

MCB 5472 Lecture #5:  
Gene Prediction and Annotation  
February 24, 2014

### Note on the assignment

- Depending on your settings PSI-BLAST can take a while to run
  - Do not leave this until the last minute!
- Recall from Assignment Lecture #1: `nohup` can allow you to leave a job running on the cluster
  - E.g., `nohup [task] & > nohup.out`

### Do you have a DNA sequence...

- Limited utility by itself
- Annotations describe what the DNA does
  - Structural: what features are present on the DNA?
  - Functional: what do those features do?

### How to annotate: 2 methods

1. From first principles:
  - Experimental data in the literature
  - Algorithmic rules
2. From orthology / homology to previously annotated sequences

### Annotation accuracy

- Manual annotation from experimental data in the literature is highly accurate
  - Although not all experiments are unequivocal
- Annotations using algorithms can be quite accurate
  - Depends on the complexity of the problem the algorithm is trying to solve
- Annotations based on orthology relies on the assumption that function is conserved
  - Depends on how rigorously orthologs are defined
  - Depends on functions not changing over time

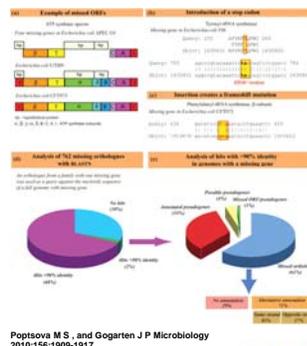
### Gene annotation

- Gene and protein annotation is typically algorithmic
- Genes and proteins have specific features that algorithms use to define them
- Algorithms for bacteria and archaea work quite well, eukaryotes more difficult because of additional complexity, e.g., splicing

## Prokaryote gene finding

- Glimmer, GeneMark: Markov Models
  - Genes modeled based on differences between coding and non-coding regions
    - E.g., typically start with ATG, end with stop codon
    - E.g., ORF overlap
    - E.g., ribosome binding regions
  - Often have difficulty to decide which strand is coding.
- Prodigal: summed likelihood of finding individual gene features
- Can be challenged by %GC bias
  - Better performance by training on known genome annotations

Fig. 1. Analysis of ORFs missing in one out of 30 completely annotated Escherichia genomes.

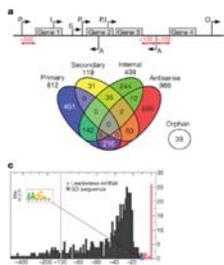


Pogitsova M S., and Gogarten J P Microbiology  
2010;156:1909-1917

Microbiology

## Remember: genes are not transcripts!

- 5' mRNA analysis in *Helicobacter pylori* shows much greater transcript diversity than evident from simple gene annotations
- Most NCBI annotations equate genes with transcripts



Sharma et al. 2010 Nature 464:250-255

## Eukaryotic gene finding

- E.g., Augustus, GeneMark-ES
- *ab initio* methods work less well compared to prokaryotic genes
  - More complicated transcripts (e.g., splice variants)
  - Less information at promoter (e.g., Prodigal uses Shine-Delgarno sequences; -35 and -10 regions vs. single TATA box)
- NCBI annotations more clearly separate genes (includes pseudogenes), mRNA (typically spliced) & protein (spliced like mRNA)

## Adding information to gene annotations

1. Combine multiple prediction methods
  - For prokaryotes, typically longest transcript chosen
  - For eukaryotes, typically all splice variants kept
2. Search for homologous genes in related taxa
  - True genes will be evolutionarily conserved
  - Annotation errors can be propagated
    - Annotations do not specify the evidence supporting them
3. Integrate RNAseq
  - Augustus can incorporate into its predictions directly
  - Rare for prokaryotes
  - Requires genes be expressed and detectable

## Metagenomes and single-cell genomes

- Assemblies are typically much more fragmented than those of cultured microbes
- Requires dedicated gene prediction methods
  - Training information often missing/obscured
  - Gene fragments obscure genomic features used for gene prediction

## Non-coding RNAs

- Some HMM-based software
  - RNAMMER (ribosomal RNAs)
  - tRNAscan-SE (tRNAs)
- Rfam: database of non-coding RNA families
  - Curated sequence alignments taking into account secondary structures
  - Infernal: software for searching DNA sequence databases using structured RNA molecule profiles
    - Takes RNA secondary structure into account via "covariance models"
  - Sister project to Pfam (see later)

