

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOODEXPLORER – A EUROFIR DATA INTERCHANGE TOOL FOR SEARCHING AND RETRIEVING MULTIPLE FOOD COMPOSITION DATABASES (FCDB)

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The EuroFIR eSearch facility prototype was built and tested during the EuroFIR NoE project (EU FP6) with a vision to connect pan-European food information, and was shown to be an excellent proof of concept for exchange of food composition data. A new and improved version of the web-based tool was subsequently developed, and renamed as FoodExplorer. The functionality, user interface and underlying database for FoodExplorer were reconstructed and recoded with new features that were added to or improved from the prototype, including improved user interfaces and data downloads via the EuroFIR Food Transport Package. The improvements also allowed closer integration with other tools included in the EuroFIR food information platform, such as FoodCASE that is used for food composition database management, food data thesauri including LanguaL, and FoodBasket, which is a simple recipe calculation tool. FoodExplorer supports both simple and advanced searches to provide complex food information to a wide spectrum of food and nutrition experts (such as food compilers, dieticians, scientists, policy makers etc.) as well as non-expert commercial users. It allows comparison of data from different food composition datasets and data exports in XML (Food Data Transport Package) and XLS (MS Excel) formats. The collection of food composition databases behind FoodExplorer is also used for dedicated EuroFIR WebServices that can deliver food information for other European projects. Integrated EuroFIR tools facilitate the future development of the Food, Nutrition and Health Research Infrastructure (eRI) that will support a wide range of end users (researchers, policy and commercial).

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