

A POWERFUL TOOL FOR PHYLOGENETIC SEARCHING AND HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZING

Jeff Person, Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, Norman, OK

A new numbering system, separate from the specimen numbers, called Pnumbers, used for phylogenetic searching and hierarchical organizing, is introduced and explained. The Pnumber is a large, nested numeric code, tied to Linnaean taxa and categories, that assigns a number to each level of identification from the class to genus level. The Pnumber is a coding system for enhancing the power of data retrieval. The Pnumber system allows for both broad and specific hierarchical taxonomic searches of the database and also allows for hierarchical taxonomic sorting. The Pnumbers are generated through an authority file initially based on the appendix in Robert Carroll's book, *Vertebrate Paleontology and Evolution*. The authority file at the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History is the only one of its kind, in that it includes all the classes of vertebrates, and allows for easy addition or subtraction of taxa. The Pnumber system has been in use at the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History since 1988.