

Parallel Sessions C  
C3 – Veterinary Special Interest Group

Friday, September 20, Room D, 16.15

## **The WILDPro Electronic Encyclopaedia: A Novel and Flexible Method of Linking, Referencing and Accessing Cross-Disciplinary Data**

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The WILDPro Electronic Encyclopaedia and Library provides information on the health and management of captive and free-ranging wild animals in the form of a large Website. It is developed by the Wildlife Information Network (WIN), an independent UK Registered Charity (not-for-profit organisation) with offices located at The Royal Veterinary College, London, and the first programmes were released in 1996. The underlying structure of the data linkages was designed in partnership with the National Wildlife Health Center, USGS. WILDPro is built to meet the needs of wildlife professionals and decision-makers worldwide, including students, lecturers, veterinarians, zoo staff, zoologists, veterinary nurses, etc. It is written by wildlife veterinarians with knowledge and experience of the range of information which is required in the field.

WILDPro uses a novel metadata structure to link information on species (including identification, range and habitat, and natural history), management of animals in care (short and long term), diseases, disease agents (physical factors as well as micro-organisms and larger parasites) and veterinary treatment. Abundant hyperlinks within the text allow the user to follow a wide variety of logical thought processes through the information, while page header hierarchies, colour coding of pages and constant access to the initial pages for different data types assist the user in navigation.

All information in WILDPro is fully referenced, allowing the user to follow up for more detailed information if required. The coding system for references clearly distinguishes between the different data sources: published books, papers from refereed journals, conference proceedings, miscellaneous documents (usually internal documents of organisations), national or international legislation, personal communications, Websites etc. An extensive Organisations Directory assists the user to contact relevant expert organisations for advice and assistance if required.

An additional and growing facet is the inclusion, in full, of a number of papers, documents and books in the associated "Electronic Library" These have been made available to WIN by the relevant copyright holders.

This Encyclopaedia is being developed in modules, which are available via subscription on the WIN Website (<http://www.wildlifeinformation.org>), and are also distributed on CD-ROM for off-line access.

Suzanne Boardman founded the Wildlife Information Network in 1992, a registered charity, which aims to provide information on the health and management of wildlife and their habitats. Together with her co-author Dr Josh Dein of the National Wildlife Health Center, United States Department of the Interior, she researched, designed and developed the WILDPro Data Management System, an Electronic Encyclopaedia and Library which disseminates this information to decision-makers worldwide.