

Morphometry.org: a new website for sharing, searching for and resampling morphometric data

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Morphometrics, the study of structure through shape, has blossomed as a field of study over the last two decades, with a proliferation of techniques for collecting and applying data. The most immediate impediment to advancing morphometrics as a mode of investigation has been the lack of an efficient way to share data between researchers. Morphometry.org is a new website for sharing traditional morphometrics, as well as 2D and 3D geometric morphometric data, in a searchable database. In the same spirit as GenBank and MorphoBank.org, Morphometry.org aims to improve morphometric investigations by eliminating time-intensive redundant data collection, enhancing collaboration, and allowing incremental addition to ongoing projects, facilitating peer-review of data accuracy and precision as well as the resulting analyses. Requirements of submission for all linear measurements and landmark coordinates include written definitions of how the measurement was taken or where the landmark is placed, the list of specimens examined with associated specimen numbers, and the values of the data as a tab-delimited table. For 2D geometric data, submissions must include the photographs used for landmark placement. Morphometry.org does not yet store voxel or surface maps for 3D morphometrics, but will do so in the future. Submitted data can optionally include illustrated references for taking measurements or placing landmarks, links to additional data about the specimens examined (such as in VertNet.org and Digimorph.org), geographic coordinates for the collection site of the specimen, and user-defined classification and metadata tags.

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