For written notes on this lecture, please read chapter 1 of *The Practical Bioinformatician*

CS2220: Introduction to Computational Biology

Lecture 1: Essence of Bioinformatics

Limsoon Wong

18 January 2008

Plan

A very brief overview of …

- **Molecular biology**
- **Tools and instruments for molecular biology**
- **Themes and applications of bioinformatics**
- **Commonly used data sources**

Tools and instruments for molecular biology will be covered in a distributed manner in later lectures as and when needed

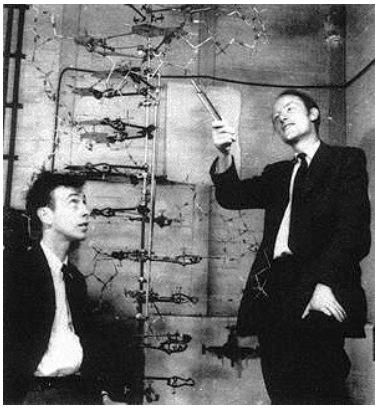
Molecular Biology Overview

Body and Cell

- **Our body consists of a number of organs**
- **Each organ composes of a number of tissues**
- **Each tissue composes of cells of the same type**
- **Cells perform two types of function**
  - Chemical reactions needed to maintain our life
  - Pass info for maintaining life to next generation
- **In particular**
  - Protein performs chemical reactions
  - DNA stores & passes info
  - RNA is intermediate between DNA & proteins

DNA

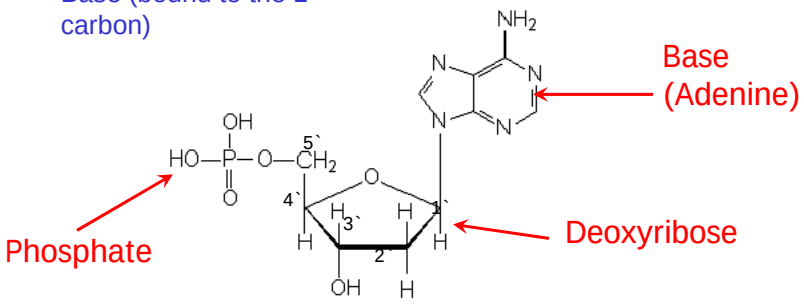
- **Stores instructions needed by the cell to perform daily life function**
- **Consists of two strands interwoven together and form a double helix**
- **Each strand is a chain of some small molecules called nucleotides**



Francis Crick shows James Watson the model of DNA in their room number 103 of the Austin Wing at the Cavendish Laboratories, Cambridge

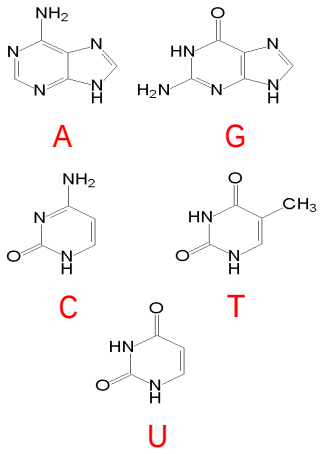
Nucleotide

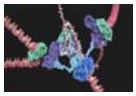
- **Consists of three parts:**
  - Deoxyribose
  - Phosphate (bound to the 5' carbon)
  - Base (bound to the 1' carbon)



Classification of Nucleotides

- **5 diff nucleotides**
  - Adenine(A), cytosine(C), guanine(G), thymine(T), & uracil(U)
- **A, G are purines**
  - 2-ring structure
- **C, T, U are pyrimidines**
  - 1-ring structure
- **DNA only uses A, C, G, & T**





Orientation of a DNA

- **One strand of DNA is synthesized by chaining together nucleotides, forming a phosphate-sugar backbone in a 5' to 3' direction**
- **DNA chain is lengthened as phosphate group at 5' carbon of the sugar of one nucleotide subunit is linked to hydroxyl group of 3' carbon of the sugar of the next nucleotide**

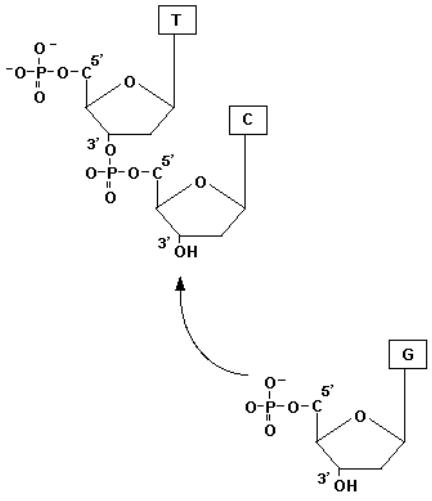
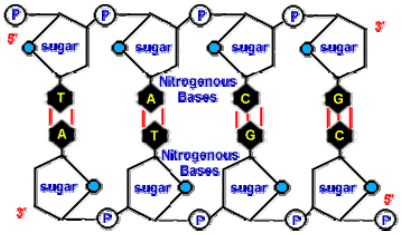
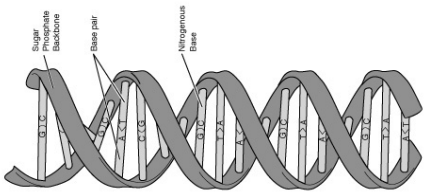


