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Creating a Taxonomic E-Science (CATE)

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Fixed-publication (whether on paper, CD-ROM or in PDF) as the medium for descriptive taxonomy is being challenged almost by default and is unlikely to survive as the sole means of publication of taxonomic acts in the long-term. The future is being anticipated already in a number of online approaches to revisionary (descriptive, monographic) taxonomy that involve continuous addition and correction of data. Such information ranges from single source web pages to databases linked in distributed networks. The ubiquity of the Internet for promoting the work of taxonomists is likely to be too strong to resist, however persuasive the arguments for control by the codes of nomenclature. This prediction is strengthened by the diminishing workforce of professional taxonomists (who are largely responsible for shaping the Codes) involved in describing life on the planet. While taxonomists may be unable to control taxonomic content in the new and more anarchic medium (other than within their own diminishing community), they do have the opportunity to shape the field to the benefit of their own close community and the much wider (and largely undefined) user base.

An Internet-based approach to revisionary taxonomy is being taken in the CATE project (www.cate-project.org). The CATE workflow is designed to allow new taxonomic proposals to be made incrementally, without readers having to wait for a complete revision. Proposals will be subjected to an open peer-review process and an editorial system. The system also provides the opportunity for high quality products to be maintained through the incorporation of well-tested taxonomic standards. CATE is being developed using two demonstrator taxa: Sphingidae (hawkmoths) as the demonstrator for animals and Araceae (aroids) for plants. There seems much merit in treating taxonomy overtly as an information science, while still regarding the subject as an intellectual endeavour in its own right. This shift in emphasis is explored by examining the growing influence of e-projects in the changing taxonomy landscape.

What messages from Web-based taxonomy projects are there for our geometrid community? This question might be a suitable starting point for our discussion.

Hunting for Gondwanaland relicts: the Geometridae of the *Nothofagus* forests of Tasmania and Chile

Axel Hausmann

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Comparable with the outstanding biogeographic importance of their hosts, also the herbivorous fauna on *Nothofagus* offers promising opportunities to explore the palaeobiogeography of the southern hemisphere and the importance of long-term isolation and vicariance versus long-distance dispersal and colonization/extinction scenarios for the extant distribution patterns and intercontinental relationships. A pilot study (DFG HA 1806/7-1) on geometrid moths of *Nothofagus*-forests in Chile and Tasmania revealed a list of candidates for possible Gondwanan relationships, e.g. in the tribes

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