## Functional annotations

## Manual annotation

- Low-throughput
- High accuracy

## SwissProt

- Started 1986 at the Swiss Institute for Bioinformatics, later developed at the European Bioinformatics Institute
- Goal: providing reliable protein sequences having a high level of annotation
  - Directly curated from literature information
  - Contrast to NCBI: a sequence repository with some automated annotation pipelines
- Current version (2014\_02): 542,503 sequences annotated from 22,6190 references

## UniProt

- Ultimately manual annotation couldn't keep up, parallel TrEMBL database created using automated annotation
- UniProtKB stores combined SwissProt/TrEMBL databases, incorporates Protein Information Resource (PIR), built on M. Dayhoff's atlas
- Syncs with EMBL/DDBJ/GenBank nucleotide databases
- Hosts several protein annotation schemes
- ExPASy – major proteomics analysis resource
- [www.uniprot.org](http://www.uniprot.org)

The screenshot shows the UniProt entry for P21888 (CRT1\_FRAMANI). The protein is from *Physalis peruviana* (Physalis peruviana). The entry includes details such as the gene name (crt1), organism (Physalis peruviana), and protein attributes (length: 482 AA, complete). The 'General annotation (Comments)' section contains the following text: "Genetically modified plants with all three phytoalexins... all three data centers and all three message, by the introduction of four double bonds...". A link labeled "Manual annotations linked to references" is visible in the text.

## EcoCyc – an example manually edited model organism database

- <http://ecocyc.org/>

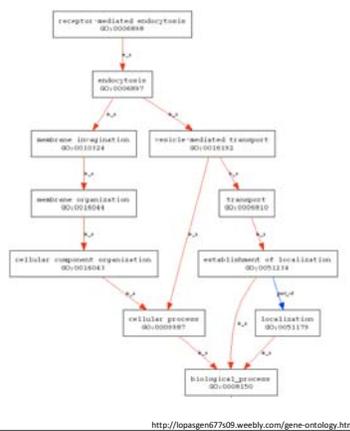


## Ontologies

- Manual annotations originally used free-text labels, not standardized
  - Problem: free text is difficult for computers to make use of
- Ontologies: knowledge representation using standardized terms and interrelationships
  - Amenable to computation

## E.g., GO

- Controlled vocabulary
- Defined relationships
- “Directed acyclic graph”
  - Links are directional
  - No individually circular paths



## Gene Ontology (GO)

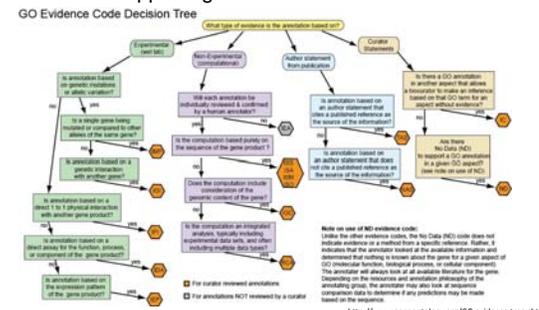
- <http://www.geneontology.org/>
- Consortium that defines standardized terms and relationships
- Centered on model organism databases
  - E.g., human, mouse, Drosophila, E.coli
  - Most curation derived from these sources, but do extend more broadly
- Linked and mapped to many other resources
- Used by many computational analysis tools

## GO domains

- GO is divided into three domains, encompassing three separate functional properties
  - Biological process: what it does
  - Molecular function: how it does it
  - Cellular component: where it does it

## GO evidence codes

- GO uniquely has an ontology to describe the evidence supporting annotations





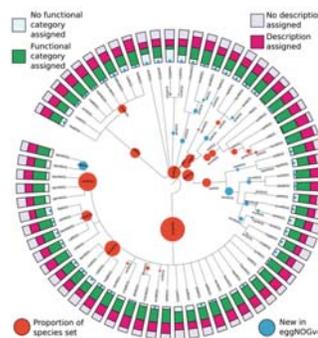


## eggNOG: method

- Use BLAST/fasta/Smith-Watterman alignments to find best matches
- Represent in-paralogs by single sequences
- Map sequences to COG/KOGs
- Triangle cluster non-matching sequences
- Add single RBH hits to clusters
- Automatically split multi-domain proteins
- Derive annotations by consensus within groups derived from multiple annotation sources