Image credit: Sue Harlocker

Double Stranded DNA

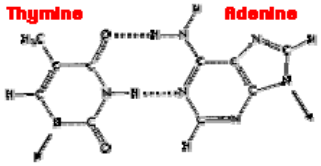
- **DNA is double stranded in a cell. The two strands are anti-parallel**
- **The double strands are interwoven to form a double helix**

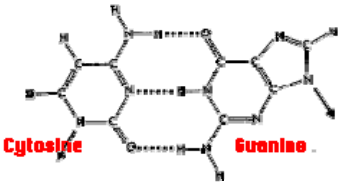




Watson-Crick Rule

- **Purine A pairs with pyrimidine T, Pyrimidine C pairs with purine G**





- **Why not pair purine with purine and pyrimidine with pyrimidine?**
  - No space (20 Å) for 2 purines to fit within helix
  - Too much space for 2 pyrimi-dines to get close enough to form H bonds
- **Why not pair A with C and T with G?**
  - Only with A & T and with C & G are there opportunities to establish H bonds betw them

Locations of DNAs in a Cell?

- **Two types of organisms**
  - Prokaryotes
    - **Single-celled organisms with no nuclei**
    - **E.g., bacteria**
  - Eukaryotes
    - **Organisms with single or multiple cells**
    - **Their cells have nuclei**
    - **E.g., plant & animal**
- **In Prokaryotes, DNA swims within the cell**
- **In Eukaryotes, DNA locates within the nucleus**

Chromosome

- **DNA is usually tightly wound around histone proteins and forms a chromosome**
- **The total info stored in all chromosomes constitutes a genome**
- **In most multi-cell organisms, every cell contains the same complete set of chromosomes**
  - May have some small diff due to mutation
- **Human genome has 3G bases, organized in 23 pairs of chromosomes**

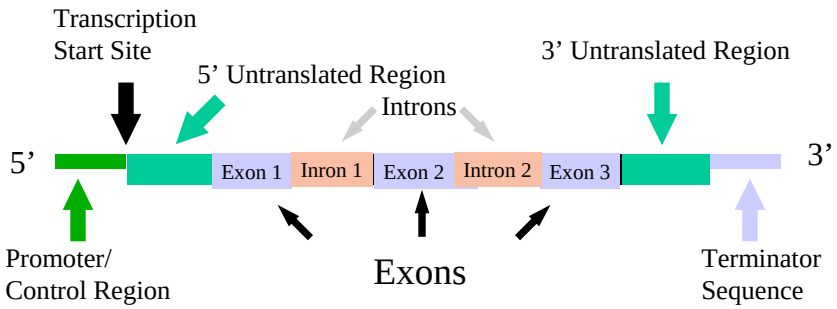
Gene

- **A gene is the physical and functional unit of heredity that carries info from one generation to the next**
- **It is a seq of DNA that encodes a protein or an RNA molecule**
- **About 30,000 – 35,000 (protein-coding) genes in human genome**
- **For gene that encodes protein**
  - In Prokaryotic genome, one gene corresponds to one protein
  - In Eukaryotic genome, one gene may correspond to more than one protein because of the process “alternative splicing”

Introns and Exons

- **Eukaryotic genes contain introns & exons**
  - Introns are seq that are ultimately spliced out of mRNA
  - Introns normally satisfy GT-AG rule, viz. begin w/ GT & end w/ AG
  - Each gene can have many introns & each intron can have thousands bases
- **Introns can be very long**
- **An extreme example is a gene associated with cystic fibrosis in human:**
  - Length of 24 introns ~1Mb
  - Length of exons ~1kb

A "Simple" Gene



Complexity of Organism vs. Genome Size

- **Human Genome: 3G base pairs**
- **Amoeba dubia (a single cell organism): 600G base pairs**

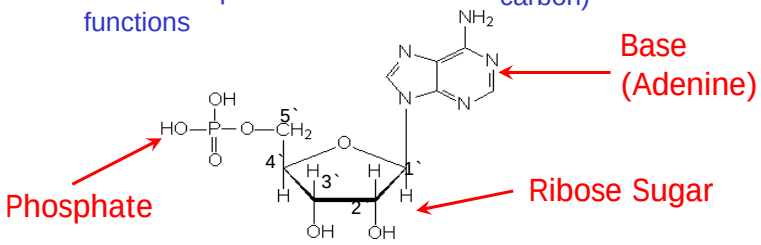
⇒ **Genome size has no relationship with complexity of organism**

- **Prokaryote (e.g., *E. coli*)**
  - # of base pairs: 5M
  - # of genes: 4k
  - Ave len of gene: 1000 bp
  - ⇒ 90% of *E. coli* genome are coding regions
- **Eukaryote (e.g., human)**
  - # of base pairs: 3G
  - # of genes: 30k – 35k
  - Ave len of gene: 2000 bp
  - ⇒ <3% of human genome are coding regions

