



Project no. 018340

Project acronym: EDIT

Project title: Toward the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy

Instrument: Network of Excellence

Thematic Priority: Sub-Priority 1.1.6.3: "Global Change and Ecosystems"

D14: 1st report on implementation of communication and PR strategy

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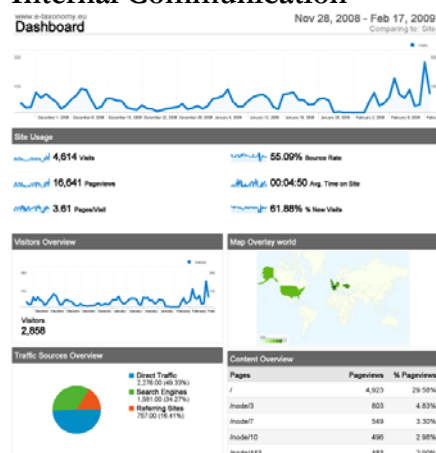
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Dissemination Level ("X" in the relevant box)		
PU	Public	X
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RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Public Relations and communication were not originally concerns in the first Description of Work for EDIT. They emerged in the first year, partly because it became clear that they were necessary for EDIT's work and partly at the request of the EDIT Scientific Advisory Council and the European Commission. Accordingly, in month 23 (February 2008), EDIT delivered an integrated PR and communications plan which encompassed three main directions, each with a tailored message:

	<i>Target</i>	<i>Main tools</i>	<i>Message</i>
Internal Communication	scientists in the network	websites and newsletter	collaborative work, modern technologies
Public Relations (PR)	decision-makers	participation in conferences	integrated taxonomy to fight current crises
Public Awareness (PA)	general public	exhibitions, school links, media	knowledge of biodiversity

Internal Communication



The new website was launched during the summer of 2008, and detailed statistics became available at the end of November 2008. It is quite successful, with an average of 375 visits per week (265 Absolute Unique visitors), excluding holidays. The new website serves its function as an internal communication tool, as the most visited pages are: “What is EDIT?”, “EDIT for taxonomists” and various event pages.

The EDIT Newsletter has produced issues #7 through #13 since the delivery of the PR plan. These issues included expanded content, including one issue devoted to a debate on the future of taxonomy which carried over from electronic forums. The electronic delivery was expanded to

100 policy and GTI readers beyond the circle of EDIT participants (itself roughly 900 people), and is being forwarded by team leaders. A bimonthly print run of 400 copies started in early 2008 and is now distributed through the member institutions.

A particular effort was made towards the involvement of team leaders in each institution. The network office circulated a slide library dedicated to the funding opportunities, tools and programmes that EDIT makes available for taxonomists. Similarly, we provided team leaders with regularly-updated and custom-made posters targeted at their institution's researchers.

Public Relations

Most of the planned Public Relation work for EDIT will start in 2009, corresponding with the preliminary stages of design of the European Commission's 8th Framework Programme for Research and Technology. However, some elements have already been put in place

A working relationship with the PR/PA officers of other networks and worldwide efforts has begun, including groups such as ALTERNet, MarBEF, GBIF, LifeWatch, PESI, Encyclopedia of Life, SYNTHESYS, CBoL, and Species 2000. This has led to exchange of texts through websites and newsletters, as well as common operation/design of booths at major events.

The full slide library for EDIT, regularly updated, is now available for any “EDIT ambassador” for use in conferences, workshops and expertise provision. EDIT was physically present in booths and/or in poster form at the following major events for science/policy interfacing: CBD

COP9, CBD SBSTTA 13, IUCN World Congress, GFÖ, EPBRS meeting, ICZ congress (Systema Naturae 250), Ville Européenne des Sciences.

Public Awareness

An EDIT workshop in Brussels (March 13-14, 2008) brought together PA staff from most EDIT members. It was concluded that EDIT can have a significant effect by focusing on the creation of the Biodiversity Year Schedule of Events, an online information clearinghouse on Public Awareness activities in 2010. This has received formal approval from the Convention on Biological Diversity's Countdown 2010 programme and will be integrated in its efforts.

EDIT will also support and take a hand in designing several projects developed by PA-oriented colleague networks or consortia. These include "Wild Wonders of Europe" (photograph exhibition), "Beacons of Biodiversity" (youth conference and art exhibition) and "Wild Flowers" (school outreach on knowing species).

One major focal point for media interest was the launch of the first All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory and Monitoring programme in the French and Italian Alps. At least eight separate articles, along with 2 radio and 1 television report, were circulated in the French, Italian and worldwide press to cover the event, with a major media launch on 12 June 2008. A press folder is now available for review, both online (<http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/press>) and in paper format.

Areas of Improvement

The communication plan (D5) envisioned a set of "success stories", to serve as a regular message and demonstrate interesting taxonomic work. Some of these have appeared on various subjects as articles in the newsletter.

However, a more coherent strategy to find, refine and organise these success stories is more difficult, largely due to varied work processes, involvement levels and cultures among institutions. Although clearly important, implementing "success stories" requires significant manpower to be successful.

Similarly, the preparation of briefs to reach decision-makers before major events has not yet been pursued, because of concerns relating to efficacy and cost. This will be reconsidered if necessary in the coming year.

Further steps in the implementation of the PR and communication plan

EDIT's Scientific Advisory Committee, as well as an outside consultant (G. Thomson), had the following recommendations for further implementation of our communication strategy, building on existing positive results:

- Make the science-drive nature more visible
- Show how the tools EDIT proposes are useful to the users
- Show the part played by EDIT community in broader biodiversity research sector and beyond
- Sell more why we need to know about species (various user groups at various levels)... "make taxonomy more alive"
- Have wider articles in the newsletter, beyond the taxonomic audience to the wider scientific community, the intelligent reader.

These guidelines will direct the next communication actions that EDIT will take, following the work-plan outlined in Deliverable 5.

Appendices

(components planned for JPA 3 month 24 - 41)

<i>App. no.</i>	<i>JPA 3 Component</i>	<i>Title</i>
01	C8.5.1	Overview of existing taxonomy-based education programmes in NHM and BG and recommendations for all partners
02	C8.5.2	Report on “how to communicate taxonomy?” with best practices and success stories useful for the PR strategy
03	C8.5.3	Work programme for designing common public awareness activities at the 2010 horizon concerning all EDIT partners
04	C8.5.4	Report to the BoD on integrated approaches of PA activities towards 2010 and beyond
05	C1.3.2	Newsletter
06	C1.3.1	Improved website
07	C8.5.5	Recommendations and guidelines for integrated approaches of PA activities towards 2010 and beyond
08	C7.1.5	Presentation of ATBI+M concept at international conference “Biodiversity Research - Safeguarding the future”
09	C7.1.7	EDIT ATBI+M special outreach flyer
10	C7.5.2	Documentation on first ATBI outreach and promotion event for media and the public at PB Mercantour & PN Alpi Marittime