



Project no. 018340

Project acronym: EDIT

Project title: Toward the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy

Instrument: Network of Excellence

Thematic Priority: Sub-Priority 1.1.6.3: "Global Change and Ecosystems"

C8.1.4.2 Report on the consultation interface for the on-line catalogue of training resources for taxonomy

Due date of component: Month 41
Actual submission date: Month 41

Start date of project: 01/03/2006

Duration: 5 years

Organisation name of lead contractor for this component: 14-RMCA

[Final]

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)		
Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	x
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Introduction:

The WP8 on-line catalogue of taxonomic training resources wants to provide a single point of access to the extensive worldwide (EU and non-EU) offer of training resources in this field (taxonomy s.l.).

Currently, a static HTML file is on-line, manually generated from a spreadsheet overview with all the training resources, at: http://edit.africamuseum.be/WP8_taxonomy_courses/index.html

There is also a Drupal version developed by V. Zintzen:
<http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/node/150>

Clearly this is not an ideal situation, because of the rigid nature of this setup: any adaptations (error corrections, changes in dates, new contact email address, ...) have to be done manually to the existing HTML pages: a cumbersome process.

The value of the catalogue will be greatly enhanced if it were more dynamic, and if the people responsible for the resources could themselves (in a controlled manner) make the necessary adaptations. They would feel more involved and the burden on the webmaster (who should be only involved on the technical side) would be reduced.

The development of such a dynamic catalogue can best be done through a number of intermediary steps, the first one of which is a consultation interface.

Requirements for the consultation interface:

- the interface will be developed in an open-source way, like the other EDIT tools
- the interface will be clear and user-friendly, so people will feel at home with it
- the interface will be accessible for low-bandwidth connections, so without too much bells & whistles
- the interface will be web-based (clearly) and architecture (and browser) independent: in practice this is always a bit tricky, but a simple setup mostly works without too much problems
- the interface will be made in a modular way, so new components (e.g. editing interface) can be added as necessary
- there will be a way to query and sort the data
- there will be a way to save or print the data results (print-friendly format)

Technologies used:

- REST webdevelopment, simple and solid protocols, no fancy new gimmicks
- server-side scripting (PHP), to be lighter on the client side, as server takes on the scripting duties. We are aware that within EDIT the Drupal CMS (content management

system) is already in use. From a developer's point of view the Drupal background database is not an ideal solution however, too much "black box" and too little control for the developer.

- PostgreSQL database
- search engine will be implemented as a normal query on the database

data fields displayed in the interface:

For display, there will be two options for the data fields: a quick overview with a limited number of fields, and a more detailed view with full (or extended) record info.

For the short overview the fields to be displayed will include:

- title of the course
- organising institution
- language
- periodicity
- duration
- content of the course
- target level for the course
- contact person

searchable data fields:

For the search and sort option, the following fields are important

- organising date
- country
- content of the course
- language
- target level

Implementation:

A first on-line prototype for the consultation interface is nearly finished and should be available in September 2009. An input interface is planned for the end of November 2009, and the fully operational on-line catalogue of courses should be ready by the end of January 2010.