⇒ **Genome size has no relationship w/ # of genes**

RNA

- **RNA has both the properties of DNA & protein**
  - Similar to DNA, it can store & transfer info
  - Similar to protein, it can form complex 3D structure & perform some functions
- **Nucleotide for RNA has three parts:**
  - Ribose Sugar (has an extra OH group at 2')
  - Phosphate (bound to 5' carbon)
  - Base (bound to 1' carbon)

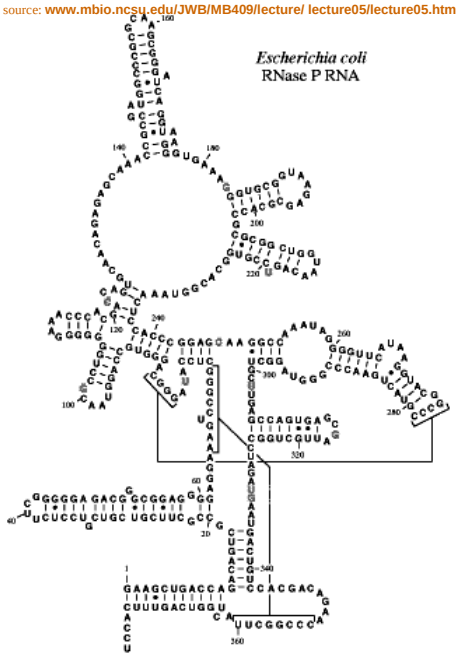


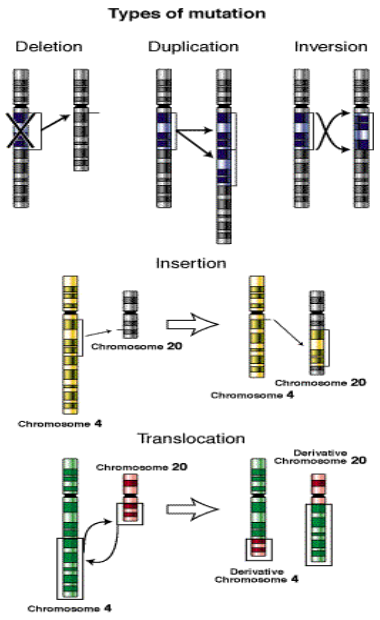
RNA vs DNA

- **RNA is single stranded**
- **RNA uses the base U instead of T**
  - U is chemically like T
  - ⇒ U is complementary to A
- **Nucleotides similar to that of DNA, but have an extra OH at position 2'**
  - Due to this extra OH, it can form more hydrogen bonds than DNA

⇒ So RNA can form complex 3D structure

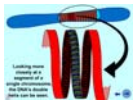
Image source: www.mbio.ncsu.edu/JWB/MB409/lecture/ lecture05/lecture05.htm



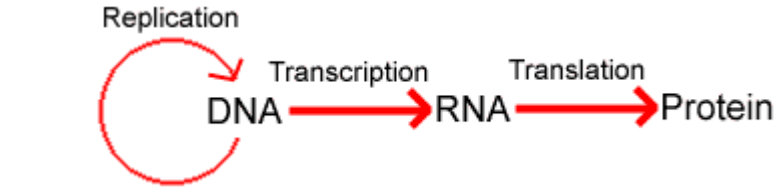


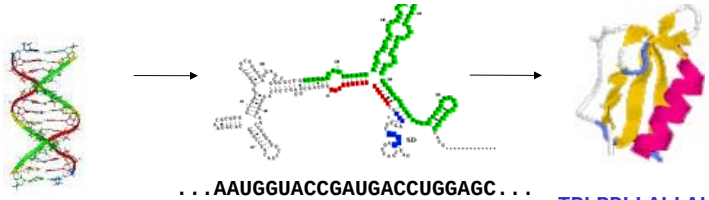
Mutation

- Mutation is a sudden change of genome
- Basis of evolution
- Cause of cancer
- Can occur in DNA, RNA, & Protein



Central Dogma

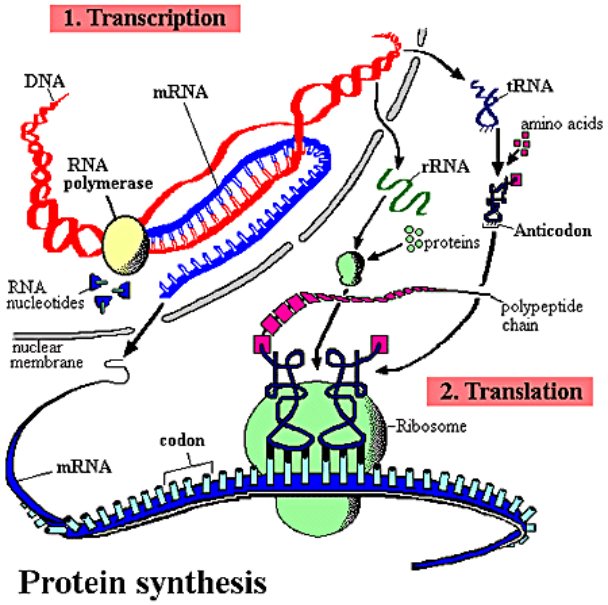




...AATGGTACCGATGACCTG...

