Specimen Identifiers

Every specimen that is saved into Kotka will have a globally unique identifier. Identifiers are used to connect specimens to their corresponding data in Kotka. They can also be used to refer to specimens in e.g. a scientific article or external databases (such as GBIF).

Kotka uses so-called HTTP URI -identifiers, which provide a standardized method for creating identifiers that are unique in global scale.

An example of this kind of identifier:
http://id.luomus.fi/GP.92636

where
- http:// is scheme identifier, which tells that this is a HTTP URI
- id.luomus.fi is a Domain name controlled by Luomus. This guarantees that no-one else can make similar identifiers (as long as everybody follows the standard)
- GP is a namespace identifier. Always uppercase.
- 92636 is an object identifier. Usually numbers, but sometimes may contain uppercase letters.

These identifiers look like web addresses and can be usually used as such to retrieve more information about the specimen. But ultimately they are just sequences of strings which carry no meaning by themselves. One cannot tell what a specimen is like just by looking at the identifier.

Rules for identifiers:
- Identifier must not be abbreviated by removing any part of it.
- A specimen’s identifier will never change.
- Same identifier cannot be shared by several specimens (Exception: the special case of several specimens in one document.), not they can be reused.
- Identifiers carry no meaning (they are so-called “dumb identifiers”)

Creating identifiers

Identifiers can be created in two ways in Kotka:

A) Manually

1. Register a namespace identifier for yourself from Kotka administrators. Usually this consists of 2 to 3 capital letters.
2. Write this namespace identifier on the Namespace ID field (either on Excel sheet or entry form)
3. Give each specimen an object identifier, which usually is running number, starting from 1. Write this to Object ID field.

It’s your responsibility to make sure that same running number is not given to several specimens. When importing the Excel or saving the entry form, Kotka will check the identifiers and prevent saving several specimens with same numbers.

B) Automatically when data is saved using entry form

When creating a new specimen using Kotka’s entry form, Kotka will generate a unique identifier automatically to the namespace HT, unless you choose to give it manually. In most cases you should let Kotka create the identifier automatically.

What if specimen already has an identifier?

If the specimen being digitized already has an identifier other than HTTP URI, it must be written into Additional IDs field or Original Specimen ID field. Then a new HTTP URI identifier is created for the specimen as described above.

If printing new labels for the specimens would be too much work, the old identifier could be used as the object identifier part of the new identifier. This way the specimen is searchable using the old identifier. However, please contact Kotka administrators before giving specimens this kind of identifiers.

If you are using Botanical Museum’s H-number as the object identifier. Use “HA” as the namespace identifier.
E.g. http://id.luomus.fi/HA.H0003706