

PlaNet - a Network of European Plant databases

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PlaNet (<http://mips.gsf.de/proj/planet/>) aims to develop and deliver a high-level plant genome database for the systematic exploration of the genome of *Arabidopsis thaliana* and other plants. Because the information resulting from experiments and bioinformatic interpretation is highly complex, the compilation of information resources requires dynamic information acquisition, expert curation and the integration of bioinformatics methods. One option to build comprehensive database infrastructure resources would be the installation of a centralized facility. However, such a proposal would suffer not only from the need for long-term commitment, but also from the difficulty of attracting a critical mass of bioinformaticians. As an alternative, PlaNet will be a distributed, shared effort among both experienced bioinformatics groups and plant molecular biologists to establish a comprehensive integrated database in a collaborative network. As one of the partners, Plant Research International is going to build a database containing relevant research results such as mutants, proteomics and metabolomics data. This database should be compatible with other PlaNet databases and with databases worldwide. The development of a suitable ontology framework will have to play an essential role in the design of the databases. Vice versa, current ontology developments and initiatives should also cover all specifics of plant biology.