

NANNOSYS

At the moment the average calcareous nannoplankton specialist needs 12 volumes of Farinacci's Catalogue, 4 volumes of Aubry's Handbook, 7 issues of Loeblich and Tappan, 26 issues of the INA Newsletter, Katharina's 1985 bible, the ICBN and a fair number of reprints to do a good job; she or he spends an awful lot of time on keeping up with literature and ploughing through it, searching for references, pictures, descriptions and ranges. In addition, she/he needs a good memory to find the right information.

Admit it, it gives you a headache! It is even worse: if your boss knew how much time is wasted on this, you would certainly get the sack in the next efficiency drive...

At the meeting in Prague, I therefore proposed to get started with a computerized database and image storage/retrieval system for calcareous nannoplankton. Such a system already exists for dinoflagellates; it is called DINOSYS, and it was developed in Utrecht University by the LPP Foundation. DINOSYS runs under Windows 3.0 on an ordinary IBM compatible PC*, it is user-friendly and fool-proof. Images can be loaded directly from the microscope or from pictures; descriptions and references can be typed in or scanned. Retrieval of images, graphics (ranges) and text takes only seconds; hard-copies can be made with a videoprinter.

A market survey (Bown, Young, myself) indicated that there is at present no other program with comparable features/options which can be made available economically. I therefore propose to use the DINOSYS software for our nannos and to call the package NANNOSYS. In my opinion NANNOSYS should be developed (i.e. loaded with data), maintained (i.e. updated continuously) and distributed (for a reasonable price) under the auspices and responsibility of the INA.

NANNOSYS will be more than just a catalogue system (although it would be a good idea to continue Farinacci's work using NANNOSYS software and create a separate NANNOCAT); it will be an "intelligent" system, which means that it contains the combined expertise of specialists.

It will be obvious that funds are needed to finance this project; costs mainly consist of salary costs for a full-time specialist and costs of travelling during 2-3 years (estimated total costs: US\$ 150.000).

Several options to get funding have been discussed in the working group:

- a. approach the major oil companies,
- b. approach major scientific institutions,
- c. a substantial increase of INA membership dues.

We did not like the last option, as many of our members can not afford the likely amounts; a combination of options a-c is perhaps best. Please let me know your opinion on these ideas as soon as possible and/or complete the questionnaire (enclosed with this newsletter):

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* MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR RUNNING DINOSYS

- A fast 286 AT PC, with \geq 1 Megabyte internal memory
- 3.5 Mb free harddisk space
- (Super-) VGA-card and colour VGA-screen
- Windows 3.0 & Mouse

NB: Early 1992 a demo-disk of DINOSYS will be available.

Editor's note: Planning is still at a very early stage. No firm decisions have been made on the system to use, data to include, mode of distribution, how to fund the system, or how to fill it. So please communicate now, particularly if you are, or have been contemplating, developing such a system. Friendly open collaboration has been one of the great successes of INA and we hope we can extend this into modern "information technology". The terminology workshop planned for Easter 1992 will bring most of the people currently debating Nannosys together so feedback before then would be invaluable.