

2017-02-19 VIVO Updates

VIVO Camp Registration deadline Feb 24. (that's this Friday!) Considering VIVO? Planning a VIVO implementation? Need to learn more about VIVO? Maybe you're the new person on an existing project and need to catch up. [Register today for Camp here](#). An [itinerary is available](#). Join colleagues leaning about VIVO in Albuquerque, April 6-8. Questions about camp? Drop us a note at info@vivoweb.org

Collaborative editing in the wiki. You know how Google Docs supports multiple people editing a document at the same time? Every sees who editing. [The VIVO Wiki](#), hosted by [Duraspace](#), was recently upgraded to Atlassian Confluence version 6.0. You can [read about new features here](#). One new feature is collaborative editing. Yay! Now task forces, governance groups, interest groups, technical writers and others working in the VIVO wiki and the VIVO documentation wiki can invite their friends and write and edit together. Do you have an account for editing? [Just ask](#) and you shall receive.

Improving the VIVO ontologies. As you may know, VIVO uses ontologies to describe the relations between things, and the data that can be recorded about these things. Vitro, the software underlying VIVO, is a "domain free" ontology-driven application. That means Vitro can be given any ontology, and it can create instances and record data about the instance, presenting web pages for each entity and supporting search over the entities and their data. In addition, Vitro provides an ontology editor to add new classes, object properties and data properties to the ontologies it is currently using. Vitro has been used to store data regarding library catalogues, clinical trials, space craft, and other collections of things defined by ontologies. You will be hearing more about Vitro over the course of the year.

VIVO inherits all this capability from Vitro, and uses a collection of ontologies to represent scholarship and research. Using ontologies proves an open data model that can be used by others, and provides a common exchange format for data about scholarship. VIVO then provides visualizations and other interface elements to make use of information about scholarship compelling and useful. Do you have ideas about how VIVO could be more compelling and more useful? We are always looking for exciting ideas.

All that VIVO records is based on the ontologies it uses. As with most human creations, ontologies change over time. We find gaps in what we are able to present. We find that ontologies we are using have been improved. We find technical issues in the ontologies resulting in VIVO behavior that could be improved.

But improving ontologies can have significant impact on the VIVO community. VIVO sites use their knowledge of the ontologies to transform data from other systems into data that can be used by VIVO. When the ontologies change, these transformation may need to be changed. Many sites use VIVO data in reports and web sites, and visualizations that they have created. These pieces of software use their knowledge of the VIVO ontologies (typically in the form of SPARQL calls) to get data from VIVO. When ontologies change, these peices of software must change, and that can be difficult, time-consuming and expensive.

I'd like to start a conversation about ontology improvements. There are a number of questions I think we may wish to consider:

- What is the purpose of any ontology improvement? What kinds of improvements are there? Why would any improvements be needed? What impacts would ontology changes have on the community? How can we know the impact of any particular ontology change?
- If we were great at ontology improvement, what form would that greatness take? What would be included? Can you picture a world in which we were great at ontological improvement? What would that world look like?
- How would we get from where we are now to what we want? What would we do first?

I'm sure there are many other questions to be asked about ontological improvement.

But you might be saying "what ontologies are there" and "why do I care". You can find [documentation on the ontologies](#) used in VIVO in the [VIVO documentation](#). You can find a [representation of all VIVO classes, object properties and data properties here](#). You may find some things you think may need to be improved.

Apps and Tools call this Thursday Interested in tools and applications that work with VIVO? The [Apps and Tools Interest Group](#) call will be held this Thursday, February 16, at 1 PM EST. Join us in a discussion of software that can be used with VIVO. We have [a catalog of apps and tools here](#). We are always eager to hear of more. Do you have a tool to be shared with the community? Tell us about it. Here's the [WebEx Link](#). See you Thursday!

Go VIVO!

Mike

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