Progress report on the Plecoptera Database project

My developing Plecoptera Database was presented at the International Joint Meeting (Ephemeroptera and Plecoptera) in Perugia in 2001, several months ago. To me, the presentations and posters at the meeting were a very stimulating experience. I returned home with lots of ideas about what is needed in a user-friendly database, numerous new keywords, and new views of what the questions and specific demands on a Plecoptera database are. This all resulted in the creation of lots of new input and output forms. It takes time for a chemist to learn to think like a zoologist would think ...

However, at home, the planned input tests were not as satisfying as I had hoped they would be. I had simply reached the capacity limits of ACCESS, due to the complexity of the data structure and the mass of data. In view of frequently repeated error messages like 'too many indices...', 'not enough array capacity...', lots of system crashs and so on, I was forced to reconsider and modify the concept.

The database is now working faster, and the internal array structure is less complex, even though the database tasks as well as the number of program modules has grown. Recent data input tests still reveal a number of little errors resulting from the new array structure, but these cases are easy and will successively be fixed. I will have to modify only single numerals in the programs to solve the problems, one by one. I expect to be past the stage of test in the near future and as soon as we have checked and updated our keyword list, serious data input will begin.

However, while the data input should soon be alright, some serious problems remain with the data output. Keywords for these unsolved problems include: multiuser environment (while data security and data consistency are at the same time maintained), comfortable user-friendly filtering of the data, and the like.

At Perugia, I was often asked how I as a one-woman database developer, administrator, data collector, etc. can plan to present a working Plecoptera database soon. It is clear that I will need your help in many ways, please. If you have suggestions regarding the above unsolved aspects, please make contact!

At this point, I would also much appreciate your help with data input. It would be great if you could supply me with various kinds of lists, preferably data files (Word, Excel, Access, no matter), or refer me to useful web addresses, such as

- o Plecoptera bibliographic references, e. g. all of your own publications on Plecoptera
- o relevant journals and publishers
- o Checklists
- o Distribution lists of Plecoptera
- o Museum inventories and relevant museums
- o Locality lists of your country (including, if possible, altitude, latitude and longitude; English and/or native spelling, etc.)
  - ▪ streams, rivers, etc.
  - ▪ mountains
  - ▪ administrative units, e.g., departments, regions
  - ▪ environmental and climatic categories

Our keyword list for the categorization of the contents of published papers is being revised. Several major subject fields are being distinguished, and we may contact experts for each among you soon and ask for detailed comments!

Most of all, I need your publications, the recent ones in particular; if you do not yet do so, please send reprints to Schlitz. The greatest help of all would be if you were willing to make data files available on which your published papers are based because that would greatly facilitate the task of data input.

Thank you all in advance!
Yours sincerely,

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