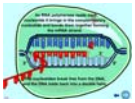
...AAUGGUACCGAUGACCUGGAGC...

...TRLRPLLALLALWP...



Protein synthesis

Players in Protein Synthesis



Transcription

- **Synthesize mRNA from one strand of DNA**
  - An enzyme RNA polymerase temporarily separates double-stranded DNA
  - It begins transcription at transcription start site
  - A → A, C→C, G→G, & T→U
  - Once RNA polymerase reaches transcription stop site, transcription stops
- **Additional "steps" for Eukaryotes**
  - Transcription produces pre-mRNA that contains both introns & exons
  - 5' cap & poly-A tail are added to pre-mRNA
  - RNA splicing removes introns & mRNA is made
  - mRNA are transported out of nucleus

Translation

- Synthesize protein from mRNA
- Each amino acid is encoded by consecutive seq of 3 nucleotides, called a codon
- The decoding table from codon to amino acid is called genetic code
- 4^3=64 diff codons

⇒ Codons are not 1-to-1 corr to 20 amino acids

- All organisms use the same decoding table
- Amino acids can be classified into 4 groups. A single-base change in a codon is usu insufficient to cause a codon to code for an amino acid in diff group

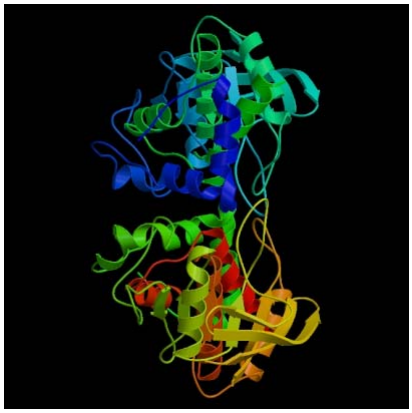
Genetic Code

- **Start codon**
  - ATG (code for M)
- **Stop codon**
  - TAA
  - TAG
  - TGA

First Position	Second Position of Codon: T	Second Position of Codon: C	Second Position of Codon: A	Second Position of Codon: G	Third Position
T	TTT Phe [F]	TCT Ser [S]	TAT Tyr [Y]	TGT Cys [C]	T
	TTC Phe [F]	TCC Ser [S]	TAC Tyr [Y]	TGC Cys [C]	C
	TTA Leu [L]	TCA Ser [S]	TAA *Ter* [end]	TGA *Ter* [end]	A
	TTG Leu [L]	TCG Ser [S]	TAG *Ter* [end]	TGG Trp [W]	G
C	CTT Leu [L]	CCT Pro [P]	CAT His [H]	CGT Arg [R]	T
	CTC Leu [L]	CCC Pro [P]	CAC His [H]	CGC Arg [R]	C
	CTA Leu [L]	CCA Pro [P]	CAA Gln [Q]	CGA Arg [R]	A
	CTG Leu [L]	CCG Pro [P]	CAG Gln [Q]	CGG Arg [R]	G
A	ATT Ile [I]	ACT Thr [T]	AAT Asn [N]	AGT Ser [S]	T
	ATC Ile [I]	ACC Thr [T]	AAC Asn [N]	AGC Ser [S]	C
	ATA Ile [I]	ACA Thr [T]	AAA Lys [K]	AGA Arg [R]	A
	ATG Met [M]	ACG Thr [T]	AAG Lys [K]	AGG Arg [R]	G
G	GTT Val [V]	GCT Ala [A]	GAT Asp [D]	GGT Gly [G]	T
	GTC Val [V]	GCC Ala [A]	GAC Asp [D]	GGC Gly [G]	C
	GTA Val [V]	GCA Ala [A]	GAA Glu [E]	GGA Gly [G]	A
	GTG Val [V]	GCG Ala [A]	GAG Glu [E]	GGG Gly [G]	G

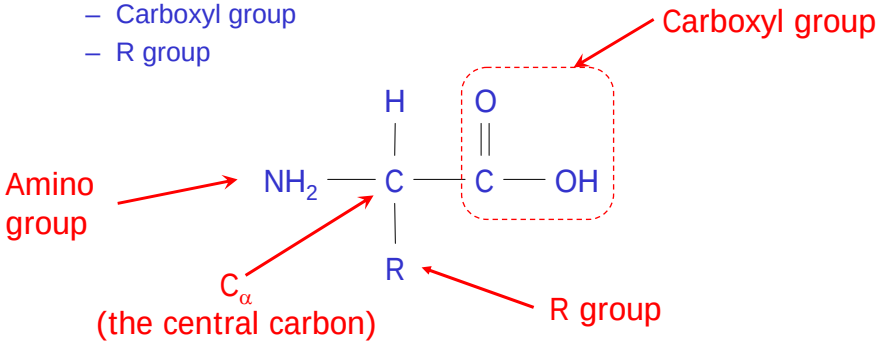
Protein

- **A sequence composed from an alphabet of 20 amino acids**
  - Length is usually 20 to 5000 amino acids
  - Average around 350 amino acids
- **Folds into 3D shape, forming the building block & performing most of the chemical reactions within a cell**



