

Progress Report CF 2011-104

Biodiversity informatics at the Western Australian Herbarium

Plant Science and Herbarium

Project Core Team

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Project status as of July 4, 2016, 4:14 p.m.

Approved and active

Document endorsements and approvals as of July 4, 2016, 4:14 p.m.

Project Team	granted
Program Leader	granted
Directorate	granted

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Context

FloraBase, the web information system for the Western Australian flora, is the Department's main means of communicating botanical taxonomic information. FloraBase draws from three corporate datasets maintained by the Herbarium, dealing with names, specimens and images. Managing the currency, authority, data quality and linkages between these datasets is an important task, both for the maintenance of FloraBase and for Western Australia's contributions to national and global plant information resources such as the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

Aims

- Deliver authoritative taxon-level and specimen-level information on all Western Australian plants, algae and fungi to a wide audience, using efficient, effective and rigorous web-based technologies.
- Deliver the Department's biodiversity data to the internet using standards-compliant web services and data structures.

Progress

- FloraBase is in a transition to new hardware, as is the entire Western Australia Herbarium IT infrastructure. Most resourcing has been given to facilitating this transition. Once the move is completed a revised presentation of plant, cryptogam and fungi images (via ImageBank) will be introduced to stakeholders.
- Maintenance of FloraBase content continued including:
 - Key loading
 - Nuytsia updates
 - Search and login updates

Management implications

- FloraBase allows the community and Department staff to retrieve the most recent information on the name, features, status and distribution of the 13785 currently recognised native and naturalised Western Australian vascular plant taxa. Species conservation and land management efforts across the state are made more effective by access to this authoritative information.
- Involvement in national and international informatics collaborations enables Western Australia to participate fully in new developments in these areas, ensures that Western Australian data is made available to the broadest possible audience, and ensures that data from other sources can be integrated with local data for more effective research and analyses.

Future directions

- Implement and maintain the display of all images available from ImageBank
- Upgrade the mapping interface to make better use of Departmental resources, e.g. NatureMap
- Implement the third major version of FloraBase, determining to what extent it draws on or is implemented within ALA infrastructure.
- Add new content, including interactive keys for identification of plant groups to species level.
- Complete and release the Specimen Accessioning Tool after a testing phase.
- Develop further standards to facilitate and participate in national and international bio-infrastructure projects, such as ALA, NatureMap and other common online services.