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Celebrating the past | Planning the future

ANNiKEY: a taxonomic information system for Annelida.

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Annelida are ubiquitous metazoans found in most terrestrial and aquatic (freshwater and marine) habitats on Earth. The phylum has recently undergone significant restructuring with the inclusion of formerly distinct marine phyla (Sipuncula and Echiura) together with the predominantly marine Polychaeta, which now includes Clitellata (oligochaetes and leeches). Annelida now comprise over 160 family-level taxa and almost 21 000 species. Comparative morphological studies of the expanded Annelida are arguably hamstrung by the current disparate system of morphological terminologies across each major group as a result of years of independent study. Further, there is no key to all families. With support from the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS), we developed ANNiKEY, a database of ~280 standardized morphological characters and biodiversity data coded for all annelid families using the open-source Delta program Intkey to enable effective data interrogation and interactive family identification. The database, fully illustrated for both characters and taxa and containing over 50 000 cells of data, will be linked to an online companion glossary of annelid terms to make it usable for both beginners and experts. We provide an overview of ANNiKEY prior to its public release online at Zenodo (https://zenodo.org).

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