Amino Acid

- **Each amino acid consist of**
  - Amino group
  - Carboxyl group
  - R group



Classification of Amino Acids

- **Amino acids can be classified into 4 types**

- **Positively charged (basic)**
  - Arginine (Arg, R)
  - Histidine (His, H)
  - Lysine (Lys, K)

- **Negatively charged (acidic)**
  - Aspartic acid (Asp, D)
  - Glutamic acid (Glu, E)

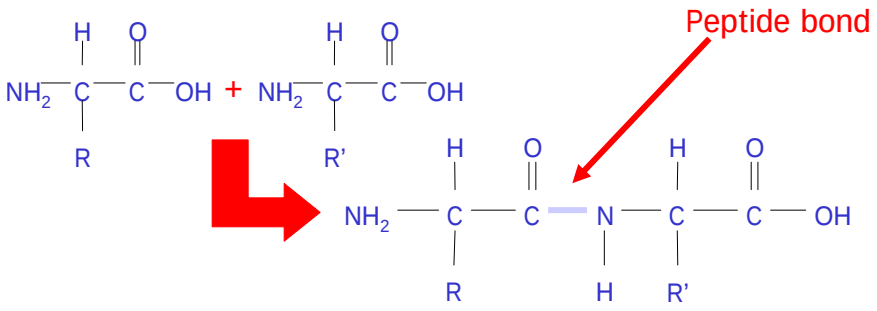
Classification of Amino Acids

- **Polar (overall uncharged, but uneven charge distribution. can form hydrogen bonds with water. they are called hydrophilic)**
  - Asparagine (Asn, N)
  - Cysteine (Cys, C)
  - Glutamine (Gln, Q)
  - Glycine (Gly, G)
  - Serine (Ser, S)
  - Threonine (Thr, T)
  - Tyrosine (Tyr, Y)

- **Nonpolar (overall uncharged and uniform charge distribution. cant form hydrogen bonds with water. they are called hydrophobic)**
  - Alanine (Ala, A)
  - Isoleucine (Ile, I)
  - Leucine (Leu, L)
  - Methionine (Met, M)
  - Phenylalanine (Phe, F)
  - Proline (Pro, P)
  - Tryptophan (Trp, W)
  - Valine (Val, V)

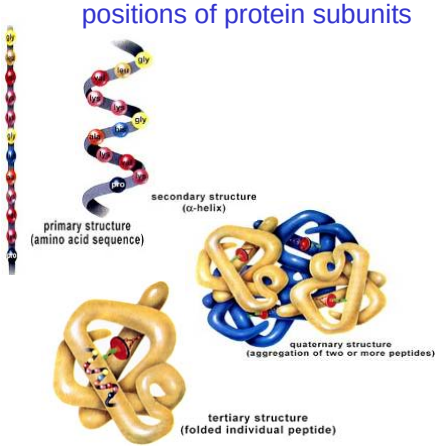
Protein & Polypeptide Chain

- **Formed by joining amino acids via peptide bond**
- **One end the amino group, called N-terminus**
- **The other end is the carboxyl group, called C-terminus**



Proteins Structure

- **Primary**
  - Seq of amino acids forming a polypeptide chain
- **Secondary**
  - Local organization into sec structures such as α helices and β sheets
- **Tertiary**
  - 3D arrangements of amino acids as they react to one another due to the polarity and resulting interactions betw their side chains
- **Quaternary**
  - Number and relative positions of protein subunits



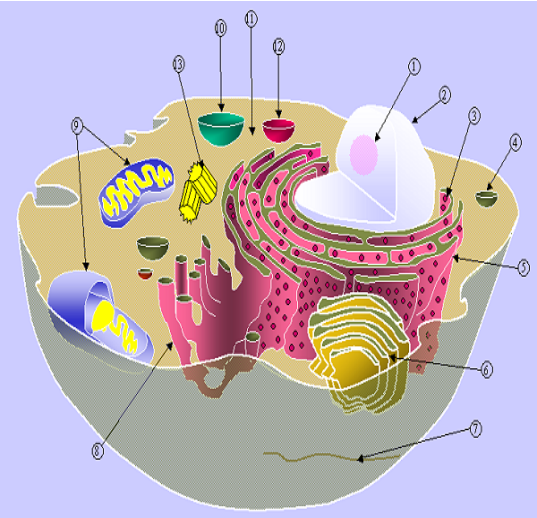
Eukaryote Cell Structure

- **Cell membrane---a cell's protective coat**
  - Separate and protect cell from env
  - Made from double layer of lipids and proteins
- **Genetic material**
  - DNA and RNA
- **Organelles--- a cell's "little organs"**
- **Cytoskeleton---a cell's scaffold**
  - organize and maintain the cell's shape
  - anchor organelles in place
  - Help uptake of external materials by a cell
  - Move parts of the cell during growth and motility

