ZIMS
by ISIS

Bring your social networking to life!

Twycross Zoo
The World Primate Centre

by Kat Garland
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Unlike the members of the Animal Team who see our animals on a daily basis, I spend most of my day in the office and would be hard pressed, for example, to tell our chimpanzees apart, what their names are, when they were born, which enclosure they live in and so on. Usually if I was putting together a simple Facebook post about an animal, for example to give an update on our latest babies, I would need to go to the Animal Team to make sure I'd got details like the animal's name, date of birth, parents' details and so on correct. Put simply, ZIMS allows us to bring up basic information about an animal without having to bother the Animal Team or Records Department.
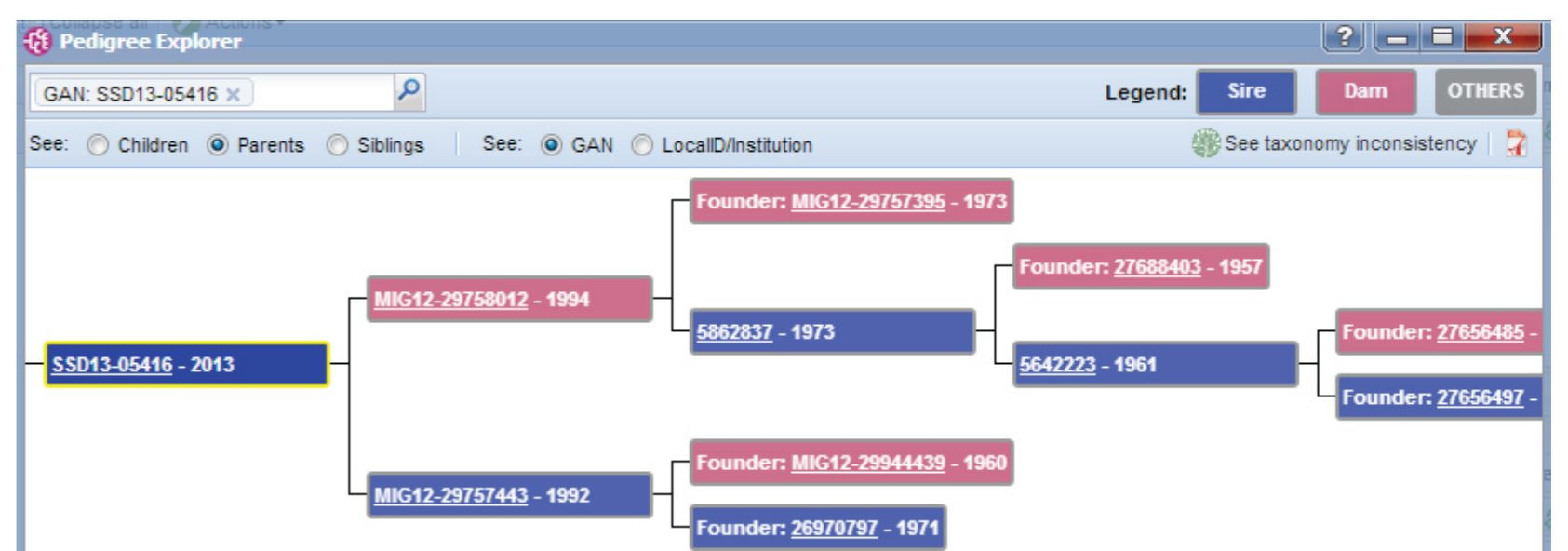
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One of the most useful things I use ZIMS for is to find an animal's date of birth. Animal birthdays are always a great 'fluffy' story for social networking, and are one of the most engaging things we post.

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Being able to research an animal's family tree is also a helpful tool, especially when new animals are born. The ancestry of the infant can be easily explored using Pedigree Explorer and any siblings or relatives they may have at the zoo can be easily found, and relatives in zoos across the world can be found, which gives a bigger picture of our part in worldwide conservation programmes.

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Notes and Observations is a feature that is helpful to have but often isn't directly used for Marketing. Notes and Observations help us keep up to date with the animals, and give us an insight into an animal's behaviour and routines. This can help for something as simple as finding out when an animal is most likely to be active if you need to photograph them.

The Reports tool is useful for finding 'zoo facts'. We can find out things such as when the first of a certain species was born at the zoo, how many of a species we have successfully bred, or when a species first arrived at the zoo. These make great questions for competitions, or 'fun' facts for social networking.

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ZIMS has proved invaluable to bulk out animal stories, and give us really interactive and engaging social networking posts. I would highly recommend getting your Marketing Team on ZIMS!

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