

Electronic publishing 'goes live': News from the International Botanical Congress in Melbourne

July 27 2011

The Nomenclature Section of the 18th International Botanical Congress in Melbourne, in July 2011, proposed and approved sweeping changes to the way scientists name new plants, algae, and fungi. To demonstrate the efficiency of electronic publishing, the first open access plant taxonomy journal *PhytoKeys* published a correspondence note by a team of botanists from various USA institutions (Smithsonian Institution, The Missouri Botanical Garden, The Chicago Botanical Garden, and The Field Museum of Chicago), led by Dr James Miller from the New York Botanical Garden. The correspondence was written, submitted, edited, proofread, and published by *PhytoKeys* during the congress in just four days.

The changes in the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature begin on the cover of the document: the title was broadened to make explicit that the Code applies not only to [plants](#), but also to algae and fungi. The new title is the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants (ICN). In addition, for the first time in history the Code will allow for the electronic publication of names of new taxa. In an effort to make the publication of new names more accurate and efficient, the requirement for a Latin validating diagnosis or description was changed to allow either English or Latin for these essential components of the publication of a new name. Both of these latter changes will take effect on 1 January 2012.

The nomenclatural rules for fungi will see several important changes, the most important of which is probably the adoption of the principle of "one fungus, one name." Paleobotanists will also see changes with the elimination of the concept of "morphotaxa" from the Code, that is the different names for one and the same species described after different parts of a fossil, should now be united under one name.

"The electronic publishing of new names will not only facilitate the [taxonomists](#) and the publishers", said Dr W. John Kress from the Smithsonian Institution, Editor-in-Chief of PhytoKeys, "but this innovation will make the whole process of scientific discovery and description of new plants and [fungi](#) much more efficient, rapid and freely available for anyone to read and use. As natural habitats are degraded at an ever faster rate, it is crucial that [botanists](#) speed-up their work on finding and describing new species of plants before they are threatened with extinction"!

"Although the journal PhytoKeys has taken a leading role in electronic publishing of new plants while at the same time establishing an archival agreement with PubMedCentral of the National Library of Medicine of the US, we shall continue to deposit a full-color printed version of the journal in the six leading botanical libraries of the world, situated in the USA, UK, Russia, and China. Such a practice will certainly comfort those who worry about the perpetuity of electronic publications over time and will guarantee safe preservation of the published and printed information" adds Dr Lyubomir Penev, Managing Editor of *PhytoKeys*.

More information: Miller JS, Funk VA, Wagner WL, Barrie F, Hoch PC, Herendeen P (2011) Outcomes of the 2011 Botanical Nomenclature Section at the XVIII International Botanical Congress. *PhytoKeys* 5

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