

Ribbens, Eric. 2006. The Wired Herbarium #1: Introduction. In *The Vasculum* (newsletter of the Society for Herbarium Curators), July 2006.

Welcome to the wired herbarium! We all use the internet daily, and as curator of a small resource-poor herbarium I rely heavily on internet websites for information. In the last seven days, for example, I have linked to IPNI, TROPICOS, the USDA Plants Database, HUH, and Specify. Furthermore, most of us also have websites devoted to our herbaria; I do, although mine needs major upgrading, and I still do not have any of our herbarium database accessible online.

Therefore, I am proposing that this column examine a variety of websites from the perspective of an herbarium curator. We'll look at sites that provide herbarium-related information and sites that provide information about herbaria. I want to combine a variety of perspectives, including people from large and small herbaria, and my goal is to explore the many different ways websites are used and the many different perspectives herbarium workers have towards these websites; I am not proposing to develop definitive site analyses, but we will point out problems we notice.

I'm going to need your help! I'm a plant ecologist who was asked to curate a moribund herbarium, so perhaps I am an ideal person to edit this column because I have no pretensions of expertise, and I expect to be learning something with every website I visit. I'll be sharing my opinions and pulling together different perspectives but I need a variety of people willing to share their opinions and uses of websites, and I need nominations of websites to be featured (again, both those accessing different herbaria and those accessing information relevant to herbarium workers).

So please send me an email: E-Ribbens@wiu.edu. Let me know if you would be willing to comment on specific websites, and send me your list of websites you think should be included. Tell me a bit about yourself, so that I can solicit a variety of perspectives later, such as how big the herbarium you work with is, what your motivation is for surfing these sites (right now I'm trying to track down every taxon in my database and annotate nomenclatural changes), your areas of expertise, and tell me what you think the biggest potential advantage of the internet is for your herbarium and your work. Thanks, and happy webbing!