

Proposed features for a metadata collection system.		
Element	Feature	Why
Form	Online	Easily filled by multiple users anywhere
	Filled in by experimenters	Experimenters are who know samples the best
		Parallelize metadata collection
	Mandatory fields	Ensure essential information is collected
	Drop-down list with predefined values	Avoid typing errors and reduce typing
		Minimize variation in metadata values (e.g. “Homo sapiens” vs “h_sapiens”)
	Standardised values	Make metadata values comparable across samples (e.g. dates in YYYY-MM-DD format)
		No need to specify units so that some fields can be treated as numerical
	Administered by few members	More likely that the features above are consistently followed
Spreadsheet	Online	Act as a catalogue of samples
	Restricted access	Data privacy
	Users can only view	Data integrity
SQL database	Unique sample identifier as primary key	Connect tables in the database Link to data files