One regional, one national. Our data is safer and more available to others. TLAs and Regional Councils, in fact anyone doing monitoring, can see what has been done, and follow examples. This will encourage standardisation that leads to better quality data, and better decision making.

Substantial Savings from Not Reinventing the Wheel

Pedro Jenson, Greater Wellington Regional Council

Prior to joining Dataversity, I was facing a project to develop systems to manage biosecurity and biodiversity data at GWRC. Via Dataversity, I was exposed to an entire suite of integrated biodiversity data tools from Environment Bay of Plenty. These are all suitable for my organisation, and available for us to use.

We will use these tools to pull together all of our biodata in order to build a comprehensive picture of our region's biodiversity. They will allow us to produce reports using biodata sourced from multiple departments within GWRC. This will mean our management activities are less speculative. We will be able to justify our resource allocation with real figures. To implement these tools, we'll only have to develop components for the workflows that are specific to GWRC programmes.

Therefore, the scope of my original project has reduced to developing just the things that are specific to my organisation. Everything generic will be provided by the EBoP system. Access to the system from EBoP could allow GWRC to avoid a substantial software development project. It will allow us to more accurately forecast funding for restoration, pest management, surveillance projects and enable us to improve the accuracy of our SOE reporting. What could have been a three to four year project is now looking a lot smaller. And most importantly we are not reinventing the wheel.

Savings on New System

Yanbin Deng, Environment Waikato

I have gained a more complete picture of all how regional councils are handling SNAs. I will discuss what I have learned with our team, and suggest that IRIS should adopt the ARC/EBoP integrated system for SNAs and biodiversity information recording. EW will save money compared with setting up new systems ourselves.