Creating Collections Through Collaboration: An Innovative Digital Library Project in Monteverde, Costa Rica

Laurie Kutner  
*University of Vermont*

Cindy Dykes  
*Monteverde Institute Digital Library Proje*

Stefanie Havelka  
*CUNY Lehman College*

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Creating Collections Through Collaboration

An Innovative Digital Library Project in Monteverde, Costa Rica

Laurie Kutner
Information and Instruction Services Librarian/ Library Associate Professor
University of Vermont
laurie.kutner@uvm.edu

Cindy Dykes
Project Associate
Monteverde Institute Digital Library Project
cdykes@maine.rr.com

Stefanie Havelka
Electronic Resources-Web Services Librarian/ Assistant Professor
Lehman College/ CUNY
stefanie.havelka@lehman.cuny.edu
@steffihavelka
The Monteverde Zone
Monteverde Institute/ MVI Library

- Provides infrastructure for international education programs/ researchers

- Place-based research / problem-based learning → generates research reports

- MVI Library – limited physical collection that supports research
  - growing digital presence
  - need identified for access to local research
A digital library project is born

- Need identified (UVM)
- Collections exist – but limited and hidden access (MVI)
- Digital library software, systems support, and server (USF)
- Interns bring state-of-the-art knowledge/ gain valuable experience (Syracuse University)
Syracuse University digital library internship

- Unique overseas internship opportunity for MLIS students
- Involvement in all aspects of creating small-scale digital collections
- Contribute to greater information access/equity
- Understand information issues in developing country context
Internship involves:

• Hands-on involvement in planning/creating digital library

• Reviewing/ updating workflow document

• Inventorying all collection items

• Making digital collection decisions/ what to include

• Describing/ assigning metadata to digital objects for bilingual collections (Spanish and English)

• Working in different cultural context, within confines of information challenges posed by location in rural CR
Digital collections support 3 areas of MVI mission

Digital collections to date:

• Sustainable Futures (community development)
• Community Health
• Tropical Ecology
Why continue to be involved?

• Have been part of long term planning process for the digital library collections

• Have had an opportunity to collaborate in co-writing a grant

• Have had a chance to evaluate how the digital collections are used and how they can be improved

• Project with lots of room for growth:
  • Have added a new collection every year
  • Other small, area research libraries want their collections to be included
Instruction and Outreach

- Teach use of collections to MVI students, staff and local community - outreach to local schools (bilingual presentations)
- Present projects to MVI Board of Directors
- **Digital libraries** featured prominently on MVI library’s website - international usage
- Future: publicize to other research institutions in Costa Rica and beyond
The future is bright ...

• Collaborative model is a success
• Continue to grow digital collections using interns
• Agreement with UCR library school to expand internship to their students
• All local MV research institutions now want documents they generate to be included in collections
Goals and dreams of the Monteverde Institute Library

• Equitable information access for all
• Clearinghouse for information and research on the Monteverde zone (digital and physical)
• Support across collections of information in the Monteverde zone (and beyond)
• Secure funding (program fees, donations, grants, etc.)
Thanks for listening!

Access our digital collections through the Monteverde Institute web site:

http://www.mvinstitute.org

Watch our video:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N7KNX2eA_s

Q and A
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