



# Better Together: Merging our knowledge about people, places, collections, and taxonomies with Wikidata

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# (My) brief history of collection data management

Around the year 1998:

- Data management was largely carried out locally.
- Dozens of individual software solutions.
- Restrictive publication policies.
- It was not generally accepted that data sharing is a good idea.

# 10 years later ...

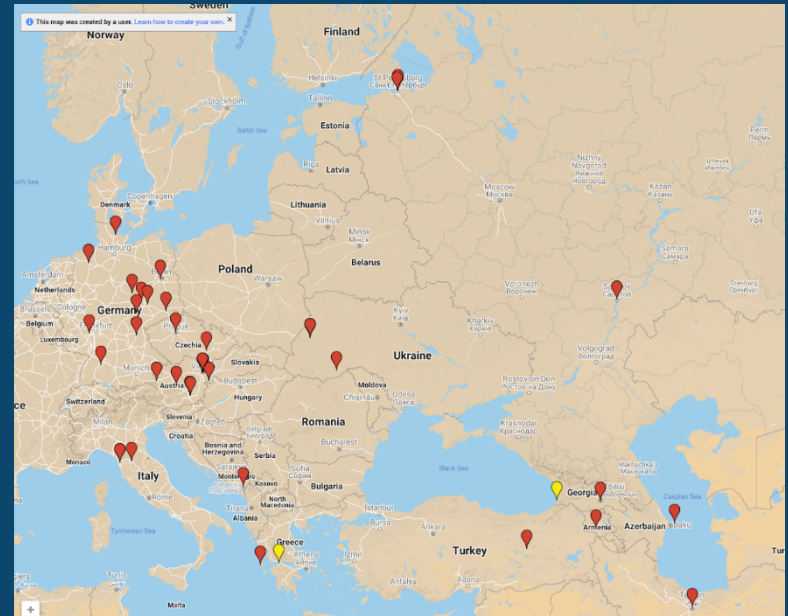
## Software development cooperation

- Collections started to re-use existing software.
- Some collections got together to develop software themselves.
- Completely new systems but also adaptations of existing open source solutions.

# Today ...

## Shared databases and platforms

- Example: The JACQ system.
- 50 herbarium collections using a single (!) shared database.
- Master database hosted at the Natural History Museum Vienna.
- Several synchronised copies in European Collections.



# Many advantages

- Core data types are maintained jointly (e.g. scientific names, controlled vocabularies).
- Harmonised data input procedures.
- Re-use already existing data (for example in the case of duplicates).
- Shared and harmonised networking components (GBIF, BioCAsE, etc.).

But ...

data are still not linkable and re-usable on a global level.


# Can we go further?

- Data types could be jointly maintained in the public domain and linked locally.
- Example: persons (collectors).
- Maintain biography jointly for example in Wikidata.
- Simply link the local data with the Wikidata ID.



Authority Management of People  
Names Workshop @ BiodiversityNext  
Conference 2019

# Example: Richard Spruce (Wikidata: q1349394)




Wikidata

- Main page
- Community portal
- Project chat
- Create a new item
- Create a new Lexeme
- Recent changes
- Random item
- Query service
- Nearby
- Help
- Donate

Tools

- What links here
- Related changes
- Special pages
- Permanent link
- Page information
- Concept URI
- Cite this page

Item **Discussion** [Read](#) [View history](#)

[Wiki Loves Earth 2020 photo competition: take photos in nature and support Wikipedia.](#)

## Richard Spruce (Q1349394)

British botanist and explorer [edit](#)

Spruce

[In more languages](#)

Language	Label	Description	Also known as
English	Richard Spruce	British botanist and explorer	Spruce
German	Richard Spruce	englischer Botaniker und Naturforscher (1817-1893)	Spruce
French	Richard Spruce	botaniste, voyageur	
Bavarian	No label defined	No description defined	

[All entered languages](#)

