the Canadian Centre has given a flavour of the sort of interaction that may develop between the barcoding initiative and the more morphological approach represented by the imaging project. Major clusters recognised in the tree support tribal groupings such as the Nemoriini and Comibaenini, and also generic groupings such as the synonymy recently published in the Pseudoterpnini of *Rhuma*, *Oxyphanes* and *Sterictopsis*, and the grouping of genera round *Hemithea* such as *Cosmogonia*, *Idiochlora*, *Metallochlora* and *Urolitha*. On the other hand, the two species currently in *Agathiopsis*, *maculata* and *basipuncta*, are widely separated in the tree, and therefore their congeneric status may need fresh scrutiny.

The images will be placed online using the software framework provided by the Atrium® system developed by plant systematists at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas who also have a strong focus on New Guinea plant diversity. The system has tools for handling large numbers of images and enabling sequences of annotations by specialists to be incorporated. We intend to link original descriptions through the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Atrium also has links to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). It is intended to get a New Guinea geometrid pilot demonstration site online shortly for comment, and this will be announced through Forum Herbulot in due course.

Distributing Lepidops© – A test case for sharing virtual museums and other data

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Most private and institutionalised museums have unpublished information, data and unworked specimens in their possession. Traditionally access to the above was restricted to persons who visited the museum and therefore a form of control was in hand to minimise plagiarism, unauthorised use of data and to ensure that proper acknowledgement was given to the originators of the information, data and specimens. The formal publication of information and data is the traditional method used to regulate the above issues. The problem with the above system was that information and many data were very much difficult to extract resulting in costly travelling for anyone wanting to gather basic information and data on a particular group of organisms he or she may be working on. This resulted in the slow progress of value-added science based on these data, information and specimens.

In today's computer age the boundaries of the above mechanisms are being challenged all the time through the ease of information, data and virtual specimen storage and exchange. It is now quite possible to have a virtual copy of the holdings of all the major museums on a single PC. Many museums are data-basing and digitising their collections and associated bits of information. This will, if made widely available, greatly speed up the pace of all types of research into our biodiversity in many fields.

Our knowledge of geometrid fauna worldwide is far from satisfactory, especially in third world countries where even the basic species taxonomy is inadequate. The necessity of a rapid increase in basic taxonomic research is emphasized as we are losing our biodiversity at a rapid pace and a stable taxonomy for the Geometridae will be of great assistance in our plight to save our geometrid biodiversity. Many new capital developments that may threaten geometrids require environmental impact studies prior to development in more and more countries. These are of no use however if we are not aware of threatened habitat or taxa in that particular area.

It is therefore imperative that we urgently promote the free flow of museum data, information and specimens amongst geometridologists in order to speed up basic research into them. The database Lepidops©, contains an updated catalogue, over 8000 images, including many undescribed taxa and types, and more than 16 000 records of Afrotropical Geometridae. As an experiment, to test the possible growth of research into African Geometridae, Lepidops is conditionally offered at only the cost of software and hardware to Forum Herbulot members. This is done in spite of the obvious risks involved. It is proposed that a protocol for data sharing be established by the forum in order to facilitate more frequent data sharing and minimise the possibility of plagiarism in all its forms.