

BRAUERIA 34

Lunz, September 2007

Dear Trichopterologist,

Janusz Majecki has now sent me the invitation to the 13th International Symposium on Trichoptera which will be held in Białowieża National Park in Poland from 22 to 27 June 2009. Please note his letter on page 4.

Digital techniques have changed our world during the last few years, and everyone enjoys their benefits. One does not have to write a manuscript five times as before, the computer helps with corrections as often as is necessary. One is not forced to put a question mark on the label of an insect when collecting in a good locality in the mountains of Sumatra, after a drive of many hours without maps and without knowing where one is: the GPS apparatus says it in few seconds. Access to information of any kind, almost limitless, is now possible for everyone. Does anyone risk to speak of disadvantages? I do.

When I get a diskette with a text for Braueria, let us say, from North America, my computer usually refuses to read it. Remarkable! Normally texts sent from Europe are completely readable, even in complicated languages such as Turkish or Lithuanian. In other cases, my computer can read part of a text, but suggests that I should have the latest version of the programme for a full understanding – which means that I have to buy too often all the new versions of any programmes (from my personal funds, of course!). I wonder how people in 30 years or so will read texts from today, stored on today's diskettes? What happens with photographs stored on a present-day CD: will it be necessary to re-store everything every five years, otherwise they will be inaccessible?

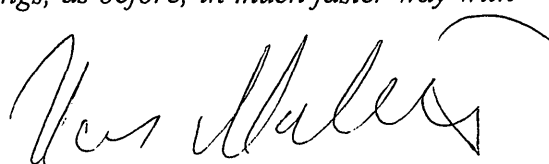
I have refused to have an e-mail address for good reasons. When I was thinking whether to get one or not, a friend told me that he had found 1400 e-mails upon returning from his holidays – to read all these must be a good pastime until the next holidays, or what? Viruses and other ugly surprises may well be kept away when the University or the Institute cleans all its computers three times a day, but I have to pay for this protection from my own money. The main reason, however, is that not the snail-mail but the correspondents are too slow. How often I ask a short question and have to wait many months for the answer: with e-mail or without.

In the old times when I was a student, every professor was immediately able to recognise whether a dissertation was authentic or stolen. Nowadays our Universities have full-time specialists who have to find out whether dissertations were fished from the internet. I remember a discussion in my country on the dissertation of the present Minister of Science – of course he was exonerated from the suspicion... Publications on caddis are not yet like this, but when I get manuscripts for reviewing I see often that the citations in the bibliography are correct, but from the text I see that the authors have never read these papers but obviously taken something from the internet. Stupid mistakes are multiplied this way. It is unbelievable how much garbage is on the internet. Everyone can put his stuff there without any control. No scientific journal on earth would ever accept this kind of material. It is really hard work to find out the quality information from the bulk of internet garbage.

To produce drawings of caddis genitalia and other details by computer is difficult and needs intensive special study, and to find out a particular function one has to start a plebiscite to find someone who knows what to do. A simple vacuum cleaner is accompanied by written instructions, the computer is not. So I make my drawings, as before, in much faster way with pencil, paper, scissors and glue.

More examples?

With best wishes



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Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

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