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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
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JAN 17 1968

Dear Dr. Rogers,

Dr. Robert A. Luse, Plant Breeding and Genetics Section of the International Atomic Energy Agency has informed me that you are developing systems for computer retrieval of taxonomic information. At present Biological Data Section of the Fishery Resources and Exploitation Division, FAO Department of Fisheries, is also actively working on such systems, and I would be extremely interested to receive information regarding your systems.

If you are interested in knowing the FAO taxonomic classification that we devised way back in 1958 and have been improving since, I shall be extremely happy to send you information on this.

I also understand from Dr. Luse that Dr. Robert D. MacDonald, The University of Tennessee Arboretum is working on such systems. Do you have any close collaboration with him or are the two systems being developed independently?

Any information you can supply on this subject will be most welcome.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

E.F. Akyüz

Chief, Biological Data Section
Fishery Resources and Exploitation Division

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TAXIMETRICS LABORATORY
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY
ARMORY 101

January 28, 1969

PHONE: 303-443-2211
Ext. 6712

Dr. E. F. Akyüz
Fishery Resources and Exploitation Division
FAO
Rome, Italy

Dear Dr. Akyüz:

Thank you for your letter of January 17, inquiring about our information retrieval system, designated TAXIR. I would like to send you our descriptive information about the system, but as you know, there is a dock strike in New York which is holding up all out-going and incoming surface mail, and there is such a large amount of descriptive information that we cannot afford to send it airmail. However, enclosed please find a description in great generality which indicates some of the more important user-oriented features of the system.

Our system is now written in FORTRAN IV for the CDC 6400, and is in the process of conversion to IBM 360 systems. We hope shortly to have the system mounted in the Computing Center at the Washington State University, to be used by the regional USDA Plant Introduction Center, under the direction of Dr. Samm Dietz.

Please note that we are willing to cooperate with interested users, to aid both the systems people and the biologists in learning the proper use of the system. Because there are a number of innovations in the system, and because there are clear needs to tell users how they may derive the most benefit from the system, we urge any interested group to consult with us on TAXIR.

I would indeed be pleased to receive the FAO taxonomic classification mentioned in your letter. As we go into mounting various data banks, using the TAXIR system, such a classification should be important. Can you send with it any descriptive information about the construction of the classification, published or unpublished? Thank you in advance for sending it.

You also asked in your letter about Dr. Robert MacDonald. He is now located at the Tyler Arboretum, P.O. Box 216, Lima, Pa., 19060. He is attempting to mount data banks of the holdings of plants for Arboreta, and is working on the files at Longwood Gardens, an institution near the Tyler Arboretum. I would not categorize Dr. MacDonald as a systems developer, but rather, perhaps as a systems user, though he has not yet decided which system will be most appropriate for his application. He has had an exposition of TAXIR, but we have no definite word that he intends to employ it for his needs.

I trust that later we will have the opportunity to send our descriptive literature. In the meantime, I trust that you can get some value from the enclosed description. If this small paper is meaningful to you, we would like to continue a dialogue with you.

Sincerely yours,

David J. Rogers

David J. Rogers

Professor of Botany