



Project no. 018340

Project acronym: EDIT

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Instrument: Network of Excellence

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C8.1.4.3 Report on the input interface for the on-line catalogue of training resources for taxonomy

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Dissemination Level ("X" in the relevant box)		
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)	

This report was compiled by Yang Wu and Franck Theeten of the Royal Museum for Central Africa.

Introduction:

An online consulting tool for the “WP8 on-line catalogue of taxonomic training resources” has been developed. This tool includes now also an input interface web page, which allows organisers to add their new courses via internet.

A search interface and an insertion form have been developed in PHP and integrated into a Drupal test portal:

<http://edit.africamuseum.be/drupal-6.14/edit-wp8-insertion-form>

(log with the “edit_user” account having password “edit_user” in order to access the input interface)

Users fill the information about their courses in different input boxes, and click on the button ‘Save’. The new course is then sent to the server and added to the database if no input error is detected.

If an error appears during the execution, the new course will not be saved in the database and an error message will be displayed on the screen telling users what the problem is. Compulsory edit boxes are indicated by a star symbol on the left. This function will prompt users to fill in each box and also trigger an error message when an incomplete form is sent. The webpage also contains some useful links, one to the general EDIT homepage and one to the EDIT WP8 homepage.

Requirements for the input interface:

- the interface was developed in an open-source way, like the other EDIT tools
- the interface aims to be clear and user-friendly
- the interface aims to be accessible for low-bandwidth connections
- the interface aims to be browser independent
- the interface was made in a modular way, so new components can be added as necessary
- content improvement mechanisms and data cleaning tools may be further developed.

Technologies used:

- REST web development, simple and solid protocols, no fancy new gimmicks
- server-side scripting (PHP), should be lighter on the client side, as server takes on the scripting duties.
- Client-side scripting (JavaScript), to show the message box and doing some verification on the client side (Exp: use regular expression to check the existence of incorrect character).
- A PostGreSQL database has been used to store the data related to the course. As a second step this PHP interface has been integrated into a prototype Drupal portal. This interface connects to the PostGreSQL database instead of the internal MySQL database of the Drupal portal . This solution allowed us to benefit from the advantages of the Drupal portal like the:

- Integrated log-in system
- Right management
- Scalability of portal
- Possibility to define several layout for the same data

However, by storing the primary data with its own data model separately, we managed to define an appropriate way of keeping the documentation of training courses independent from the internal Drupal database which has its own static data model and is not intended for the storage of primary data.

Keeping the data on training courses separated should ease the exportation of the data on the training courses and its reusability in different environments in a long term perspective and keeping sustainability in mind.

Detail of online courses:

To add a new course the user should give the following information:

- title of the course*
- the location of course
- country
- organiser of the course*
- organising institution
- language*
- periodicity*
- duration*
- content of the course*
- target level for the course*
- responsible name of the course*
- contact person
- website of the course

(*): compulsory fields

Implementation:

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