### Statements

instance of


human

[2 references](#)

[edit](#)







[+ add value](#)

image



[edit](#)

# Linking Richard Spruce (q1349394) in JACQ


Stable identifier	<a href="http://herbarium.bgbm.org/object/B200097721">http://herbarium.bgbm.org/object/B200097721</a>
Collection Herb.#	B 20 0097721
Stored under taxonname	<b>Abrodictyum cellulosum (Klotzsch) Ebihara &amp; Dubuisson</b>  
Family	Hymenophyllaceae
Det./rev./conf./assigned	B. Zimmer (B) 2017-10-30
Ident. history	orig: <i>Trichomanes trichoideum</i> ; G. Mettenius: <i>P. Windisch 1994-06: Trichomanes filiforme</i> ; B. Zimmer (B) 2017-10-30:= <i>Abrodictyum cellulosum</i>
Isotypus for	<i>Trichomanes filiforme</i> J. W. Sturm
	Typified by: P.G. Windisch 1994-06
Collector	    Spruce, R. 2278 ( <a href="#">link to CETAF Botany Pilot</a> )



# Linked information for Richard Spruce (q1349394)



- Biography
- Publications
- Specimens from different collections

**Biography**  
Richard Spruce  
\* 1817 † 1893  
British botanist and explorer  
Spruce



**Linked data from other information systems**  
[BHL](#)  
[BLOODHOUND](#)  
[VIAF](#)

**Specimens from BGBM**

Stable identifier	Scientific Name	Media
<a href="http://herbarium.bgbm.org/object/B100001502">http://herbarium.bgbm.org/object/B100001502</a>	Gnetum paniculatum Spruce ex Benth.	
<a href="http://herbarium.bgbm.org/object/B100001503">http://herbarium.bgbm.org/object/B100001503</a>	Gnetum paniculatum Spruce ex Benth.	

# Advantages of the approach

- Duplicate work in data maintenance is avoided.
- Improved data quality.
- Easy integration of additional information sources.
- Creation of a common information space across collections.

# Extending the approach to other data types

- Places
- Scientific names
- Taxonomic concepts
- Controlled vocabularies (e.g. habitat types)
- Collections

Much of this is already being addressed in various working groups and initiatives.

# Can we perhaps go even further?

- Give up local collection management and move it into the public domain.
- Only data on storage, loans, etc. would be maintained locally.



# What do people think?

In 2019 (~30) members of a CETAF ISTC / Digitisation Working Group meeting were asked whether they found the idea of **maintaining collection data in the public domain interesting** and whether it should be investigated further.

# Surprise 😊

**Anton Güntsch**  
@aguentsch

This will make history: 95% of #CETAF #ISTC 2019 participants find the idea of stopping local specimen data management and moving "everything" to [@wikidata](#) interesting. What about a pilot project with a sample set of specimens from CETAF collections? [@eurotaxonomy](#)



**Neu bei Twitter?**

Registriere dich jetzt, um deine eigene personalisierte Timeline zu erhalten!

Registrieren

**Relevante Personen**

**Anton Güntsch**  
@aguentsch  
Folgen  
Head, Research Group #Biodiversity #Informatics at FU Berlin #BGBM, father of two, piano and synth player @jackiesdelight - twittering personal views

**Wikidata**  
@wikidata  
Folgen  
The free knowledge base that anyone can edit - sister of @wikipedia (tweets mostly by @nightrose and @auregann)

**CETAF**  
@eurotaxonomy  
Folgen  
Europe's unique hub for taxonomic expertise and natural science collections

**Trends**

1 · Trends  
#Datenschutztag  
1.678 Tweets



Kontakt  
Twitter

[a.guentsch@bgbm.org](mailto:a.guentsch@bgbm.org)  
[@aguentsch](https://twitter.com/aguentsch)

BGBM/BDI

<https://www.bgbm.org/de/wissenschaft-biodiversitaetsinformatik>