Organelles

- **Cell nucleus---a cell's info ctr**
  - House a cell's chromosomes
  - DNA replication and RNA synthesis occur here
- **Ribosomes---the protein production machine**
  - Process genetic instructions carried by mRNA into protein
- **Mitochondria & chloroplasts---the power generators**
  - Self-replicating organelles in cytoplasm, w/ own genome
  - Generate energy, process involves metabolic pathways
- **Endoplasmic reticulum**
  - Rough ER help to export proteins from cell after mRNA translation
  - Smooth ER is important in lipid synthesis, detoxification etc.
- **Golgi apparatus---central delivery system for the cell**
  - Site for protein processing, packaging, and transport

Eukaryote Cell Structure



1. Nucleolus
2. Nucleus
3. Ribosome
4. Vesicle
5. Rough ER
6. Golgi apparatus
7. Cytoskeleton
8. Smooth ER
9. Mitochondrion
10. Vacuole
11. Cytoplasm
12. Lysosome
13. Centriole

Processes In/Out of the Cells

- **Biological pathway: Molecular interaction network in biological processes**
- **Regulatory pathway**
  - Genetic info processing
  - Env info processing
  - Cellular processes
- **Metabolic pathway**
  - Enzymatic processes creating energy and other parts of the cell

- **Genetic info processing**
  - Transcription, Translation, Sorting and Degradation, Replication and Repair
- **Env info processing**
  - Membrane transport, Signal transduction, Ligand receptor interaction
- **Cellular processes**
  - Cell motility, Cell growth and death, Cell communication, Development, Behavior

Signal Transduction Pathways

- **Signal transduction is a proc where cell converts one kind of signal/stimulus into another**
- **Stimuli/Responses**
  - Stimuli: factors from env of a cell, e.g., kinds of molecules buffeting its surface, temperature, …
  - Responses: how cell react to stimuli, e.g., activate of a gene, produce metabolic energy, …
- **Types of signals**
  - Extracellular: binding of "extracellular" signaling molecules to receptors that face out from membrane
  - Intracellular: trigger by extracellular signal
  - Intercellular: betw cells

Intercellular Signaling

- **Type of intercellular signaling**
  - Endocrine
    - **Broad effect, specific receptor, travel thru blood**
    - **Hormones**
  - Paracrine
    - **Within local tissue, enzyme/extracellular matrix**
  - Autocrine
    - **Affect cells of same type**
  - Juxtacrine
    - **Transmitted along cell membranes**
    - **Capable of affecting either the emitting cell or cells immediately adjacent**
- **Type of signaling proteins**
  - Signal molecule
    - **Pass signal outside cell**
  - Receptors
    - **Bring signal from outside to inside the cell**
    - **One end outside cell, the other end inside**
    - **Applied to cell membrane and nucleus membrane**
  - Intracellular signaling protein
    - **2nd messengers inside cells**
    - **Pass msg from receptors to target protein within a cell**
  - Target protein
    - **Final recipient of signal**

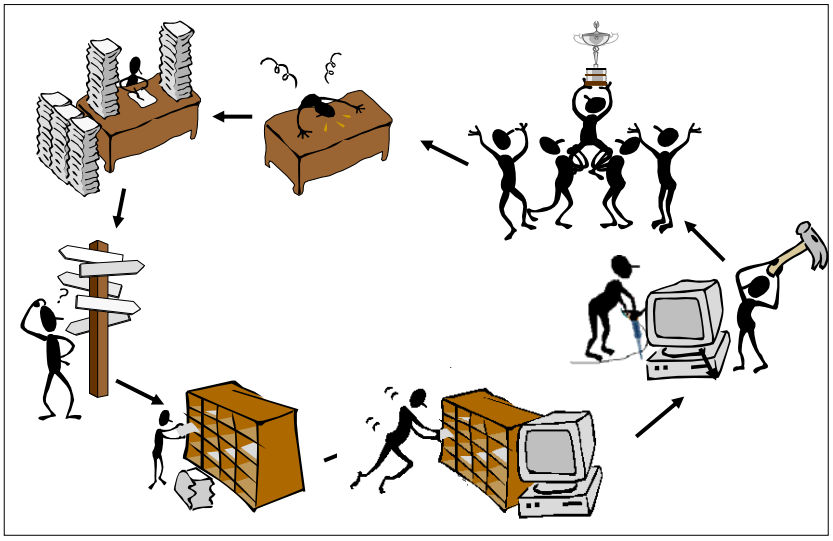
Processes In/Out of the Cells

- Biological pathway: Molecular interaction network in biological processes
- Regulatory pathway
  - Genetic info processing
  - Env info processing
  - Cellular processes
- **Metabolic pathway**
  - Enzymatic processes creating energy and other parts of the cell

- **Process nutrient molecules to maintain cell's living state**
- **Anabolism**
  - Energy is used to combine simpler substances---e.g., amino acids---into complex compounds, such as enzymes and nucleic acids
- **Catabolism**
  - Complex molecules are broken down to produce energy
  - Carbohydrate catabolism, Fat catabolism, Protein catabolism

Themes and Applications of Bioinformatics

What is Bioinformatics?



