

CAMD Case Studies – Emerging Technologies - 2015

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Museum Victoria; Atlas of Living Australia



The [Biodiversity Heritage Library](#) is an international project that aims to digitise and make freely available the full text of biodiversity-related literature.

The project was started by a group of libraries in museums and herbaria in the US and the UK. It has since become a global consortium with nodes in Europe, Egypt, China, South Africa, Brazil and Australia. It now provides access to over 40 million pages of digitised literature.

Concentrating initially on out of copyright works, but now incorporating in copyright works too, books and journals are scanned, uploaded to the Internet Archive, and made available through the Biodiversity Heritage Library website. Users include scientists needing historical information about species, distributions and taxonomy; artists; educators and students but it is also a fascinating site for anyone interested in natural history or rare books.

[Museum Victoria](#) is the lead agency for the Biodiversity Heritage Library in Australia, on behalf of the Atlas of Living Australia. This project demonstrates excellence in many ways.

The fact that project participants have successfully initiated scanning operations at libraries, across countries and continents attests to the strength of both the project and the collaboration. The project is also now a founding member of the Digital Public Library of America.

Rather than designed to support a visit to a physical GLAM venue, the Biodiversity Heritage Library provides access to digitised literature wherever the user is in the world.

Target audience / community: international educators, researchers, students, artists.

Demonstrating innovation in: international collaboration; expanding access to collections.

[Source, Meeting of Cultural Ministers, Digital Technologies Working Party Report Attachment 2 'Projects Demonstrating Excellence in Digital Innovation' June 2015]