

A REPLY TO HEINO LEPP'S 'A TALE OF TWO CDS'

Dear Editor,

All authors learn to take both good and bad reviews of their published work as normal events; however, Heino Lepp's comparative review of the *Fungimap* and *101 Forest Fungi* CDs (*Australasian Mycologist* 20: 100–103) demands a reply. While parts of his criticism may be justified, two points should be brought to all readers' attention. Firstly, these two CDs target substantially different user groups, have completely different internal structures and very different aims. For these reasons they should never have been compared. Secondly, a comparison of the reviews shows that the review style of each CD is quite different. The *Fungimap* CD is shown to have faults but these are put to one side and the positive aspects are emphasised; the *101 Forest Fungi* CD has faults, but these are generally the only aspects that are emphasised and where good aspects are present, these are denigrated. Fair criticism is absolutely essential to the scientific process, but it should always be unbiased, constructive, cover both good and poor aspects of an author's work and demonstrate the reviewer's understanding of the intent of the author.

There is no doubt that *101 Forest Fungi* has some typographical errors and text mistakes but these can be dealt with in a later publication. Testing of the CD by the Lucid software centre has also shown that the reviewer is incorrect in his statements with respect to full pictures in the key and netsearch operation. The bibliography of the CD was chosen to reflect books readily available on public or school library shelves and the reviewer's comments are therefore irrelevant.

An aspect of the reviewer's comparison which must be addressed is the fact that the most important function of the CD was essentially skimmed over: the Lucid key itself. For the reviewer to devote just over one paragraph out of ten to the specific operation of the Lucid keying software is a considerable omission of fact. One could readily draw the inference that the reviewer concentrated on a subset of 'browser' aspects of the *101 Forest Fungi* CD which allowed comparison with the *Fungimap* CD, rather than examine and explore the unique aspects of the first published key to fungi written in the Lucid key software.

Despite the unfortunate inference that can be made from the reviewer's article, the CDs are not in competition and I consider that they should never have been comparatively reviewed. In essence, the *Fungimap* CD targets 'those involved in the *Fungimap* project'. The *101 Forest Fungi* CD targets the student population with absolutely no prior interest or knowledge of these organisms. Information from the publisher indicates that the CD is already fulfilling its aims and I am delighted that the love of fungi is being presented to the mycologists of the future.

Dr Tony Young
Bee Cottage
Blackbutt, Qld 4306
tyoung@bigpond.com

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