Themes of Bioinformatics

Bioinformatics =

Data Mgmt +
Knowledge Discovery +
Sequence Analysis +
Physical Modeling + ….

Knowledge Discovery =

Statistics + Algorithms + Databases

Benefits of Bioinformatics

To the patient:

Better drug, better treatment

To the pharma:

Save time, save cost, make more $

To the scientist:

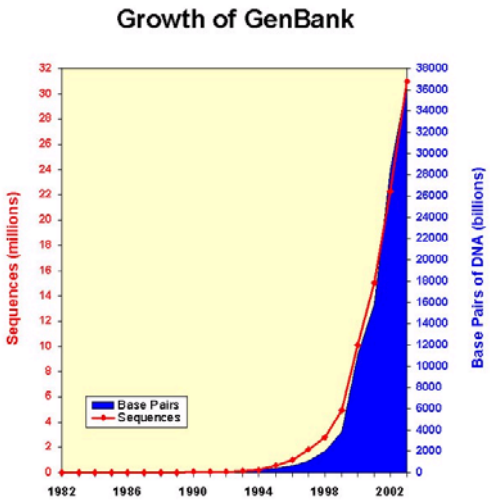
Better science

Some Bioinformatics Problems

- **Biological Data Searching**
- **Gene/Promoter finding**
- **Cis-regulatory DNA**
- **Gene/Protein Network**
- **Protein/RNA Structure Prediction**
- **Evolutionary Tree reconstruction**
- **Infer Protein Function**
- **Disease Diagnosis**
- **Disease Prognosis**
- **Disease Treatment Optimization, ...**

Biological Data Searching

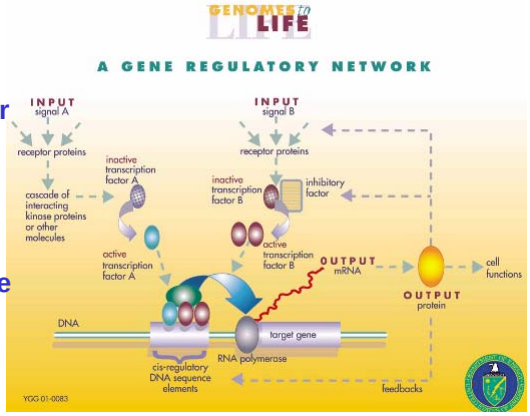
- **Biological Data is increasing rapidly**
- **Biologists need to locate required info**
- **Difficulties:**
  - Too much
  - Too heterogeneous
  - Too distributed
  - Too many errors
  - Due to mutation, need approximate search



Cis-Regulatory DNAs

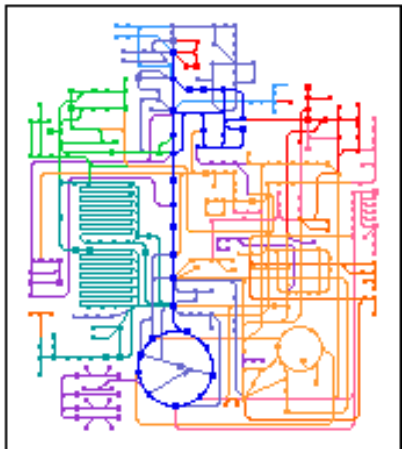
- **Cis-regulatory DNAs control whether genes should express or not**
- **Cis-regulatory DNAs may locate in promoter region, intron, or exon**
- **Finding and understanding cis-regulatory DNAs is one of the key problem in coming years**

Image credit: US DOE



Gene Networks

- Inside a cell is a complex system
- Expression of one gene depends on expression of another gene
- Such interactions can be represented using gene network
- Understanding such networks helps identify association betw genes & diseases



Protein/RNA structure prediction

- Structure of Protein/RNA is essential to its functionality
- Important to have some ways to predict the structure of a protein/RNA given its sequence
- This problem is important & it is always considered as a "grand challenge" problem in bioinformatics

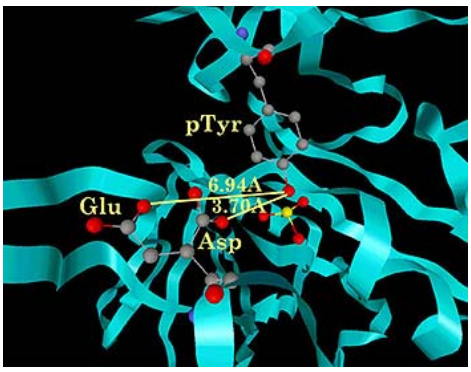
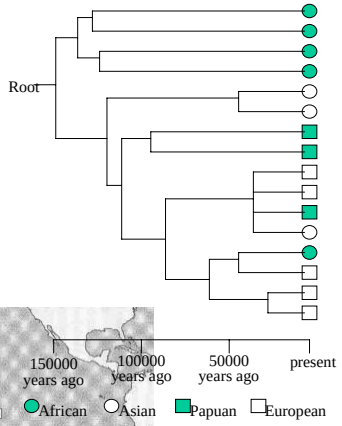


