Nannotax: progress and prospects

Jeremy R. Young
University College London, Department of Earth Sciences, London WC1E 6BT, UK; jeremy.young@ucl.ac.uk

Paul R. Bown
University College London, Department of Earth Sciences, London WC1E 6BT, UK; p.bown@ucl.ac.uk

It is now four years since Nannotax3 was launched at the INA14 conference in Reston, VA, USA. Since then, it has become a key reference tool for nannofossil studies and has steadily expanded its scope. Through the efforts of Rich Howe, the catalog side of the system is now nearly comprehensive and contains original descriptions of >4000 taxa. In parallel, the main Cenozoic and Mesozoic databases include descriptions and range data on ca 2700 taxa and are now illustrated by >20,000 images, mostly with full metadata, including images from ca 200 publications. Data on stratigraphic distributions come from both total range summaries, based on literature compilations, and actual records from the Neptune database of occurrence data from DSDP, ODP, and IODP records.

Work over the past 18 months has largely focused on developing the system and applying it to planktonic foraminifera, and is supported by a further round of funding from the UK Natural Environment Research Council and in collaboration with Brian Huber, Bridget Wade, and other planktonic foraminiferal specialists. This work has resulted in many improvements to the editing interface so that it is accessible to user-editors via the internet without need for database skills. It also has resulted in numerous improvements to the presentation of data on the system. In parallel, there has been continuous development of the content.

This talk will both review the progress over the last two years and review the prospects for building on the system in terms of both potential avenues for extending to other groups of microfossils and adding additional functionality and data types to the nannofossil content. A particular focus will be the discussion of tagging and keys to allow searching for taxa using morphological characteristics.