Collection Maintenance of Malacological Specimens

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The Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) is home to over a million specimens, with nearly half of its collection consisting of mollusks. The museum was chosen to join a conglomerate of research institutions to digitize mollusk specimens found along the Eastern Seaboard and Gulf of Mexico. The project's focus is to digitize data for over 3,000 species of mollusks to be uploaded to a variety of public data repositories. HMNS' primary goal was to begin the validation of metadata and to confirm the physical location of the specimens which met the guidelines of the project. In order to ensure standardization, the species name must be updated to correct taxonomy, all specimens in each catalog record must be accounted for, as well as standardizing the data entered. Over the course of thirteen weeks, over 2,000 catalog records were updated and over 100 catalog records were created, therefore inventorying close to 2,500 records which represented 34,454 specimens. Along with the validation, 46 new physical locations were created in the Emu software. Although the project is still underway, it encapsulates what is expected of an Information Professional: collection care of the information objects, routine inventorying, and updating records to ensure future generations can locate the desired object.

About the author:

Marissa Talamantes (she/her/hers) is a recent graduate from the ALA Accredited University of North Texas with a M.S. in Library Science. She also obtained two certifications while completing her graduating degree: Art Museum Education and Archival Management. She currently works part-time as a Library Associate at a small HBCU, where she also assists the archivist with creating Finding Aids and processing collections. Marissa resides in Austin, TX and hopes to find a full-time position in a special collections which will further her hands-on experience as well as her intellectual knowledge of managing Archives at an established repository.