Image credit: Kolatkar

Evolutionary Tree Reconstruction

- **Protein/RNA/DNA mutates**
- **Evolutionary Tree studies evolutionary relationship among set of protein/RNA/DNAs**
- **Figures out origin of species**



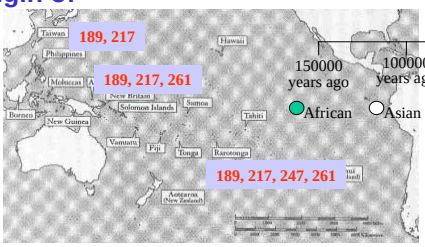


Image credit: Sykes

Breast Cancer Outcome Prediction

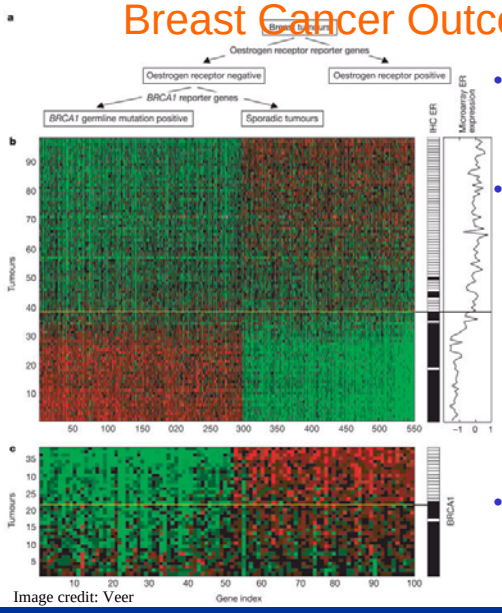


Image credit: Veer

- **Van't Veer et al., *Nature* 415:530-536, 2002**
- **Training set contains 78 patient samples**
  - 34 patients develop dist-ance metastases in 5 yrs
  - 44 patients remain healthy from the disease after initial diagnosis for >5 yrs
- **Testing set contains 12 relapse & 7 non-relapse samples**

Commonly Used Data Sources

Type of Biological Databases

- **Micro Level**
  - Contain info on the composition of DNA, RNA, Protein Sequences
- **Macro Level**
  - Contain info on interactions
    - **Gene Expression**
    - **Metabolites**
    - **Protein-Protein Interaction**
    - **Biological Network**
- **Metadata**
  - Ontology
  - Literature

Exercise: Name a protein seq db and a DNA seq db

Transcriptome Database

- **Complete collection of all possible mRNAs (including splice variants) of an organism**
- **Regions of an organism's genome that get transcribed into messenger RNA**
- **Transcriptome can be extended to include all transcribed elements, including non-coding RNAs used for structural and regulatory purposes**

Exercise: Name a transcriptome database

Gene Expression Databases

- **Detect what genes are being expressed or found in a cell of a tissue sample**
- **Single-gene analysis**
  - Northern Blot
  - In Situ Hybridization
  - RT-PCR
- **Many Genes: High Throughput Arrays**
  - cDNA Microarray
  - Affymetrix GeneChip® Microarray

Exercise: Name a gene expression database

Metabolites Database

- **A metabolite is an organic compound that is a starting material in, an intermediate in, or an end product of metabolism**
- **Metabolites dataset are also generated from mass spectrometry which measure the mass the these simple molecules, thus allowing us to estimate what are the metabolites in a tissue**

- **Starting metabolites:**
  - Small, of simple structure, absorbed by the organism as food
  - E.g., vitamins and amino acids
- **Intermediary metabolites:**
  - The most common metabolites
  - May be synthesized from other metabolites, or broken down into simpler compounds, often with the release of chemical energy
  - E.g., glucose
- **End products of metabolism**
  - Final result of the breakdown of other metabolites
  - Excreted from the organism without further change
  - E.g., urea, carbon dioxide

Protein-Protein Interaction Databases

- **Proteins are true workhorses**
  - Lots of the cell's activities are performed thru PPI including message passing, gene regulation, etc.
- **Function of a protein also depends on proteins it interact with**

- **Methods for generating PPI database include:**
  - biochemical purifications, yeast-two hydrid, synthetic lethals, in silico predictions, mRNA-co-expression
- **Contain many false positives & false negatives**

Exercise: Name a PPI database

Any Question?

Acknowledgements

- **Most of the slides used in this lecture are based on original slides created by**
  - Ken Sung
  - Anthony Tung
- **Inaccuracies and errors are mine**

References

- S.K.Ng, “Molecular Biology for the Practical Bioinformatician”, *The Practical Bioinformatician*, Chapter 1, pages 1—30, WSPC, 2004

- DOE HGP Primer, http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/publicat/primer/index.shtml

- Lots of useful videos, http://www.as.wvu.edu/~dray/Bio_219.html