## eggNOG:

- [http://eggnog.embl.de/version\\_4.0.beta/](http://eggnog.embl.de/version_4.0.beta/)
- 107 different annotation levels
- 1.7 million ortholog groups
- 7.7 million proteins
- Probably the currently most comprehensive ortholog database
- Can use to construct PSSMs/HMMs



## Interpro

- Classifies proteins according to a combination of multiple protein motifs
- Multiple sources synthesized into single Interpro classification system
  - Four broad annotation types: Family, Domains, Repeats, Sites
- Interpro terms mapped to GO
- InterProScan – resource to annotate proteins using all member databases
  - HMM and regular expression-based classifications

## Interpro: member databases

- Pfam (domains, curated; Sanger)
- PROSITE (diagnostic motifs; SIB)
- HAMAP (homologs, curated; SIB)
- PRINTS (conserved motifs; U. Manchester)
- ProDom (domains, automatic via PSI-BLAST; PRABI Villerubanne)
- SMART (domains and architectures esp. signaling, curated; EMBL)
- TIGRFAMs (homologs, curated; JCVI)
- PIRSF (homologs & domains; ; Georgetown)
- SUPERFAMILY (structures, curated, U Bristol)
- CATH-Gene3D (homologs, mapped to structures, automatic via Markov clustering; University College London)
- PANTHER (functional homologs, curated, USC)

## Conserved Domains Database (CDD)

- Protein classification database maintained by NCBI
- CDD database based on domains curated by NCBI using structural alignments
- Also includes external resources: Pfam, SMART, COG, PRK, TIGRFAM
- Downloadable PSSMs for each CDD family for querying via RPS-BLAST

## CD-Search

## Are functions actually conserved?

- All of the protein annotation methods that we have discussed assume the hypothesis that function is evolutionarily conserved
- But we know that this can be confounded by duplication/loss and xenology
  - Can be addressed by better methods of determining orthology
  - Not typically accommodated by annotation databases
- Even orthologous functions can drift and/or be promiscuous

## Are functions actually conserved?

- Compare curated GO annotations of orthologs and paralogs
  - Corrected for annotation biases
- Functions of orthologs more similar than paralogs, but not perfectly

Altenhoff et al. (2012) PLoS Comput. Biol. 8:e1002514

## Are functions actually conserved?

- Same for 13 species instead of just 2
  - Paralogy potentially a greater confounder
  - Differences in GO annotation completeness

Altenhoff et al. (2012) PLoS Comput. Biol. 8:e1002514

## Are functions actually conserved?

- Define function as expression similarity between same human and mice tissues
- Same trend: ortholog function more conserved than paralogs, not absolute

Chen & Zhang (2012) PLoS Comput. Biol. 8:e1002784

## Are functions actually conserved?

- Yes, but not perfectly even for highly conserved sequences
- Likely depends on definition of “function”
- Annotated functions are likely quite broad in most cases

## Protein database vs. pathways and reactions

- Protein databases are based on homology
  - Hypothesis that function is conserved
- Reaction databases classify function without reference to homology
  - Function can be due to evolutionary convergence
  - GO is an example of this we have already seen
- Reaction and pathway annotations are therefore closer to function but further from underlying evolutionary mechanism

## Enzyme Commission

- One of the oldest functional annotation schemes, arising out of biochemistry
- Four part numerical nomenclature having increasing specificity
  - EC 3: hydrolases
  - EC 3.4: hydrolases acting on peptide bonds
  - EC 3.4.11: hydrolases cleaving amino-terminal amino acids from a peptide
  - EC 3.4.11.4: hydrolases cleaving amino-terminal amino acids from a tripeptide
- Database updates are infrequent

## Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG)

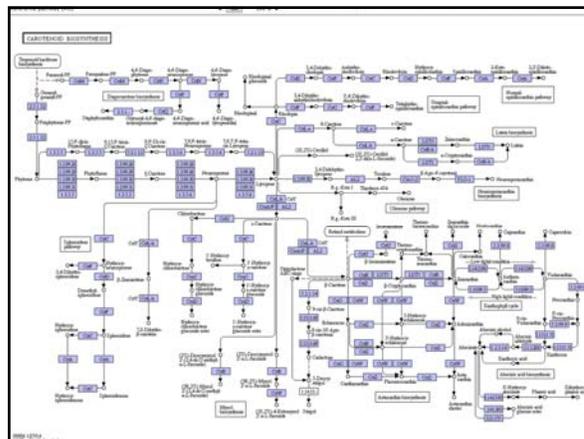
- Manually edited pathway database
- Orthologs defined in other genomes
- Reactions combined into metabolic maps
  - Pathways are typically quite general
- Individual proteins can be freely queried via web
- Individual genomes can be annotated via KAAS server
- Underlying database NO LONGER FREE

