

Entrée

Sharing herbaria via the Internet

Entrée brings together data from herbaria to export to the Atlas of Living Australia. This data is keenly sought after by the community, containing information on the occurrence of plants in time and space as natives or weeds, as members of plant communities, and as objects.



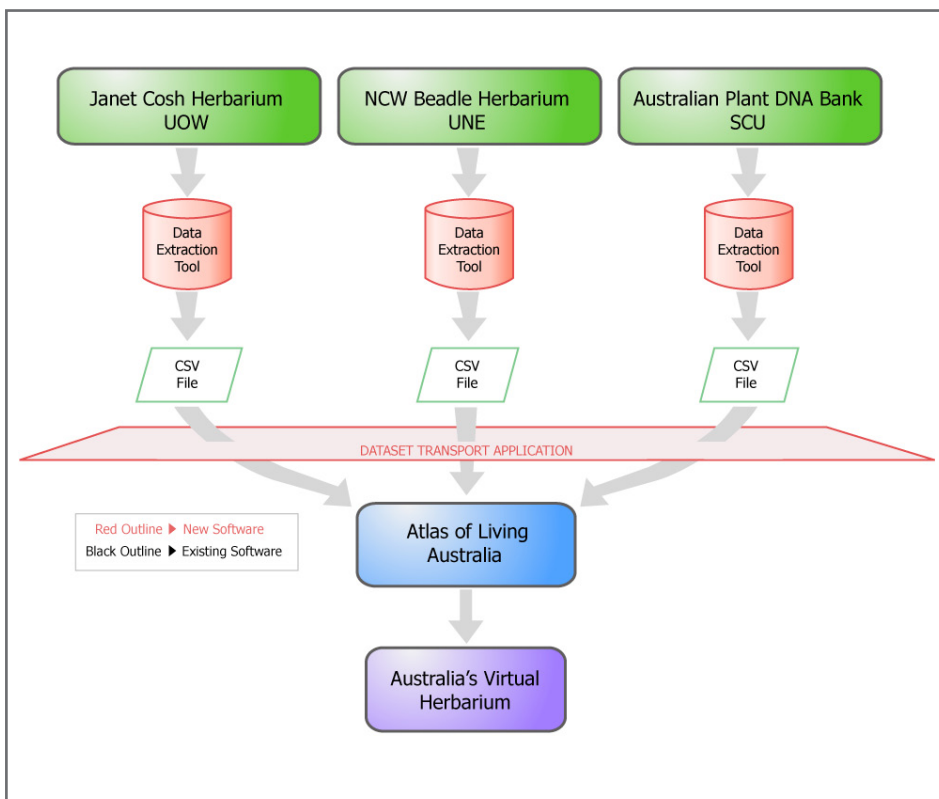
Sharing herbaria via the internet

The Entrée project is bringing together information from several important collections of plant specimens, as well as the collections' records, observations, field notes and research. The project is part of two larger projects which are making this wealth of biodiversity information freely accessible online.

The plant collections being brought together are the Beadle Herbarium at the University of New England; the Janet Cosh Herbarium at the University of Wollongong and the Australian Plant DNA Bank at Southern Cross University.

All these collections are interesting and valuable in their own way – the

Beadle Herbarium contains about 80,000 plant specimens; the Janet Cosh Herbarium focuses on plants from south eastern New South Wales, including Sydney and the South Coast. The Australian Plant DNA Bank stores plant tissue and DNA samples, as well as taxonomic and demographic information about the samples.



The data and information from the collections offers a useful online resource for scientists, taxonomists, botanists, curators, gardeners, horticulturalists, teachers and students.

The Entrée project is an Intersect innovation project. This project makes the three collections available to the Atlas of Living Australia and Australia's Virtual Herbarium so that their contents will be more widely available and discoverable.

The Atlas of Living Australia

The Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) provides access to biodiversity information from museums and biological

collections, research, literature, observations, maps, images, identification tools and molecular data.

By combining biodiversity information with analytical tools and services, the Atlas assists with the ongoing study, identification and management of Australia's plants, animals and microorganisms. The Atlas informs research, education and decision making on biosecurity, food security, climate change, sustainable farming, global change management as well as species and landscape conservation.

The ALA is a five-year project funded under the Australian Government's National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS); and is a collaborative project between CSIRO, a number of museums and universities, the Council of Heads of Museum Directors, the Australian Government and the heads of plant, animal, insect and micro collections.

Australia's Virtual Herbarium

Australia's Virtual Herbarium (AVH) provides immediate, on-line access to the wealth of data associated with scientific plant specimens in each Australian herbarium. Six million specimen records will be enhanced by images, descriptive text and identification tools. The AVH is a collaborative project of the State, Commonwealth and Territory herbaria. It is

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being developed under the auspices of the Council of Heads of Australian Herbaria (CHAH), representing the major Australian collections.

Features

1. The electronic records of the Janet Cosh Herbarium, the NCW Beadle Herbarium and the Australian Plant DNA Bank are available to the ALA and AVH by creating a HISPID-compliant data interchange tool.
2. The infrastructure allows more herbaria to be added to the project by providing protocols and software to handle the HISPID transfer to the ALA.

The University of New England's NCW Beadle Herbarium collection contains approximately 80,000 plant specimens. Detailed records are largely recorded in an Access database, and work is currently underway to redevelop this database under Oracle, with a web front-end. This system has been developed in a manner to facilitate participation in AVH and the ALA.

The Australian Plant DNA Bank at Southern Cross University is a repository for plant tissue and DNA specimens. A LIMS system based on an Oracle database is used to track both tissue and DNA samples, as well as record taxonomic and demographic information about the samples. The

system contains the information required to create entries in the ALA and AVH, but there is currently no automatic method for doing so.

At the University of Wollongong, the Janet Cosh Herbarium is a repository for dried plant specimens collected from the Sydney, Illawarra, South Coast and Southern Tableland regions of New South Wales. The Herbarium provides information on the taxonomy, history, distribution and conservation of plant species within these regions. The specimens are stored in a controlled environment and their details are recorded in a database. Voucher specimens used in research are also stored in the Herbarium.

Reusability: High ■■■

designed for institutions with herbaria

Project Details

Start Date: June 2010

End Date: Q2 2011

Client(s):

UOW, UNE, SCU, ALA, AVH and the Council of Heads of Australian Herbaria

Technologies:

Java, SWT

Related Links:

www.ala.org.au

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