



"Content-building for the Encyclopedia of Life"

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Abstract:

The "Encyclopedia of Life" aims to assemble and serve freely on the web information for all 1.9 million known species, as well as new species as they are described. Each EOL species page contains descriptions, images, maps, references, and links from many sources. We have four main approaches to creating species pages.

First, we partner with existing online databases. Our Content Partner Registry (http://www.eol.org/content_partner) allows partners to complete an online data sharing agreement. The partner project, with our assistance, prepares an XML document compliant with our schema and maintains it at a public URL. We harvest this document regularly to update EOL. Partners get traffic statistics and feedback through the Content Partner Registry.

Second, we provide tools for contributing new content. LifeDesks (<http://www.lifedesks.org>) help communities of scientists create their own website and then export images and text for EOL. Anyone can share images with EOL using the photo-sharing site Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>) or add text directly on an EOL species page.

Third, we are building a network of curators to review and rate contributed information. Curators are professional scientists or committed citizen naturalists who provide credentials. Using simple tools for trusting, rating and commenting, curators maintain the quality of Encyclopedia of Life's vetted content. They receive credit in a citation for each page they review.

Fourth, we foster regional Encyclopedias of Life. Regional EOL projects assemble and serve information about the species of vital interest to them, in the languages of their regions. We ensure access to tools, best practices, and compatible technology, so that regional efforts seamlessly exchange data with and serve both their own communities and the larger world through EOL.

While most of the information flowing through EOL is provided generously on a volunteer basis, we have recently begun a fellowship program to provide partial support for a small number of early-career scientists. This program serves as model for catalyzing online science. Using modern technology, the Encyclopedia of Life community promotes global understanding of the species with whom we share our planet, and which are critical to the future of biological diversity.

Presentations' Abstracts