

vifabio – A virtual guide to libraries and the internet for biologists

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Abstract: Die Virtuelle Fachbibliothek Biologie (vifabio) bietet einen zentralen Sucheinstieg zu Literatur und biologischer Fachinformation in Bibliotheken und Internet. Die wesentlichen Inhalte dieses Fachportals werden vorgestellt. Dabei wird auf entomologisch relevante Inhalte hingewiesen. Der Virtuelle Katalog ermöglicht es, die Fachkataloge biologischer Bibliotheken, mehrere Aufsatzdatenbanken sowie den Internetquellen-Führer von vifabio parallel zu durchsuchen. Der Internetquellen-Führer bietet qualitätskontrollierte Links zu biologischen Web-Angeboten, Portalen und Datenbanken sowie zu Web-Auftritten von Institutionen und Fachgesellschaften. Ein spezieller Datenbank-Führer unterstützt die Benutzer, unter mehr als 500 Datenbanken die „richtige“ zu finden.

Keywords: literatur retrieval, scientific literature, digital library, Literaturrecherche, Fachliteratur, Digitale Bibliothek

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Introduction

The Virtual Library of Biology – vifabio – has been established as a biological information portal for research, teaching and study. This ongoing project is conducted by the University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg, Frankfurt/Main with several partner institutions, among them the DEI (Deutsches Entomologisches Institut). The comprehensive holdings of biological literature of the special subject collection Biology, Botany, Zoology, supported by the DFG, form the basis of the content of vifabio. The project's objective is to create a central access point to various resources for biologists, such as printed materials in libraries, databases and internet sites. The vifabio website was launched in 2007 (<http://www.vifabio.de/>); most of the content is available both in English and in German language. The core elements of vifabio are:

Virtual Catalogue

The Virtual Catalogue of Biology integrates libraries with important holdings of biological literature for parallel search. Thereby, vast collections of zoological books and journals are retrievable. The Biodiversity Heritage Library enlarges the Virtual Catalogue to cover digitalised taxonomic literature. In addition, article databases with data from several million journal articles have been integrated – document supply service or the electronic full texts being just a few clicks away. Some of the features of the user interface (Fig. 1) are:

- an option to customise target libraries and databases (by checking the boxes on the right-hand side),
- the bookmark list (to be reached via a tab above the search form) which allows users to save search results for printing or downloading them afterwards, and
- additional information on libraries and databases (via the “i” = info symbols)

Internet Guide

The Internet Guide is a collection of quality-checked links to biological internet resources. Access is provided via search tools, as well as via browsing through multiple alternative systems of resource arrangement (e.g. subjects/themes, geographic coverage, resource type). As of March 2009, 1,600+ internet sites have been checked and catalogued, with more to come. Availability of hyperlinked resources is monitored automatically to avoid broken links.

- Users can easily browse through subject trees (example: <http://tinyurl.com/cm7sn9>).
- Important facts about resources (including abstracts and classification) are shown immediately; even more detailed information is at hand (by clicking on “more...”).

Virtual Catalogue - Search hints:

- ▶ Type your search term in one of the empty boxes.
- ▶ You are not obliged to fill in all the boxes.
- ▶ It is possible to combine several search boxes ("author" and "title"). Multiple terms in a search field will be regarded as a phrase.
- ▶ The truncation sign is "*" (words are not automatically truncated): "ant*" retrieves "ants", "ant-eater".
- ▶ Names in the author's box should be specified as such "Darwin, Charles".

Fig. 1: Screenshot of the search form of vifabio's Virtual Catalogue

BioLib

In cooperation with Kurt Stüber's BioLib, digitised versions of historic biology books are now available as PDF files. There are several ways of finding these historical books: via our Virtual Catalogue of biology, via www.BioLib.de, or via searching / browsing the repository. As of December 2008, users can view and download about 300 titles, among them many historic entomology books. They are available as PDFs of various file sizes (with respect to bandwidth).

Online databases

Providing various ways of access to biological databases is a major goal in vifabio (fig. 2). An inventory of important online databases for biologists provides access via searching and browsing. This collection comprises bibliographical databases as well as factual and pictorial databases for all sub-disciplines of biology. Users can find more than 500 freely available databases (complete listing: <http://tinyurl.com/dcezpj>). DFG-funded licences permit nationwide usage of some bibliographic databases, for example, Biological Abstracts 1926-2004 (for German universities / residents only).

Additional features

Convenient access to electronic journals is enabled through the Electronic Journals Library (EZB), with its familiar traffic lights indicating existing licences at the user's current place of work. Lists of new acquisitions of vifabio's partner libraries are provided (<http://www.vifabio.de/about/ne/vifabio-ne.html>), as well as links to job advertisements, calendar of events and other services. Further enhancements of vifabio will include improved search tools, and improved linking features to electronic full-texts as well as integration of more bibliographic databases into the virtual catalogue. A repository for electronic documents, to be established as part of vifabio, shall provide a platform for open access publication.

Virtuelle Fachbibliothek Biologie

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vifabio » Biological Online-Databases

Biological Online Databases

The Virtual Library of Biology provides various ways of access to biological databases:

- Find the "right" database by using our Database Guide, a catalogue of biological online databases! There, you will find bibliographic as well as factual and picture databases.
- Nationwide usage of bibliographic databases free of cost via National Licenses in Germany:
 - Biological Abstracts / BIOSIS Previews (volumes 1926-2004)
 - Zoological Record (volumes 1864-2006)
 - CAB Abstracts Archive (volumes 1910-1989)
- Nationwide pay-per-use access even to the latest updates of bibliographic databases:
 - Biological Abstracts (including volumes 2005ff.)
 - Zoological Record (including volumes 2007ff.)

Some article databases, among them PubMed and BioLIS, have been integrated into vifabio's Virtual Catalogue for parallel searching.

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NEWS
Biodiversity Heritage Library
 With BHL, much digitized taxonomic literature is added to the Virtual Catalogue
 > more

PAY-PER-USE
 From now on, even private individuals can use **Biological Abstracts** and **Zoological Record**
 > more

Fig. 2: Screenshot of special web page about biological databases

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