EDIT: experience and impact

Dave Roberts
Network Steering Committee

The Natural History Museum, London
Network of 26 European and 2 N American taxonomic institutions aiming to integrate research and improve the production of knowledge.

Funded by the European Commission over 5 years. Coordinated by the MNHN (Paris).

Contributes to overcoming the taxonomic impediment identified by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Guiding vision is Future Trends of Taxonomy report
Goals:
– Co-ordinate European taxonomy (600M€) in a coherent and ambitious European research strategy;
– Optimise CETAF infrastructures;
– Spread and share scientific results with major international initiatives (GBIF, CBoL, GTI, CBD, etc.).

Covers:
– Taxonomy and classification of life;
– Molecular barcoding and phylogeny;
– Management of collections and other infrastructures;
– Bioinformatics and web services (50% of budget);
– Run by the directors of participating institutions who have sat down together for the first time in two centuries.
European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy

http://dev.e-taxonomy.eu/platform

CDM Community Store

The CDM Community Store is a repository for every conceivable type of data produced by taxonomists in the course of their work. It supports concurrent editing, and can be interfaced via web protocols by a wide array of applications.

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Internet Platform for Cybertaxonomy

1. Platform access: the EDIT Cybergate
2. Basic technological architecture: CDM and Java Library
3. Output: Data Portal and print publication services
4. Input: The EDIT Taxonomic Editor
5. Tools: The Geo-Platform
6. Tools: Descriptive components
7. Tools: Bibliography (ViTaL)
8. Tools: Specimen access
9. Technology: Security and Single Sign-on (SSO)
10. Tools and developments for ATBI and Monitoring activities
11. Usability testing

Version 2 released October 09

http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/node/655
European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy

Scratchpads
biodiversity online

Hosted web sites, with tools for taxonomists

Intended to encourage community building

Unbranded, to encourage community identity

Tools to facilitate structuring of data

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Scratchpads:

- Taxonomy & Literature
- eBooks
- Image Galleries
- DNA, Phylogeny & Specimens
- eJournals
- Societies & Organizations

1.2k users, 58 countries, 170k pages
100 "Virtual Research Communities"
EDIT, GBIF, NHM, & EOL
Platform for biodiversity research & data publication
Changing the nature of collaboration
Expanding opportunities to participate in science

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Scratchpad goals beyond EDIT

- Establish host nodes & mirrors at major institutions
- Expand and distribute the Scratchpad developer network
- Connect Scratchpads with major international initiatives (EOL, GBIF, CBoL, BHL, GTI, CBD, etc.)
- Formalize Open Access publishing with a major journal
- Standardize on-demand citation framework
- Expand community building & outreach

Potential partners

- Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL)
- Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), LifeDesks
- European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy institutions
- Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)
- Oxford e-Research Centre (OeRC)
- Pensoft Publishing (publisher of “Zookeys”)
Sociological survey of Scratchpad maintainers

46 of 99 maintainers were interviewed.

Goal was to understand the motivations and benefits perceived by users when adopting the Scratchpad system, and to identify the barriers (both social and technical) that may hinder wider uptake.

People engage with the Scratchpads for a variety of reasons and confirm that users perceive a range of benefits to their scholarly work practices.

Some describe social resistance amongst their colleagues.

Concerns about the software sustainability made some users turn away from Scratchpads and similar virtual research tools.
Observation 1

The primary barrier to researcher's engagement is sociological, not technological.
What is the role of networks of institutions regarding multiform barcoding networks?

EDIT = EU level
CBoL = world level

www.ECBoL.org

Maintaining the information flow and traceability of data
Roadmap to the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy

- Preliminary infrastructure design (Month 25)
- Strategic decisions on process & roadmap
- Components & their requirements
- Requirements from stakeholders
- Decisions on scope of joint operations & level of integration
- Practical design options (Month 52)
- MoUs & implementation (Month 60)

BoD

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Observation 2

Formal collaboration between institutions is only possible if they share common goals.

Science Policy in EDIT Institutions

Not all member institutions have formal written policies.

Member institutions operate on a variety of strategic levels from local to global.
Thank you for your attention