

## **The Foraminifera.eu Project - status and perspectives**

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The Foraminifera.eu-Project wants to foster the interest in foraminifera. It builds a bridge between science and community. It is run by amateurs. Experienced foraminiferologist get a platform to share their knowledge with inexperienced ones. We offer practical help in sample-processing, imaging and classification. Foraminifera.eu has become a popular website with more than 2400 monthly unique visitors viewing about 22.000 pages and staying on average for 8 minutes. More than 100 people have contributed samples, images, drawings, ideas and/or are working on mutual projects such as publications, exhibitions, talks and collections. Reasons for the popularity of the foraminifera.eu-project and perspectives for its development are discussed.

Searchable foraminiferal database and images:

As a major service and outcome we have established a freely accessible foraminiferal database with an online multi-criteria search query based on high quality SEM and optical images and drawings. So far 3000+ illustrations are searchable on 19 data-criteria with 1100+ defined values. Six of the criteria are taxonomical, two morphological, four geographical, four stratigraphical, two source-related and one is faunal. An illustrated key to genera offers for about 380 genera a multi-criteria search query on 7 criteria with about 100 defined values. If connected well to the internet any query results within seconds in a plate like presentation of images accompanied by information on genus, species and geological time. Each entry in the database has a single webpage with a bigger image and accompanying information.

A survey has revealed that visitors like most the easy-to use and well structured interface, quality of images and the possibility to choose from a set of parameters in the database-query. They ask mainly to broaden the coverage of genera and species and consider as a major flaw, that many classifications are not reviewed by scientists and may not be reliable. As a response we are integrating since October 2010 primarily images and drawings provided by scientists, resulting in 1000+ reviewed entries. Along with it the number of genera has risen by about 50% to 380. Still on the wishlist is the establishment of more faunal criteria such as water depth, temperature, faunal province and salinity. A useful geographical interface has been established for recent foraminifera with maps to choose from rather than from text. As the background of the visitors is manifold such are individual wishes to enlarge or change the database.

Community character and practical help:

About 40 of the 2400 monthly visitors contact us. Most want information, literature, samples or technical help. With about 3 we are able to establish a mutual project, resulting in more than 100 contributors after 3 years of existence. A major group provides samples and/or specimens in order to receive SEM-images and discuss its classification. The second largest group are scientists contributing illustrations as a courtesy or to get the own collection accessible worldwide and selectable through the database-query. It is intended to further foster the interest in foraminifera with practical help, sharing samples and mutual projects. Thus a section of mini-lectures has been added and the illustrated key-to-genera has been created. In September 2011 a weekend workshop for beginners "Introduction to Micropaleontology" will be held in Hamburg.