

What is the Metadata Catalog?

The metadata catalog is a dynamic tool that we used on the Ballona Historical Ecology to track data collection and share information among our team members. Given the collaborative nature of this project, being able to share data dynamically was important to reduce repetition of effort, to allow for collaborative viewing of data, and to facilitate regional synthesis and ongoing investigations. The catalog provided the means to organize and query historical documentation by spatial location, wetland descriptions, time period, and source. Upon review and entry to the catalog, each source was assigned metadata such as year, author, and keywords pertaining to the item's ecological content. The assigning of metadata within the online catalog system allowed us to query our data sources by using simple to complex parameters in an efficient manner with relative ease. For example, we were able search citations by year or by year, location, author, and citation type (i.e., map, text, or photograph). The metadata catalog also allowed for data to be uploaded to a centralized location via ftp so that team members were able to download and access the data dynamically.

We have made the metadata catalog is available to the public at (<http://68.70.114.27/>). We removed data that was posted on the website given restrictions associated with copyright permissions. However, bibliographic tables and information about source institutions may be downloaded from this online database creating a secondary product for stakeholder use. This type of metadata catalog creates a living tool for the discovery of new information and allows for the creation of different questions that can be explored by future researchers.