



## ViBRANT Strategic Board

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011, 19.30

Chez Léna et Mimile, 32 Rue Tournefort, Paris

### MEETING NOTES

Attending:

*Vince Smith* (Chair) – Nat. Hist. Museum, London: ViBRANT Coordinator (VS)  
*Christine Hine* - Univ. of Surrey. Sociology of science and technology (CH)  
*Rod Page* - University of Glasgow. Professor of taxonomy (RP)  
*Dave Roberts* - Nat. Hist. Museum, London: ViBRANT Project Manager (DR)  
*Gregor Hagedorn* - Julius Kuhn Institute, Berlin. Specialist in ID tools.  
*Donat Agosti* - Founding member of Plazi, Switzerland. Specialist in taxonomic literature.

Apologies: None

Administrative support and notes: *Gemma Malder* (GM) and *Lucy Reeve* (LR).

#### Agenda

- Background – Project goals and priorities (VS)
- Introductions (around the table) (All)
- Identification of strategic issues
- Subsequent meeting arrangements
- Any Other Business

#### **1 Background**

The ViBRANT project began on December 1, 2010 and will run for three years. ViBRANT's broad management structure was outlined in the grant proposal and subsequent negotiation that resulted in funding under the EU's FP7 e-Infrastructure program. Additional information was provided in ViBRANT's consortium agreement. The terms of reference for the strategic board (summarised below) was discussed, refined and agreed during the meeting. These broad terms will be reviewed annually and will remain fluid as dictated by project needs. The strategic board is represented on the management committee by Vince Smith.

*Strategic Board Definition:* A collective of interested individuals who identify with the vision, mission and values of ViBRANT, and who provide insight into the needs of the communities served by ViBRANT to all other the governing bodies.

*Composition:* The ViBRANT project Coordinator, ViBRANT project manager and up to four invited experts representing major sectors of the biodiversity informatics community. Membership is for three years and may be renewed.

*Meetings:* Two formal meetings, one at the start of the project and another in year 3. Most business will be conducted electronically through the ViBRANT strategic board forum.

ACTION

*Role:* Develop the overall communication and dissemination strategy; provides feedback on ViBRANT activities as the "voice" of global biodiversity research; identify opportunities to include ViBRANT in the fabric of global biodiversity research.

*Initial Formation:* During the ViBRANT kick-off meeting (Scripting Life) Paris, France on January 19, 2011.

## 2 Introductions

Since this was the founding meeting, each member gave a short introduction of themselves and their work. These introductions are summarised below:

Vince Smith

Vince is a "cybertaxonomist" at the Natural History Museum in London and Coordinator of the ViBRANT project. He applies computer technology and the web to the study of biodiversity. Vince also is a systematist working on the evolution and taxonomy of parasitic lice (Insecta: Phthiraptera). See <http://vsmith.info/>

Christine Hine

Christine is based at the University of Surrey where she works on the sociology of science and technology. She has a special interest in information technology and the Internet, and recently wrote the book "*Systematics as Cyberscience*" which looks at the use how new technologies are changing research practices and priorities in systematics

Rod Page

Rod is professor of taxonomy at the University of Glasgow. He was editor of the journal Systematic Biology until the end of 2007 and his main interests until then were in phylogenetics and the development of bioinformatics software. Recently his research interests have focused on the development of taxonomic tools and systems on the Web.

Dave Roberts

Dave is a microbiologist at the Natural History Museum, London. He has been involved in the development of information systems managing biodiversity data and was the Workpackage 6 leader in the FP6 EU funded European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy. Dave is the ViBRANT Project Manager and chairs the management committee.

Gregor Hagedorn

Gregor is a research scientist at the Julius Kühn Institute and specialises in interdisciplinary research between computer science and biodiversity. He has been involved in a number of EU funded biodiversity informatics projects including BioCISE and was a workpackage leader in the recent KeyToNature project. Gregor is involved in Workpackage 4 in ViBRANT.

Donat Agosti

Professor Donat Agosti is a specialist on ants and in recent years has played a prominent role discussions on copyright of taxonomic literature. He is a member of a number of scientific associations and has several different scientific posts and affiliations including the Smithsonian Institution. Notably Donat is the president of Plazi, a digital library based in Switzerland.

### 3 Identification of strategic issues

VS

In a wide-ranging discussion involving all members of the group, three long-term strategic areas were identified. These are likely to have lasting significance to the ViBRANT project. These are:

#### *Licensing and copyright, particular with respect to the non-commercial use:*

The Creative Commons “non-commercial” (NC) limitation is part of the default licence scheme added to content created within the ViBRANT infrastructure. A strict definition of NC makes this content incompatible with a growing body of other free material (e.g. Wikipedia) and potentially rules out other beneficial uses that a content creator might have intended to allow. ViBRANT need to identify the issues surrounding the non-commercial limitation within ViBRANT and outline some next steps in the light of this discussion.

#### *ViBRANT project branding*

The ViBRANT consortium is composed of a complex mixture of projects, institutions and initiatives at different levels of maturity. There is some confusion of the purpose, value and distinctness of the ViBRANT brand, as distinct from the brand of its component elements. We need to clarify these issues, especially with respect to the potential longevity of the ViBRANT brand and nascent project elements that are being developed under the ViBRANT umbrella.

#### *Incentives and metrics*

Traditionally, scholarly impact is measured by citation counts: if a lot of people formally cite your work, it's important. Today, however, we can also measure another kind of impact, using the Web. People blog about, tweet, bookmark, and store articles and other publishing concepts as well as citing them. ViBRANT needs to explore the issues surrounding the development of these alternative metrics of impact.

#### *The “publishing” concept*

In the established scholarly communication system, the concept of a journal article dominates our definition of a unit of communication. However, the web enables people to publish elements of publications (e.g. images, datasets, specimen observations, analyses, protocols etc) with much more granularity. This offers the advantage that these elements can be more readily reused than would otherwise be the case. ViBRANT needs to explore these issues both in principle and in practice throughout the project.

It was agreed that VS as project coordinator would author a series of essays on these topics. These essays would help to identify the key issues and promote discussion on these themes.

**4 Meeting frequency**

The strategic board will have two formal meetings, one at the start of the project and another in year 3. The view of the strategic board will be sought electronically through the ViBRANT strategic board forum, blogs and twitter posts.

**5 Any other business**

None.

**VS**