4-1-2012

Creation of a Natural History Information Database with Mobile Device Access for the Pace Campus in Pleasantville

Joshua J. Schwartz
Dyson College of Arts and Sciences, Pace University

Martina Blackwood
Dyson College of Arts and Sciences, Pace University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/cornerstone3

Part of the Animal Sciences Commons, Biodiversity Commons, Instructional Media Design Commons, and the Plant Sciences Commons

INTERIM REPORT

Creation of a Natural History Information Database with Mobile Device Access for the Pace Campus in Pleasantville

Cornerstone III

Co-Principal Investigators:

Joshua J. Schwartz, Ph.D., Dyson College

Martina Blackwood, DPS, Instructional Technology, Dyson College

6-1-2012

Original Goals

Our main goal is to develop a system that will permit individuals on campus to easily gain information about the species of plants, animals and natural areas on Pace's Pleasantville campus. By scanning a QR code on small sign posts near items of interest using their mobile devices, individuals will access relevant websites. A Twitter account will also be made available so that students and faculty may inform others via "tweets" of noteworthy species (e.g. bird) sightings on campus. An important goal of the project is to enlist the assistance of Pace students in implementing the system.

Progress to Date

As of May 31, 2012, we have accomplished the following.

We have obtained necessary equipment (computer, printer, laminator, plant signs, ipad, and camera).

The PIs have created two pages (for a plant and an animal) that will serve as models (and elements of a grading rubric) for students assisting with the project.

We have set up a website for the species pages and uploaded (for trial purposes) a page for one species that can be accessed via a QR code using a mobile device such as a smart phone or ipad.

We have created a list of priority species on campus for incorporation into our data base.

Documents (to be uploaded as web pages) for over twenty species have been created.

We have setup a Twitter account. We intend to publicize its availability during the fall semester once the completed species pages have been uploaded to our website.

Impacts - Students

We have involved an environmental studies student (who received independent course credit during the spring of 2012) and six graduate students in the Environmental Sciences program (ENS 625) in the creation of species web pages. Allowing undergraduate and graduate students to participate in this project will provide them with an opportunity to better understand some of the principles involved in conducting a research study.

Impacts – Faculty

Angelo Spillo and Cara Cea have assisted by involving their students (see above) in the project.

Next Steps

During the summer and fall of 2012, with the help of our employed undergraduate student assistant, we will incorporate additional information, as needed, into the species pages that have been created. We will also increase their number. This student and the PIs will also photograph species, and assemble and erect species signs on campus.

As part of her independent study course in the fall of 2012 with Dr. Schwartz, a biology/environmental studies student also will be assisting with the project.

We plan to communicate project details to additional faculty we anticipate may be interested in participation of their students. In this regard we have recently communicated with a professor in the English department about involving students in one or more of her courses in the project. We plan to have students locate relevant poems and literature that could then be accessed via links on our species' pages. We hope students will also become involved creatively by contributing examples of their own writing.

We hope to involve one or more students in Information Systems to help us increase the technological sophistication of the system. Examples include GPS-based access to appropriate web pages in the database and an online docent-led tour of a portion of campus.

We intend to publicize the Twitter account. This account will be linked to the Greenspace Facebook page.