North Annamites: an interactive software for plant identification

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1st Symposium of the " Flore du Cambodge, du Laos et du Viêtnam "

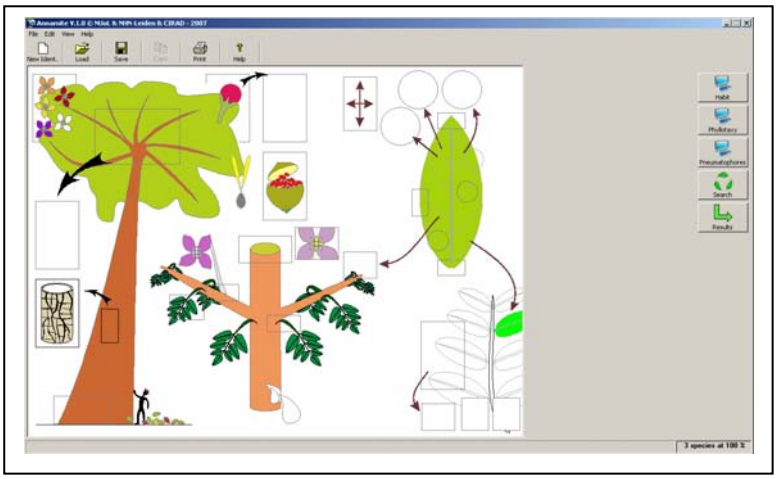
8th – 14th December, 2008

Faculty of Sciences, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Summary

North Annamites V.1.0 focuses on an initiative in the emerging area of biodiversity informatics. It was built on a species identification system called IDAO (IDentification Assistée par Ordinateur) and was conceived not only to facilitate the access to the information on species, but also to improve training initiatives. The software proposes a new identification tool, different from other computer-based species identification systems because:

- It uses only drawings instead of technical jargon and provides users the freedom to choose the character that is easy to observe.
- Missing information or data are permitted, thus allowing for the identification of incomplete samples.
- A certain level of observational error is also tolerated and, at each step of the identification process, a probability of resemblance is calculated for each species. Thus, species are sorted by decreasing order of similarity.



These knowledge bases comprises the most obvious vegetative and generative characters (51) and all the states of these characters (238), and these have been coded for 127 trees species found in tropical humid forests in the north Annamites Mountains of Laos.

The users can access the pictures, the botanical descriptions and drawings, the ecology, distribution and uses of the species at any moment in two languages i.e. English and Lao.

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Developed as an open source web-based application, the knowledge base is available on-line, on CD-ROMs for personal computer platforms as well as on UMPC (ultra mobile PC) a low-cost computing device with in local languages which allows for regular updates of data through the web-based database.