## KEGG example

**KEGG ORTHOLOGY K10027**

| Enzyme                              | EC           | All links    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| EC 3.4.11.4                         | EC 3.4.11.4  | EC 3.4.11.4  |
| Bacillus subtilis (strain 168)      | BACSUB_01102 | BACSUB_01102 |
| Escherichia coli (strain K12)       | ECOL_00443   | ECOL_00443   |
| Staphylococcus aureus (strain 8020) | SAUR_00001   | SAUR_00001   |
| ...                                 | ...          | ...          |

**Enzyme description:**  
 Acting on the C-terminal group of dipeptides, with other specificities.  
 EC 3.4.11.4: hydrolases cleaving amino-terminal amino acids from a tripeptide



http://www.genome.jp/kegg/kaas/

**KAAS - KEGG Automatic Annotation Server**  
for automatic genome annotation and pathway mapping

**Request**

**About KAAS**  
KAAS (KEGG Automatic Annotation Server) provides functional annotation of genes by BLAST comparison against the manually curated KEGG GENES database. The result contains KEGG IDs (KEGG Pathway) assignments and automatically generated KEGG pathways.

**Example of Results**

**KEGG pathway mapping**

## Biocyc

- Collection of curated metabolic pathways
- Typically smaller modules compared to KEGG
- www.biocyc.org

| DATABASE | SCOPE  | HIGHLIGHTS   | ORGANIZATION   |
|----------|--|--|--|
| EcoCyc   | Escherichia coli K-12 (MG1625) Model Organism Database | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature curation of complete genome</li> <li>Information from 25,426 publications</li> <li>Transcriptional regulatory network</li> <li>Flux balance metabolic model</li> </ul> | SB International   |
| MetaCyc  | Multigenomic Metabolic Pathways and Enzyme Database    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,297 metabolic pathways from 240 organisms</li> <li>Extensive commentary</li> <li>Information from 22,279 publications</li> </ul>  | SB International   |
| HumanCyc | Human genome   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>271 metabolic pathways</li> </ul>   | SB International   |
| ArzCyc   | Arabidopsis thaliana                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>405 metabolic pathways</li> <li>Information from 1,532 publications</li> </ul>  | S. Rhee, Department of Plant Biology, Carnegie Institution, USA              |
| YeastCyc | Saccharomyces cerevisiae                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>152 metabolic pathways</li> <li>Information from 1,392 publications</li> </ul>  | SID Carstens, Stanford U., USA   |
| LatAocyc | Lactobacillus acidophilus                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>141 metabolic pathways</li> </ul>   | BCSI Molecular Science and Bio-Technology Institute, University of Melbourne |

**BioCyc Tier 1: Intensively Curated Databases**

**BioCyc Tier 2: Computationally-Derived Databases Subject to Moderate Curation**  
35 databases are available; see our Tier 2 page

**BioCyc Tier 3: Computationally-Derived Databases Subject to No Curation**  
2947 databases are available (see our Tier 3 page) and ready for adoption (owned) by interested scientists for curation and updating.

**Create Your Own Pathway/Genome Database**  
Interested in creating a Pathway/Genome Database for a genome of interest? (see our page)

## Metacyc example

**MetaCyc Enzyme phythomon**

**Reaction**

**Pathway**

## Metacyc example

**Enzyme**

**Pathway**

## Metacyc example

**Metacyc Pathway: Arsenic(III)oxobisphosphate (BioCyc)**

**Reaction**

**Pathway**

## Uniprot cross-references Interpro, metacyc

**Cross-references**

**UniProt**

**InterPro**

**MetaCyc**

## Annotation process

- Use web to find information about particular proteins
- Use individual tools separately on your genome
  - Allows most customization, proofchecking
  - Standard for eukaryotic genomes
- Use automatic prediction servers
  - Common for prokaryotes
  - E.g., NCBI, IMG (JGI), RAST, Megan, MAGE
  - Each vary slightly in algorithm, user engagement and proofchecking, visualization
- Transfer homology from previously-annotated sequences
  - Can propagate incorrect annotations
  - Can limit coverage