# Anancy:
# CTA's virtual resources centre

< http://anancy.cta.int>

*by A. Koda Traore*

An ancient Afro-Caribbean legend tells how one day, back in the mists of time, the God of heaven decided to give Anancy, the spider, a pot containing all the wisdom of the world and asked him to share it with all those he might meet. A noble vocation, one that the CTA decided to entrust to its virtual resources centre, Anancy.

Developed by the CTA in collaboration with the ZADI / ISICAD of the German Ministry of Agriculture, Anancy is a web portal designed to answer the continually growing demand for agricultural and rural development information on the part of CTA staff and its ACP partners.

The principle behind the relational database is the philosophy of free access. The strategy underlying the collection of information is based on a progressive movement consisting, in its initial phase, of numbering the publications and other sources of information generated by the CTA programmes. Currently more than 3.5 gigabytes of texts have been assembled containing the following: the historical index of Spore, the Centre's information bulletin; the complete texts of CTA seminars, studies and technical publications; the radio dossiers produced by the



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CTA, downloadable in MP3 format; and information produced by the CTA's other thematic platforms (Agritrade, ICT Update, Web Portal on Knowledge).

The navigation system enables less competent users to access the available resources by progressing through themes, sub-themes, collections, regions or countries. More experienced users will benefit from the multi-criteria search option. Access to the information resources on the Web is made easier by the use of a number of tools, including:

- the RSS format for sharing the latest information from the Centre's partners such as Eldis, Euforic and EARD Infosys+, and

- an adapted form of search engines such as Google to carry out simultaneous searches of several Web portals specialising in important questions like food safety or biotechnology.

The CTA has started discussions with AGORA, a system of access to international scientific journals and publications on agricultural and rural development, with the intention of extending this service to the ACP countries.

And finally, Anancy reflects a series of challenges not simply limited to the problems of numbering or storage. CTA is convinced that information systems must be shared on the same basis as the information itself. The notion of 'virtual' that Anancy reflects, therefore, is nothing more than potentiality itself, it is the reality of the future (Guedon.1998). With this in mind, CTA's intention is to transfer the solutions employed to the ACP countries in order to contribute to the progressive creation of a decentralised network of resource centres in agricultural and rural development.

**Reference:** Guedon. 1998. The digital library: an oxymoron? In theses published by the University of Lyon [e ligne] <www.theses.univ-lyon2.fr/info/theses/nlm-fr.html> (accessed January 2002).

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A french version of this article is available online – see www.inasp.info/newslet

## Acronyms and explanations

**Agritrade:** Website on challenges facing trade in agricultural produce in future ACP–EU relations <http://agritrade.cta.int>

**AGORA:** Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture <www.aginternetwork.org/fr/>

**ELDIS:** Gateway to information on development issues <www.eldis.org>

**EUFORIC:** European Forum on International Cooperation <www.euforic.org>

**EARD Infosys+:** European Information System on Agricultural Research for Development <www.eiard-infosys.org>

**ICT Update:** Current awareness bulletin on ICTs <http://ictupdate.cta.int/>

**Knowledge for development:** Observatory on Science and Technology for ACP Agriculture and Rural Development <http://knowledge.cta.int/>

**ZADI:** Zentralstelle für Agrardokumentation und–information:The German Ministry of Agriculture's documentation and information centre <www.zadi.de>